

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 18 – NO. 6

also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

\$1

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

DECEMBER 5, 2019

Word Spreads of State Grant To Improve Canal District

By MIKE JACKSON

TURNERS FALLS – The rumors are swirling downtown, but town officials will not comment on a \$2.2 million state grant scheduled to be announced later this month.

In mid-November, the selectboard was asked to sign what town planner Walter Ramsey described as “a grant agreement that the state has asked me not to say much about, because the news of it is embargoed.”

“Unfortunately, we’re not at liberty to discuss what this is,” selectboard member Michael Nelson said at the time, “other than that it’s an exceptionally wonderful opportunity for the town, and we’re

very excited about it.”

A public announcement about the grant – \$2,163,000 from the state Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development – is expected to come December 17.

Nevertheless, it appears to have become common knowledge among downtown residents and business owners polled this week by the *Reporter* that the secrecy is about a long-awaited MassWorks grant to develop infrastructure crossing the Turners Falls power canal.

In February 2018, a half-billion-dollar bond bill, S.2300, was introduced in the state Senate containing a provision “that \$2,600,000 shall

see **GRANT** page A8

A Difficult Dog Hearing Divides Selectboard, and Local Family



Dog trainer Elise McMahon (left) and Zsa Zsa Taylor-Brunelle (right) disagreed as to whether the dog that attacked Taylor-Brunelle's son was “dangerous.”

By JEFF SINGLETON

MONTAGUE – Last week the Montague selectboard held a hearing to determine whether a family dog who had bitten a four-year-old child should be declared a “dangerous dog” and euthanized.

Dog hearings are often painful and contentious, with attack victims injured and traumatized and dog defenders vowing that their much-loved pet is always gentle with family members, children, and other animals. Local officials frequently state they “hate” making decisions about dogs, a comment heard several times last week.

But the hearing on November 25 was exceptional. It lasted nearly three hours. The injuries to the young victim, Jace Brunelle, may have nearly killed him, and he required hours of reconstructive surgery at Children’s Hospital in Bos-

ton. Members and friends of the extended family, which was clearly divided over the dog’s future, packed the meeting room.

The victim’s parents, Curtis Brunelle and his wife Zsa Zsa Taylor-Brunelle, were requesting that the dog, Garrett be euthanized. Garrett is owned by Montague police detective Joshua Hoffman, whose partner, Marney Brunelle, is Curtis’s sister. The incident occurred at the Montague Center home of Cina Brunelle, the mother of Curtis and Marney and the grandmother of Jace.

Greg Corbo, a member of the town’s law firm Kopelman and Paige, had driven to Montague town hall from the South Shore to attend the meeting. One selectboard member, Michael Nelson, recused himself from the discussion as a friend of the Brunelle family, leaving only two members to reach a decision

see **DOG HEARING** page A6

GILL SELECTBOARD

High-Speed Fiber To NMH Would Run On Public Line

By GEORGE BRACE

At their November 25 meeting the Gill selectboard heard a proposal to install a fiber-optic cable along Main Road to the Northfield Mount Hermon School (NMH) in exchange for partial use of that cable. The board also approved a conservation restriction and reviewed a report to the state on the town’s conservation efforts, among other business.

Doug Norton of regional telecom provider Access Plus Communications (ACP) presented a proposal to install fiber-optic cable to NMH using space on utility poles allotted to Gill as a municipality. Norton proposed that his company install and

maintain the cable free of charge for a contract period of five years, in exchange for the use of a small portion of the cable in order to provide internet service to NMH. Under the agreement, the cable would be permanently owned by the town.

Norton said ACP has a contract with NMH to provide a fiber-optic path from the school to Greenfield, which would connect them to the internet’s “big pipes.” He said the company has other options to make the connection, but due to time constraints and costs, it makes sense to incur the cost of installation and offer ownership of the cable, which he estimated to be worth

see **GILL** page A5

Coop Members Take a Turn Discussing Store’s Future



About forty people made it out in the snow to discuss the coop’s prospects.

By ISABEL KOYAMA

LEVERETT – Members of the Leverett Village Co-op gathered on Tuesday evening at the Leverett town hall to generate ideas for a lasting way out of the store’s ongoing financial crisis. In contrast to the string of weekly public board meetings held over the past few months, this special meeting was called for and facilitated by coop members. The board of directors, who were all in attendance, took a back seat.

The meeting was petitioned for by six signatures. Three of these belonged to members Tom Wolff,

Ann Ferguson, and Danielle Barshak, who had co-authored an open letter to the board in early November requesting proof of a viable survival plan for the coop.

The two-hour session used a reflective exercise called “SWOT,” to evaluate the coop’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the hopes of generating proposals for a way forward. Wolff led the exercise, beginning with an assessment of strengths.

Members mentioned everything from food preferences (“soup!” shouted a man named Sam) to a love of the coop as a communal

see **COOP** page A2

Two Holiday Blowouts

By MATT ROBINSON

FRANKLIN COUNTY – There were two high school games of local note during Turkey Week this year. The Mohawk Warriors went down to Deerfield to take on Frontier in their annual Wednesday night mashup, and on Thursday, the Franklin Tech Eagles took the battle to the Vikings’ home turf in Northampton.

Both games were lopsided, so I won’t give play-by-play reports, but here are the highlights and my observations.

Frontier 36 – Mohawk Co-op 0

Wednesday’s game was a washout, in more ways than one. What began as an ice storm became a rain torrent. It rained so hard and for so long that by the final whistle, everyone and everything was soaked.

The Warriors have fought the Frontiersmen 86 times on Thanksgiving week since the early 1930s. I didn’t realize the amplitude of the rivalry, simply because I haven’t

been to enough games.

When I was a kid, the Wednesday before Thee Game consisted of bonfires at the old high school and outdoor football rallies. When I got older, my friends and I would hang out at the school and wait for Greenfield students to drive into the parking lot to taunt us. On other Wednesdays, we’d drive into Greenfield and taunt their kids. I’ve gone to a few Wednesday night games as an adult, but strictly as an observer – I never had a dog in the fight, so I never really experienced the full intensity of the rivalry.

This year’s game was disappointing for the Warriors. Not because they were blown out, but because they lost at all. “It’s embarrassing,” one of the injured Mohawks lamented as he was getting taped up. Again, he wasn’t embarrassed because they were losing by a lot, just that they were behind at all.

Before the game, I wrote: “If the Warriors can stay healthy and can

see **SPORTS** page A5



Franklin Tech’s Donte Rosewarne comes in for a touchdown during the Eagles’ Thanksgiving Day defeat of the Smith Vocational Vikings.

Leverett Selectboard Town Officials Strategize Over How to Attract Cannabis Biz

By JERRI HIGGINS

The Leverett selectboard believes it is just a matter of time before someone comes before the board seeking a license to grow, process, or sell cannabis – and Leverett wants to be ready for that.

Seth Seeger, updating the selectboard last week on the activities of the town’s revenue committee, said they are seeking participants to start an economic development group (EDG).

“It’s sort of like a chamber of commerce,” Seeger explained, “a non-town entity that could shepherd in ideas to the town for discussion.” He noted that the EDG would be staffed by volunteers, but could also seek grant funding. By functioning independently of the town, Seeger said that the group could help foster an unconstrained environment for discussing and assessing ideas prior to reporting back to the revenue committee.

Asked by selectboard member Tom Hankinson about legal cannabis as a potential revenue stream, Seeger said that growing and processing the plant is an idea the committee brainstormed about, but that lack of easy access and foot traffic would hamper any proposed retail outlets in Leverett.

“One of the biggest stumbling blocks that we’ve come across so far,” said Seeger, “is that there’s no town sewer and water, so there’s a high cost for businesses wanting to come in.”

Responding that he thought a cannabis business wouldn’t need a lot of water or sewer, selectboard chair Peter d’Errico said: “2,500 square feet could make a significant business. You can use a regular well, and you don’t have any particular waste product.”

D’Errico did say that while the retail aspect would be tougher in Leverett, it’s still possible, and that he hopes an EDG would pursue that avenue – perhaps pairing cannabis producers with entrepreneurs who might want to invest in the industry. Seeger agreed that would be a good use of an EDG.

Hankinson said that Leverett could use the retail sales revenue. “There’s got to be options out there,” he said, musing that maybe cannabis could be sold at the Leverett food co-operative.

D’Errico added that he knew of at least one property which had been built to commercial specifications and could potentially be used for retail cannabis, if the property became available on the market.

While the future is yet to be seen, the selectboard decided that any applicant seeking a Host Community Agreement for a prospective marijuana license must submit \$3,500 which will go into a town-managed escrow account “to cover legal costs for review of the applicant’s submission to the selectboard,” as written in the town’s Marijuana Host Agreement Application Policy.

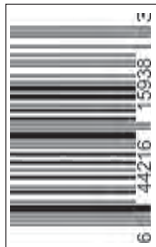
In an effort to close loopholes

see **LEVERETT** page A6

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The Montague Reporter

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Hungry For Meaning

The first of three proposed Trump Administration rollbacks to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – food stamps – goes into effect this week. As of Thursday, states suffering from high unemployment will no longer be able to issue waivers for the program's work requirement, a cap of 3 months' aid per 3-year period for childless adults out of work.

The USDA says the move will boot 688,000 Americans off the food benefit, and "save" the federal government around \$1.1 billion per year. (For comparison, the Navy just entered a \$22 billion contract with General Dynamics to build *nine* nuclear-armed submarines.)

The agency's official rationale for the change is to "improve economic outcomes, promote self-sufficiency, and encourage greater engagement in meaningful work activities..."

Of course, public spending is not the same as waste – so cutting \$1.1 billion in food aid will be an immediate hit for America's farms and supermarkets – but the government hopes that loss will be more than made up for as a result of the


new activity prompted by a greater countrywide rate of hunger.

The 688,000 Americans receiving Trump's hunger nudge toward the workplace will be attempting to join the pool of 53 million workers in low-wage jobs – that's 44% of Americans aged 18 to 64, according to a new Brookings Institution study. The *median* wage earned by these 53 million workers is \$10.22 per hour.

The two largest categories of these low-wage jobs – "retail workers" and "information and records clerks" – are, by no coincidence, among those most directly threatened by automation in our era of cloud computing, self-checkout kiosks, and automated logistics.

Which makes us wonder what exactly the Department of Agriculture was thinking with its assertion that these low-wage jobs are "meaningful." Does meaning vanish whenever an unnecessary task is automated? Or just drudgery?

"Meaningful" should be a giveaway: an attempt to imply that these cuts are based in anything other than an increasingly outdated ideology of austerity and meanness.



Don't forget to tip your carrier
this holiday season

CORRECTION

In an article about alternatives for commercial composting in downtown Turners Falls (November 21, "Compost Collaboration Encouraged," page A1), pet waste was listed as one of the things accepted by providers of these services. Simply not true. Sorry for the error!

COOP from page A1

gathering place. The store's list of weaknesses included its inconvenient location, high prices, lack of consistent stock, and "ancient" operating equipment. "We prefer *vintage*," one staff member replied jokingly.

One member pegged the store's "seasonal vulnerability" as a weakness, referring to a decline in revenue during winter months. At this, Wolff pointed out the recent snowstorm, and countered, "look how many people are here concerned about the coop. That's great."


The group went on to discuss opportunities and threats, and suggested proposals to address them. All the while, membership committee chair Ann Ferguson tried to keep up as she hastily wrote down every idea on flip-chart paper. Finally, members "voted" on the proposals

they'd conjured by walking around the room and placing stickers next to their favorites.

"I was prepared for a little bit more push-back from the board about how we were running the meeting," said Danielle Barshak, one of Tuesday's facilitators. "It's not even clear from the bylaws who has the authority to run such a meeting," she added, calling the Leverett store's bylaws skimpy compared with those of other coops.

Barshak said she believes the Leverett coop should be modeling its bylaws on those of other successful cooperatives.

Although the board of directors officially voted at a previous meeting to dissolve the coop, it will not be dissolved unless its member-owners agree to do so. "I just want to reassure you that we do have a chance here," said



NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION

Jose deflates the first of about a hundred tires that he will change today at Tire Warehouse in Greenfield. Customers who walked in to the business this week with hopes of getting service done in a few hours were also deflated to learn that there were 30 to 50 cars ahead of them by ten o'clock in the morning. Owner Jarad Weeks said he prefers that folks drop off cars for the entire day when possible.

GUEST EDITORIAL

A Final Black Friday at Wilson's

By **JERRI HIGGINS**

GREENFIELD – Friday, November 29, was the beginning of the end for Wilson's Department store, whose "retirement sale" started and will continue until everything is sold – even the fixtures.

Arriving by 8:30 a.m., a line of about 20 people had already formed at the back parking lot entrance, with another 20 or so people at the front entrance. Standing around in 29°F temperature with 20-mph wind gusts, they gave credence to the term "hardy New Englanders."

The general sentiment was sadness at Wilson's closing, and watching the gathering crowd snaking through the parking lot and turning down Chapman Street, it was hard not to feel that if this many folks shopped Wilson's regularly, they'd not be going out of business – a retiring President or not.

Franklin County resident Brian Hemingway, who arrived by 7 a.m. to be the first in line, said: "I was going to put in an application for a job this week, and then I found out that it's closing. But I'm here for the sale."

"We're so sad," said Caitlin von Schmidt, a former coordinator for the Greenfield Business Association. "And we're heartbroken," added



HIGGINS PHOTO

The department store's "retirement sale" started with a Black Friday rush.

Rebecca Beauregard, next to her. "I mean, it's the end of an era, it really is." Both women arrived around 8 a.m., getting in line behind Hemingway.

"I think it's sad, but I think it will bring new development to Greenfield," said Logan McCarthy, also one of the first in line at the parking lot entrance. "It really is a problem that there's not a lot of retail in Greenfield."

Jeremy Brunaccioni, who worked at Wilson's in the 1980s, said he felt especially saddened by the news of Wilson's closing as a former employee. He got to give his well-wishes to

Wilson's retiring President Kevin J. O'Neil as the back doors opened to the awaiting crowd and O'Neil greeted customers coming inside.

The store filled in an orderly procession, but it was quite a wait in all checkout lines, with many of us skipping yet another long line to sign up for a chance at winning a prize later in the week.

Thank you, Wilson's, for 137 years of continued service to Greenfield. Your absence will be felt as our area loses an historic "brick and mortar" department store.

Jerri Higgins lives in Montague.

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Compiled by CHRIS PELLERIN

With Black Friday and Cyber Monday behind us, it’s time to think about the **local businesses** that depend on our patronage year-round, but especially this time of year. My friend, artist Louise Minks, likes to say “Mills, Not Malls!” when referring to our local gem, Sawmill River Arts Gallery, and the other shops and restaurants at the Montague Bookmill.

We also have some great stores in downtown Turners to find unique gifts, so be sure to shop locally on Small Business Saturday.

Many stores and restaurants are participating in the Downtown Turners Falls “Open Door Promo” from December 6 through 21. Pick up a game card at LOOT or Black Cow Burger Bar and collect stickers at local businesses. Two lucky winners drawn on December 21 will each receive \$150 certificates to use in 25 participating businesses!

I told you last time about the **Great Falls Gift Mart** pop-up shop at Avenue A and Third Street in Turners Falls. It will be open Thursdays through Saturdays this month from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sundays 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

There is another pop-up, **No Regular Thing**, open December 7 and 8 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at 7 North Street, Montague Center. All proceeds will go to organizations that work to combat the climate crisis.

Also running through the holiday season: shop at the **Arcana Art and Jewelry** pop-up at The Local Yoga Joint, 42 Canal Street, Turners Falls, from 2 to 6 p.m.

Come learn about our wildlife neighbors who share our home in the Connecticut River Watershed. The **Kiddleidoscope program** at the Great Falls Discovery Center,

2 Avenue A, Turners Falls includes a story, activities, and a craft to introduce young children to wildlife along the river. For ages three to six, accompanied by an adult. Siblings and friends welcome.

The program this Friday, December 6 from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. is about **Beavers**.

If anyone is looking to help others less fortunate during this season of giving, Greenfield Savings Bank, 282 Avenue A, is participating in Franklin County’s **Warm the Children** clothing campaign, collecting new hats, gloves, and scarves.

The bank is also an official drop-off location for new, unwrapped toys for the US Marines’ **Toys for Tots** campaign. Hours of drop off are normal branch lobby hours. No donation is too small!

Also, **Santa** will be arriving at GSB at 3:30 p.m. this Friday, December 6. Bring the kids and your own camera or phone for a photo with Santa.

The **Polar Express Pajama Party** returns to Franklin County Technical School, 82 Industrial Boulevard, Turners Falls, from 5:15 to 8 p.m. on Friday, December 6. Admission is \$2 and includes activities, games, face painting, and Christmas specials.

At 7 p.m., the boy from the train will read the *Polar Express* book, after which Santa and Mrs. Claus will hand out the first gift of Christmas bell to all kids in attendance. Photos with Santa, Mrs. Claus, the Conductor and the Engineer will follow. Each Traveler will receive a cookie and hot chocolate!

Open to all kids ages 10 and under. Space is limited, so the event will only be open to the first 300 people to register. Those who wish to register can email Franklin County Technical School at *polar-*

express@fcts.us or call (413) 863-9561, x 233.

On Saturday, December 7 from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., the Erving Senior/Community Center hosts a **Holiday Bazaar** at 1 Care Drive, Erving. Free Door Prizes, raffles, handcrafted gifts, baked goods, and an auction table await.

Our Lady of Czestochowa Church’s **St. Nicholas Bazaar** is also on Saturday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 84 K Street, Turners Falls. It features Polish pierogi, baked goods, religious items, crafts, raffles, and games.

Feel that cold North wind blowing? Are you sore from shoveling? Want an inside activity with no physical labor required? Do you want to challenge not only your mind but also your patience?

Never fear, Greenfield Savings Bank is here with a **Puzzle Swap!** At the bank branch 282 Avenue A, Turners Falls on Saturday, December 7, from 10 to 11 a.m.

Swap with fellow puzzle-masters, and feel free to chat for a few minutes in a comfy, climate-controlled environment with light refreshments, all courtesy of Greenfield Savings Bank. No reservations required: all with a puzzle to swap are welcome! They have puzzles for all ages.

The finale of the **Climate Change Theatre Action:** Lighting the Way season will be this Saturday morning, December 7, from 10:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. as part of Racial Justice Rising’s regular monthly program series at the First Congregational Church, 43 Silver Street, Greenfield. Doors open at 9:45 a.m.

In addition to staged readings of ten short plays about climate change, the program will feature a performance by Musica Franklin’s youth chorus. The plays address a wide range of themes including indigenous rights, land rights, water rights, water pollution, human relationship to the land, individual and collective action, corporate exploitation, consumerism, and ancestral knowledge. Playwrights represented are from South Asia, Canada, Uganda, India, Samoa, the Philippines, Ethiopia, the

United States, and Algonquin, Ojibwe, and Ojibwe nations.

This program is free, and childcare is available by reservation. A talk-back session follows the readings. For more information or to reserve childcare, contact *email@racialjusticerising.org*.

Each winter, Community Action helps warm hundreds of Franklin and Hampshire County families. Available to both homeowners and renters, the Fuel Assistance Program helps income-eligible participants afford their home heating expenses.

A **Community Action Fuel Assistance information session** will be held Monday, December 9, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Greenfield Public Library, 402 Main Street, Greenfield. Tracey Kellam-Masloski of Community Action will be at the library to answer questions and offer fuel assistance information.

Later, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., Elaine Arsenault of **Census2020** will be in the main room of the Library to answer questions, offer employment information, and accept applications. The Census Bureau is recruiting people in Franklin County to assist in the 2020 Census count.

You can earn extra income while helping your community; 2020Census jobs provide great pay, flexible hours, weekly pay, and paid training. Call the library at (413) 772-1544 for more information.

The **Friends of the Montague Libraries** will sponsor a holiday/solstice card making table at the Carnegie Library, 201 Avenue A, Turners Falls, during the week of December 9 to 14.

Come in any time the library is open and make a card for family, friends, or consider making a card to be donated to a local nursing home.

Ghee (clarified butter) is a high-heat, lactose-free cooking oil used for centuries to relieve digestive disorders, calm the nervous system, and promote overall vitality. Join NOFA/Mass for a hands-on experience with guide Hannah Jacobson-Hardy, founder of Full Moon Ghee, at Franklin County Technical School on Tuesday, December 10 from 6 to 8:30 p.m.

Hannah will show how to transform butter into ghee, explain ghee’s health benefits, and infuse it with herbs and spices to make herbal ghee. Handouts, recipes, and taste tests will be provided, and each participant will take home a jar of ghee made in class.

Origami is back! On Thursday, December 12, from 3:30 to 6 p.m. at the Millers Falls Library, 23 Bridge Street in Millers Falls, the Millers Falls Community Improvement Association is sponsoring a holiday/solstice ornament and card making workshop for adults and children: origami, cat’s eyes, beaded Christmas spiders, and more.

Refreshments will be served. For more information, call (413) 863-3214.

Kids should start drafting their **letters to Santa**. They can be dropped off at the special mailbox at Spinner Park at Avenue A and Fourth Street beginning Monday, December 2. Santa will arrive to collect his mail on Friday, December 13 at 6:30 p.m.

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Great Falls Middle
School Students
of the Week

Week ending Nov. 22:

Grade 6

Alex Golembeski

Grade 7

Linley Rollins

Grade 8

Ian Bastarache

Related Arts

Jacob Guillemette

Letters to the Editors

Bus Driver’s Plea

Warning

I’m a school bus driver. I am responsible for the lives of each and every one of my students, even before they are actually *on* the bus. There are laws in place to help me keep them alive and well.

When the school bus is in the process of slowing down, to either pick them up or drop them off, I activate yellow, alternating, flashing lights on the front and back of the bus. When I’ve come to a complete stop and open the door, the red, alternating, flashing lights take their place, along with a flashing stop sign that extends from the road side of the bus.

All vehicles are required to stop when the bus has stopped and the red lights are flashing. These are things you learned when learning to drive. That being said, I feel I have to explain every detail. because 16 cars this year have gone through

said red, flashing lights. That’s nearly two a week on my route, alone.

The idea that so many of my students’ lives mean less to you than getting home early, or Facebooking and texting while you’re driving, is appalling. As someone who has had to bury their child, the perpetual ache of such emptiness is a feeling I want no other parent to feel. I don’t want to have to welcome those parents into the club that no one wants to belong to, and I’m sure you don’t want to be the reason.

Please stop while the lights are still yellow, and come to a complete stop. Creeping along just prolongs the time in which I will let the child out of the bus or allow them to cross. Help me get our kids home safe and sound.

Pam Morawski
Montague Center

Dear neighbors in Montague and Leverett, heed the warnings of local businesses closing down or on the brink. If you want to keep local shopping viable, *you gotta shop local*.

All these great local stores need customers. The Leverett Coop, Red Fire North – all of them need you to stop in and buy groceries, or at least a coffee and muffin, on a regular basis or they will shut down. Or buy a gift certificate for someone else for the holiday celebrations. It’s a win-win.

You want to keep our area quaint and New Englandy? Vote with your dollars. Get to know your local shops. Be a neighbor. Keep the small shops going – or it’ll all be chains. Ugh.

We’re all in this together.

Mik Muller
Greenfield

BUCKINGHAM

RABBITS VINTAGE

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GUEST COLUMN

Millers On The Move: December 2019

By MICHAEL NAUGHTON

MILLERS FALLS – About twenty people met at the Covenant Church, on Bridge Street in Millers Falls, on November 21. They were there to hear Suzanne LoManto, Montague's cultural coordinator, present the final draft of "Millers on the Move! Strategic Priorities for Millers Falls Village Center." LoManto brought a few paper copies to pass around, and an electronic version has been made available online at tinyurl.com/MFStrategicPriorities.

Much of the content was already familiar to villagers, as the document was the culmination of a process that was started last spring. Managed by Peg Barringer of FinePoint Associates, under the direction of the Montague planning department, the report was funded by the state Department of Housing & Community Development and the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative.

As described in my last column, the first step was a visioning survey asking residents to imagine, and then describe, the Millers Falls that they would like to see in the future. The results of this survey were tabulated and organized into lists of "strengths," "weaknesses," and "opportunities." These lists were brought to a community meeting in July, where attendees first refined them and then were asked to offer suggestions for strengthening the strengths, addressing the weaknesses, and pursuing the opportunities.

The responses were then organized as projects arranged under ten general goals, further divided into short-term and long-term goals. These were brought back to another community meeting in September, where villagers were asked to choose their top three priorities under each goal and time frame.

These choices were taken away and tabulated, and the final product was the document presented at this latest meeting. LoManto told the group that it will be presented to the Montague selectboard at their December 9 meeting, and she urged villagers to attend to show support.

In its final form, the document does not propose any specific projects. Instead, as the name "Strategic Priorities" indicates, it describes the values and hopes of the people of Millers Falls. She explained that it will guide town officials during the planning process, both in shaping town-wide plans that affect the village and in more local efforts.

Attendees reacted positively, and there was some discussion of a few projects that might get attention in the near future. LoManto said that the riverfront access project on Newton Street is scheduled to be completed sometime next summer, and Walter Ramsey, Montague's town planner, is looking for funding sources for repairing the stairway from West Main Street to Grand Avenue.

There was also talk of forming a wayfinding committee to coordinate better signage for the village, and of improving the lighting by the book drop-off at the library. Library director Linda Hickman spoke in favor of developing a historical walking tour of the village – perhaps with a printed map, made available at a central information location.

There was also some discussion of trying to coordinate better with Erving. Historically, "Millers Falls" was located in both Erving and Montague, with residents on both sides of the river, and until relatively recently, it had its own fire and water district and its own post office. So far, the strategic planning process has

been driven by Montague officials, and while working with Erving was mentioned in the "Strategic Priorities" document, the focus is on doing things in Montague.

LoManto assured the group that Ramsey intends to work closely with Erving's new town planner on projects affecting the village, and David Brule offered to do some outreach among residents on Erving's side.

On a side note, LoManto informed the group that the owner of Carroll's Market has asked the selectboard to designate some short-term parking spots (15 to 30 minutes) in front of his store. She said the selectboard was expecting to discuss it on December 9, and asked if the group wanted to offer an opinion. After some discussion, attendees decided to try to reach out to other business owners who might be affected, in order to better understand the larger impact of the proposal. This might not happen until January, and they asked if the decision might be postponed.

Last, but not least, the Millers Falls Community Improvement Association will be hosting a holiday card and ornament-making workshop at the Millers Falls library on Thursday, December 12 from 3:30 to 6 p.m. All ages are welcome, and refreshments will be served. Look for the announcement in Local Briefs.

And this coming weekend, December 7 and 8, three downtown Millers Falls art studios will be having a Holiday Art Sale. New Story Studios, Cornertopia, and Eric Grab Art Studio will be offering original art and craft, reproductions, and unique commissioned gifts both days from 1 to 5 p.m. Get your holiday shopping done early!

Michael Naughton is a member of the Millers Falls Community Improvement Association.

GUEST EDITORIAL

Symbols Count! Change the State Flag and Seal

By ANNA GYORGY

WENDELL – Massachusetts is my home state, but I never took a real look at the state symbol until April 22, 2018, at an Earth Day event at the Wendell Town Hall.

It opened with an "Earth Day Retrospective" on the ecological history and struggles in our area, featuring local activist David Detmold presenting on "Colonial land grab of Indigenous lands: brief review, then latest actions."

One of those "latest actions" was the idea of changing the image that represents our state on every state flag, state police car door, courtroom dais, and more.

A large slide showed an idealized image of a Native American from 1898. He holds an arrow upside down, while above him looms a broadsword, modeled on that of Myles Standish, murderous Plymouth colony military commander.



We learned that former state representative Byron Rushing, a Democrat from Boston's South End, had filed bills for 34 years to form a commission to invite Native leaders of the Commonwealth to sit with state legislators and the Secretary of

State to reconsider the symbol, and choose something more appropriate for our time. Without success.

In spring 2018, Wendell, Gill, New Salem, and Orange passed the first town meeting resolutions to support establishing such a commission and change the official symbol of our state.

Now 23 of Franklin County's 26 towns have passed similar resolutions, along with cities and towns in Hampshire County, Cape Cod, and the Boston area. Currently 39 communities, a total of more than 10% of Massachusetts cities and towns, have gone on record in favor of changing the state flag and seal. It's a movement now.

So is now the time? Indigenous activists say yes: that on the eve of 2020, the 400th anniversary of the landing of the first British colonists in Massachusetts, we must reject racist emblems of the past.

With that in mind, 16 of us took a bus from western Massachusetts to Boston on November 19 to rally and testify at a hearing, before the Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight, on the House and Senate bills to establish a special committee to recommend a new or redesigned seal: H.2776 and S.1877.

Our delegation included members of the Mount Toby Friends Quaker Meeting, the New England Peace Pagoda, Traprock Center for Peace & Justice, Racial Justice Rising, and the Berkshire County Manos Unidas Multicultural Educational Cooperative. Rhonda Anderson from Colrain was one of many indigenous activists demanding legislative action.

At a rally before the hearing, we heard state senator Jo Comerford speak, along with other sup-



Activists from Wendell and Turners Falls and indigenous residents from around the state joined together with banners on the State House steps.

porting officials. She and Berkshire County state senator Adam Hinds cosponsor the bill in the Senate. Cosponsors in the House include Lindsay Sabadosa, Mindy Domb, Natalie Blais, Paul Mark, and Susanannah Whippis.

Many eloquent members of various indigenous nations spoke at the rally, or gave oral testimony at the hearing. A woman from the Wampanoag Tribe spoke of the colonial atrocities against native people, saying "we've been struggling for 400 years for freedom," and adding "I do not want to live under the threat of the sword."

Fairies Gray, the Sagamore of the Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag, said his people had passed down oral history from the time when Myles Standish used his sword to cut off the heads of three of his ancestors – ambushed at Wessagussett – and mounted them on stakes in the center of Plymouth, less than three years after the Pilgrims first landed. A hush fell on the Gardener Auditorium as

he spoke, choking back tears.

In addition to the effort to "Change the Flag and Seal," the other four pieces of legislation included in the Massachusetts Indigenous Legislative Agenda 2019-2020 are: "Honor Indigenous Peoples Day," replacing Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples Day to celebrate Indigenous resilience and survival; "Protect Native American Heritage," protecting objects of cultural patrimony; "Remove Racist Mascots," ending the use of Native American mascots in Massachusetts public schools; and "Educate Native Youth," seeking to improve educational outcomes and opportunities for American Indian and Alaska Native students.

For more information, readers can visit MAindigenousagenda.org, or ChangeTheMassFlag.com. Contributions to the effort can be made online at traprock.org/donate/.

Anna Gyorgy is a member of the board of directors of the Traprock Center for Peace and Justice.

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GILL from page A1

approximately \$100,000, to the town in exchange for the pole usage.

Norton described the cable as consisting of a minimum of six “tubes,” each containing 12 “strands.” NMH would require use of one tube, leaving the other five for potential town use. APC would also agree to service the cable during the five-year contract period, but Norton added that breaks would be cheap to fix if the contract was not renewed. He said his company has previously made such agreements with four other western Massachusetts towns.

Norton was questioned at length by chair John Ward, board member Greg Snedeker, and town administrator Ray Purington. (Board member Randy Crochier was not in attendance.) He said that connections for town buildings could be written into the agreement, but thought particulars would vary depending on usage and location.

Purington said fiber-optic connections are currently available to town departments through Massachusetts Broadband Institute, but “it’s not cheap.” He said the town hall and the safety complex get internet through Comcast, and the town hall is still okay for bandwidth, but that may change once cloud computing gets underway.

Purington said he had heard from police chief Christopher Redmond that there may be broadband issues at the safety complex. The library currently receives free internet service, and was reportedly not having bandwidth issues.

Snedeker asked about connecting to the elementary school, and

Norton replied that the school might present a special case due to its distance from Main Road, and might need to be treated differently.

Snedeker also asked what allowing NMH, a private off-taker, access to the town-owned cable would mean in relation to other potential private off-takers, such as residents. Ward rephrased his question, imagining a resident asking “If NMH has it, why doesn’t it go to my house?”

“It’s not a residential thing,” Norton responded, “unless the town as a whole wants to pursue a residential thing.”

One potential stumbling block involves timing. Norton said ACP hopes to move quickly due to its contract with NMH. If Gill cannot come to a decision in the near future, he would begin a process through Eversource or Verizon to meet his schedule.

Purington said the selectboard can only approve contracts up to three years; a five-year contract would require approval by town meeting, which would delay the decision.

Norton said that due to the expense of the project, it would be dangerous for him to sign a contract for a shorter period, but tepidly added “we could roll the dice, I suppose.”

The board responded positively to the proposal. “It sounds like a win for everyone,” said Snedeker. The board requested more details and said they would take up the matter at their December 9 meeting, when Crochier could also weigh in.

Environmentalism

The board approved a conservation restriction (CR) for a property

on Mountain Road owned by Emily Samuels and Richard French. They also agreed to sign a letter of support for the restriction.

Alain Peteroy of the Franklin Land Trust appeared with French to present the request. The 59-acre property is mostly wooded, with power lines running through it. Peteroy cited the purposes of the restriction as preserving wildlife habitat, scenic views, and working forest use. French has reserved the right to bring a portable sawmill onto the land, and cut and dry timber.

Ray Purington outlined the contents of a report Gill was filing as part of the state Green Communities program. He listed the top three items of interest as the energy commission’s successful completion of energy-savings projects at the library, town hall and Riverside building; raw data showing a 15% reduction in energy usage since 2010; and a new feature of the report, which boils “energy use intensity” in each building down to a single number.

Purington said the latter feature may be of greater use to cities, but Gill does not have a lot of buildings to look at. “If I count the pump station,” he said, “I have to break into the second hand for another finger, but it’s pretty manageable.”

The board approved a three-year renewal of the “IamResponding” service for the fire department at \$735 per year. Fire chief Gene Beaubien said the service sends alerts to firefighters, who can reply with their phones, showing the department who will be responding to calls. “It’s a great program,” said

the chief. “It really is.”

The board approved purchase orders of \$2,076 for equipment needed to finish the town’s new tanker, and a work order to fix an issue with the springs on Engine Two.

New Riverside sewer rates will be taken up at the board’s December 9 meeting. Purington said he hadn’t completed a detailed analysis, but that Montague only increased its rate by 1%, which bodes well for deciding Gill’s. He added that nothing is sticking out as a “budget-buster.”

The board approved a request from highway superintendent John Miner for a pay raise and increase in vacation time, from one to two weeks, for employee Brandon Ovitt. Miner spoke highly of Ovitt’s work, and Snedeker agreed that he should be rewarded. Snedeker also felt that the pay and vacation increases were more in line with competitive rates.

The board also approved the hiring of Bruce Dobias to the department. “It’ll be nice to get back to a full crew,” said Miner.

Snedeker reported that a multi-town planning board has been formed to look into the feasibility of recombining the Pioneer and Gill-Montague regional school districts. He said the board would conduct research and make recommendations, not decisions, and would be looking at potential improvements in programs as well as cost savings. The group is looking for as much input as it can get from the communities, and residents should feel free to contact members if they have any questions. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for January 8.

The board then went into executive session to conduct contract negotiations with the highway superintendent.



NOTES FROM THE GMRSD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

TFHS an “Innovation Pathway”

By MIKE JACKSON

Turners Falls High School has received the green light from the state to become an Innovation Pathways school, allowing students to receive credit for learning placements in local workplaces, superintendent Michael Sullivan told the school committee at their regular meeting on November 25.

The district will pair with the regional employment board and Community Action to develop programs in healthcare and social assistance. Next steps include creating new classes and forming partnerships with local employers.

Work has begun on the district’s FY’21 budget. Business manager Joanne Blier gave a short presentation on what is available from revolving funds and excess and deficiency – the district’s free cash fund – before touching on the towns’ expected “affordable assessments.” Montague’s may be \$10,478,818, up by 4.41%, and Gill’s “matching” assessment, with the same amount of growth, comes to \$1,706,156.

Many factors are expected to affect those figures before the spring. “When the minimum contributions come out [from the state], Montague might go up to \$11 million,” Blier said. At the outset, the district’s projected operating budget is \$20,942,435, up 5.06% from the current year. Increased state aid for education is anticipated to help.

The committee reviewed a number of revised district policies, including the policy on reviewing and revising district policies. No votes were taken.

A student proposal to change the high school graduation date was discussed. Principal Joanne Menard said she had heard from two families arguing against the change, as they are already making arrangements for the June 5 date.

Greenfield High School has reportedly changed their graduation date from that day to May 29. Student representative Kaitlyn Miner said that addressed part of the ini-

tial reason for the proposal, and it was taken off the table. School committee chair Jane Oakes recommended the district coordinate with nearby districts in setting graduation dates in the future.

Menard said students and parents had proposed raising funds by selling clothing items with the Turners Falls Thunder logo. The new club would store the items in a closet in a dean’s office. Blier said the store would be seeded with funds from the general budget. It was unanimously approved.

Oakes asked whether merchandise would be available in adult sizes. “Have you seen high school kids?” Heather Katsoulis asked her.

Miner also reported that the Turners Falls High School food drive helped 15 families over Thanksgiving, and another drive aims to help 15 in December. Marchers with Monte’s March reached their goal of raising \$3,000 for the Food Bank.

The meeting opened with the official recognition of the John & Abigail Adams Award winners of the class of 2020. This year’s recipients are Cameron Bradley, Jakob Burnett, Josy Hunter, Joseph Kochan, Corey Martineau, Chantelle Monaghan, Alyson Murphy, Dabney Rollins, Emily Sisson, Brody Trott, Allison Wheeler, Lindsay Whiteman, and MacKen-na Whiteman.

Theresa Kolodziej, the non-voting representative from Erving, said her town will observe in a similar way on the regional planning committee looking into a six-town district. Erving school committee member Jennifer Eichorn has been appointed as the liaison.

This Tuesday, the committee held a special meeting to begin discussing the process of hiring a replacement for superintendent Sullivan, who has announced his resignation at the end of the academic year. A request for comment about the meeting from school committee chair Jane Oakes had received no answer as of press time.



SPORTS from page A1

hold onto the passes, they can defeat the Hawks...” At game time, two key linemen and Mohawk’s star running back Evan Shippee were all in street clothes.

As far as the passing game, coach Doug McCloud adjusted to the downpour by instituting his West Coast offense. Although Shawn Davenport completed over 40 percent of his passes, most were for short yardage. Any pass longer than three or four yards was lost in the rain.

Frontier adjusted to the deluge by running the ball – just running the ball. In fact, they only threw one pass in the entire game.

The Red Hawks set the pace early, banging down the field and scoring in the first one minute and 3 seconds. They got the 2-PAT, and then their defense stopped Mohawk. On Frontier’s second possession, they fumbled and Mohawk’s Cam Lococo recovered the ball.

That gave the Warriors a chance to tie it up, but an illegal chop block marched them way back. Mohawk soon faced fourth and long on the 29, and decided to kick. Cullen Brown had enough leg to make the 46-yard field goal, but it went wide.

The game remained a one-score affair until Frontier instituted a long, sustained drive that chewed up most of the second quarter. Mohawk had another chance but came up empty, and as time ran out in the half, Frontier scored their third touchdown, going into halftime leading 24-0.

The didn’t dampen the Warriors’ spirits. For the entire second half, Frontier only managed to score one offensive touchdown. They did, however, score a *defensive* TD, when newly acquired Jake Dodge intercepted a pass and scored on a pick-six.

With Shippee on injured reserve, Lococo, Robert Goodell, and Liam Driscoll shared ball carrying duties

for the Mohawks. Under center, Davenport completed passes to Whiting, Lococo, and Brown. The loss evens the Mohawk Co-ops’ record to 5-5.

So what will happen next year? Will Turners Falls High School field enough players to have its own team, or will they co-op with Mohawk or Pioneer? To quote the late, great Doris Day, “Whatever will be, will be. The future’s not ours to see.”

FCTS 30 – Smith Voc 0

The Franklin Tech Blue Eagles traveled down to Northampton on Thanksgiving morning, and soundly defeated the winless Smith Vocational Golden Vikings.

Smith Vocational High School is a pretty friendly venue, with a state-of-the-art scoreboard, and at the concession stand they sold donuts, the perfect Thursday morning breakfast. The Viking fans are friendly enough, and several groups tailgated in the parking lot. Smith Voc is also a working farm, complete with horses and cows. Their football field sits on a hill above the pasture. The view is beautiful, but the wind is strong and unpredictable. Spectators and players alike lost gloves, papers, and even chairs to the crosswinds.

But coach Joe Gamache decided to pass the ball. This worked well enough, because Tech held the Vikings in check, so they had plenty of opportunity to pass. On their first drive they opted to go for the first down on fourth-and-3 on their own side. It worked; Hunter Wozniak made the catch, and advanced the ball deep into Viking territory. Later in the game, Gamache tried four straight passes inside the 5-yard line.

One of the best catches of the morning came on Tech’s third touchdown. Colby Mailloux made a reaching catch in the back of the end zone, carefully keeping his toes just inside the hash mark.

When Tech scored next, the visiting fans celebrated wildly. It wasn’t because Tech was now leading 30-0, but because quarterback Owen Bashaw had broken a school record. Bashaw now owns the single-season record for completions, passing yardage, and TD passes.

Because Tech was up by so much, the clock ran unstopped in the fourth quarter. Gamache and his staff frantically substituted underclassmen to make sure everyone played.

Bashaw finished with 11 completions for 134 yards, two touchdowns, and three interceptions. He finished his record-breaking season with 55 completions for 801 yards and nine TD passes.

And Owen wasn’t the only player who attained milestones on Thanksgiving. Midway through the game, Dylan Demers’ father told me that Dylan was closing in on 100 tackles. Demers had four solo tackles and four assists against the Vikings, giving him 101 total tackles – another standout played without fanfare.

During the game, one of the regulars said to me, “That’s my grandson, #54, and my granddaughter, #58.”

Although I’ve been to most Tech games this year, I never noticed that #58 was a girl. I guess that’s a testament to her workmanlike – workwomanlike – effort. She made tackles, protected the QB, and blocked for the running backs, all without wearing her gender on her sleeve. Her name, by the way, is Briana Snyder, and her brother’s name is Kyle.

Ian McClure led the Franks in rushing with 150 yards, followed by Dominic Bowden-Smith (66) and Bashaw (13). On the receiving end, Mailloux caught seven passes for 88 yards, Wozniak made two receptions for 22 yards, Donte Rosewarne made a catch for 19, and McClure made a 5-yard reception. Lucas Upham and Kyle Snyder each added 2-PATs.

Donte Rosewarne made seven solo tackles and an assist, Bowden-Smith had five unassisted tackles, and Brooks Medeiros, Austin Demers, and Dylan Demers four each. Rosewarne made an interception and caused a fumble, McClure and Mailloux batted away passes, and Chad Adams recovered a fumble.

The future of Franklin Tech foot-

ball is a little more settled than Turners Falls High School. They always have a ton of kids, and their coaching staff is enthusiastic and supportive.

The biggest question for the Franks’ next season is: will Owen Bashaw break Franklin Tech’s career passing records?

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DOG HEARING from page A1
about the dog’s fate. This presented the possibility that the board might not reach a majority decision.

The hearing began with a presentation by the boy’s parents. Taylor-Brunelle read a prepared statement from her mother-in-law, Cina, who did not attend the meeting. Cina was the only adult present when the incident occurred on the morning of October 19. Jace had been sitting on a recliner in the living room while the dog Garrett was “curled up,” sleeping on a nearby couch. The boy likely slid off the chair, landing on or near the dog.

“I looked down at my phone again, I suppose,” Cina wrote, “and within that blink, Jace was screaming, kneeling, or bending in front of the dog, and Garrett was snapping at his face and growling.” Cina picked the boy up and carried him into the bathroom. “His face was torn apart,” she said.

Jace’s father soon arrived, and they went to Baystate Franklin hospital in Greenfield. As Jace’s mother took an emergency flight back from Florida, the boy was transported to Baystate Children’s Hospital, where he underwent extensive “pediatric plastic surgery.” Taylor-Brunelle showed the selectboard pictures of her son’s injuries, and described in detail her nine-day experience waiting for the outcome of his surgery.

“All of these moments felt like my life was taken away by a Category 5 hurricane, all because this very unpredictable dog did something very unpredictable,” she wrote. “As a dog owner myself, I know that I am responsible for my dog’s actions – no ifs, ands, or buts. Owning them is both a joy, and can be a curse, knowing the weight they could put on my shoulders.

“Garrett is a prime example of how a typical ‘family dog’ is now a dog who has bitten someone. We now have to add aggression and biting to this dog’s inventory of behavior, which is likely to happen again.”

The Question of Intent

The board heard next from the

town’s animal control officer, Calin Giurgiu, who was informed of the incident when the boy was taken to the emergency room. Giurgiu did not make a recommendation about the dog’s future. “It’s hard to make a recommendation on this,” he said. “We’ve been dealing with a lot of animals, some of which are loose all the time and causing problems. But this dog didn’t cause any trouble until now.”

Elise McMahon of Montague Center, a dog trainer and behavior expert, then testified that she had evaluated Garrett and he had “acted appropriately” during the evaluation, though she did not interact with him while he was sleeping. McMahon said that in her opinion, the child’s wounds were probably not from the dog aggressively shaking him, but may have occurred when the boy attempted to pull away from a “snapping” bite.

“It looked like the canine caught the child’s lip,” McMahon said, “and when he tried to pull away, which is completely understandable... the laceration was caused by that, not by the intention of the dog biting.”

After a lengthy back-and-forth between McMahon and Taylor-Brunelle, the board heard from Detective Joshua Hoffman, the dog’s owner. “No one feels more horrible about this than myself and Marney,” said Hoffman. “We never thought anything like this would occur.” Hoffman said Garrett had one previous “bite incident,” years ago when he and his former partner lived in the Patch section of Turners Falls.

“Garrett’s been over to the house hundreds of times,” Hoffman said. “He’s been around the kids hundreds of times. Nothing like this has ever happened.... They run around him, and he’s never shown any type of aggression toward the children.”

Marney Brunelle stressed the effect that the incident has had on Hoffman’s daughter, “who I am very fortunate to have in my life.” “I have seen what this has done to her,” Brunelle said. “Us saying that



Montague police detective Joshua Hoffman (left) and Marney Brunelle (right) defended their dog’s temperament and character.

there is a potential for the dog to be put to sleep is very upsetting to her, and it’s not fair. The whole situation is not fair.”

Legal Ambiguity

After over two hours of testimony, selectboard members Rich Kuklewicz and Chris Boutwell began to deliberate on the fate of the dog. At Corbo’s direction, they first sought to determine whether the dog was a “dangerous dog,” or simply a “nuisance dog,” under the definitions in Chapter 140 of Massachusetts General Law.

Kuklewicz said he believed Garrett was dangerous, due to the severity of the injuries and the risk that the animal could bite again. Boutwell initially said he would define the animal as a nuisance, placing restrictions on him but not recommending euthanasia. Corbo pointed out if the two gridlocked on the issue, no decision would be forthcoming.

The board’s difficulty may have been partly caused by ambiguities in state law. The statutes provide criteria for declaring a dog dangerous, which Corbo reviewed with the board, but not for determining the

fate of a dangerous dog. The “Definitions” section of Chapter 140 (Section 136A) defines a dangerous dog as one “that either: (i) without justification, attacks a person or domestic animal causing physical injury or death; or (ii) behaves in a manner that a reasonable person would believe poses an unjustified imminent threat of physical injury or death to a person or to a domestic or owned animal.”

This language would appear to define a dangerous dog as one who injured a person or animal “without justification,” or one presumed to pose an “imminent threat” of injury or death. The first criteria, which in the end was applied to Garrett, does not require any judgment on the animal’s past behavior or prediction of the future. The fact that Garrett had never threatened a child in the past or, with more supervision, might not in the future did not appear to be legally relevant.

Once a dog is declared “dangerous,” Chapter 140 is silent on any criteria for euthanizing it. The argument Taylor-Brunelle made for euthanizing Garrett focused heavily on the extent of Jace’s injury and trauma, as well as her own distress.

Garrett’s owner and defenders, meanwhile, focused on the lack of aggressive behavior in his history, his intent at the time of the incident, and the impact of euthanizing him on his family. Yet, none of these considerations were addressed by the language of the law.

State Case Law

Case law – past decisions by courts that can be used as “precedent” – may be of limited help, and were not discussed at the Montague hearing.

For example, last month a state circuit court overruled a decision by a hearing officer and sheriff in Fall River to euthanize a “pit bull-type” dog who had twice bitten an 18-month-old child. The dog had attempted to charge through a closed screen door to chase another animal, and instead encountered the girl and clamped its jaws on her head. The child’s father, the partner of the dog’s owner, pried the animal’s jaw open, whereupon it bit the young girl a second time in the leg.

The Fall River sheriff, on the advice of the city’s animal control officer, declared the dog a “dangerous see **DOG HEARING** page A7

LEVERETT from page A1

and avoid costly misunderstandings, d’Errico said he wanted clear wording and intent in the policy:

“Can we at least put in a reference to that statute, so it’s clear...” said d’Errico, “that we want this put in escrow, and this is *separate* from any additional funding which may be necessary pursuant to [Massachusetts General Laws c. 44, s. 53G and 57G1/2]?”

Teawaddle Hill Road Saga

Susan Pacheco, a Teawaddle Hill Road resident, expressed her displeasure to the selectboard at receiving an email sent by the Leverett town administrator Marjorie McGinnis, informing Pacheco of an eminent domain assessment to be conducted of her property.

McGinnis apologized for the perceived slight to Pacheco, saying that she did try to call her but got a non-working number, so email was the available contact option McGinnis had.

“That’s not the issue,” Pacheco said. “You don’t just say ‘In response to your comments’ in an email – you have a little tact. And what comments – when? Three years ago? Well, after three years ago, the town approved [a potential water line connection from Amherst].”

A resident since 2006, Pacheco had signaled her willingness to let go of her property, but last week said that was before the possibility of an Amherst water line connection to remedy the toxic wellwater resulting from leachate from a capped Leverett landfill.

The selectboard disagreed with Pacheco’s assertion that the potential Amherst connection afforded a new solution that gave her rea-

son to stay in her home.

“There’s no point arguing about it,” d’Errico said. “We all remember it; you don’t remember it. And the fact is, it’s been started. I just want to report that.”

“You’re supposed to be helping us get clean water,” Pacheco said. “It’s been decades of not having clean water.”

“I’m trying my damndest to get clean water to you,” Hankinson responded. “We all are. And you show up here and you sound so accusatory, as though we’re not trying to do our best. We’re on the same side, and I get tired of having people on that side of the table yelling at us.”

“We’ve been the selectboard that’s been working on it after decades of no one working on it,” added member Julie Shively. “You could also remember that.”

Pacheco and other residents stayed to hear the latest updates on consulting firm Barton & Wilcox’s geoengineering findings, which Hankinson described as “extremely frustrating.” The team had hoped to gather data from Teawaddle Hill Road resident Virginia Goodale’s 500-foot-deep well to determine the potential level of the contaminants, and whether the well was producing clean water further down. Instead it found a poorly producing well, with a flow rate of only 30 milliliters (or about two tablespoons) per minute, making any scientific testing data less reliable.

Hankinson made the decision to not have Goodale’s well hydrofracked due to the potential for damage to neighboring wells.

“If the Goodales want to frack their well and they mess up their neighbor’s well, that’s their dime,” said Hankinson, “but the town

can’t be in a position of doing an action that could damage other wells.”

Hankinson said that a final report would be issued soon. “We’ll take it from there,” he said, “but I’m not particularly optimistic, based on what little data could be gleaned from that well.”

After the meeting, Pacheco lamented that the selectboard members “are not the ones living through this – we are. They come to a board meeting twice a month. They don’t have to deal daily with what we’re living with, and we’re tired of it.”

New Road Boss On The Job

New highway superintendent Matthew Boucher reported that he has “been a little busy.” The highway department’s newest hire, Doug Depault, won’t start until December 9.

Boucher said he’s been out sanding on the few nights needed so far this season, having former highway superintendent, Will Stratford, pitch in while waiting for the new hire.

“We’ve graded Pratt Corner number 6, and part of Dudleyville in the north end of the Gutter, in the past couple weeks,” Boucher said. “Will and I came over here [to the town hall] and did a fall cleanup, and we did some shoulder work and paving on Shutesbury Road.”

Hankinson joked about the “crossing their fingers,” hoping to avoid “the hell of a time Dudleyville Road had last year,” which saw nearly impassable frost heaves and mud ruts.

“You don’t drive in the ruts,” d’Errico said, adding “it could be a public service to teach people how to drive on a muddy road – and not just in Leverett.”

Boucher said the town’s roads are in pret-

ty good shape this year, but warned that frost and thaw cycles with heavy rains “can’t be dealt with preemptively.”

Other Business

The selectboard discussed an assessment survey for a police regionalization study grant, and agreed that some of the project’s grant money could go toward hiring a consultant to help design the survey.

Shivley, who has researched the topic in the past, said she thought it could be a worthwhile partnership for whichever towns would take part, but warned that regionalization “gets complicated in how you set it up, and how you would pay for it: would it be a regional force or shared police chief, and how it would be paid for?”

She noted that Leverett police chief Scott Minckler, who has been meeting with the Wendell police department succession committee, is in favor of regionalization.

A Community Development Block Grant was extended another six months to June 30, 2020 allowing Franklin County Regional Housing & Redevelopment Authority to complete their housing rehabilitation work in Leverett.

The Council On Aging’s annual grant was approved, but the selectboard said they would like the group to either help pay a portion of the heating costs used during their programming this year, or figure some portion for heating costs in their budget for next year.

The selectboard agreed to place a \$3,200 article for the Leverett library’s heating system maintenance on the spring Leverett town meeting warrant.



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DOG HEARING from page A1
dog” and ordered it to be euthanized. The owner appealed the decision, and was supported by both the father and mother of the child, who admitted that the dog was dangerous under state law but testified that it had never acted aggressively toward the girl.

Judge Kevin Finnerty accepted the family’s arguments, saying that while he felt the second bite was of “great concern,” he saw no evidence that the dog shook the child, which would “indicate a predatory intent.” Finnerty also said that the dog owner “is a responsible pet owner who is

prepared to take the necessary steps to alleviate the risks associated with owning [the dog].” He imposed conditions on the owner, including that the animal wear a muzzle when being walked, and an insurance policy valued at \$100,000.

Garrett Spared

In the Montague case, a 1-1 vote by the selectboard would have resulted in no action being taken by the town. In the end, however, Attorney Corbo was able to engineer a compromise. Boutwell agreed to join Kuklewicz in declaring Garrett a “dangerous dog,” but Kuklewicz

agreed to stop short of advocating that he be euthanized.

The board placed restrictions on Garrett, including a requirement that he be kept in the house except for walks by his owners, and that he not be allowed in the presence of young children. Hoffman will also be required to purchase liability insurance valued at \$300,000 to cover the animal in the case of future incidents.

At the hearing, both sides expressed that the case has caused a good deal of tension within the Brunelle family.

Attempts to reach Hoffman for comment on the outcome of the hearing were unsuccessful as of press time.

Taylor-Brunelle told the *Montague Reporter* that she was not satisfied with the town’s decision, given what her son had been through. Originally from Pittsfield, she said she found it difficult to trust a decision in a small town like Montague, where everyone appears to know one another.

Although she said in a telephone interview that she was considering appealing the decision not to euthanize the dog, she sent us the following text message the next day, asking that it be included in our article: “Although I feel there are grounds for appealing the decision, I also need closure, and would like to move on to our future rather than what is out of my control.”



Left to right: Selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz, member Chris Boutwell, town administrator Steve Ellis, and town attorney Greg Corbo discussed the town’s options.

NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Town Hopes Millers Sewer Repairs Will Be Finished By New Year’s

By **JEFF SINGLETON**

In a meeting dominated by a three-hour hearing on the future of a dog that seriously injured a child (*see article, page A1*), the Montague selectboard handled its regular business on November 25 in less than thirty minutes.

Probably the most noteworthy news to emerge from regular business was a vote by the board to allow a company called Diversified Infrastructure Services, Inc. (DIS) to “proceed with the Millers Falls sewer repair project.”

The project, funded by an October special town meeting appropriation of \$75,000, is designed to reduce infiltration of water into the Miller Falls sewer system, which has overwhelmed the treatment plant in the town of Erving where Millers’s sewage is treated.

The initial goal was to plug the sources of groundwater inflow prior to this winter, but the project was delayed when a single initial bid to do the work came in well over the appropriation.

After revising the specifications and rebidding the project, the town found DIS, which proposed to do the work for only \$46.30 over the appropriated amount.

The selectboard voted to execute a contract with DIS, and issued a “notice to proceed” with the project. Town administrator Steve Ellis told the board that the contract envisions that the project be completed by December 23, and inspected by the end of the month. He added that there were “liquidated damages that would return to the town as a fee, should the timeline extend outside of this December.”

Reached by telephone after this

week’s snowstorm, Ellis said that the timeline still held, but noted that there was some flexibility in the contract in the event of “extreme weather.”

Waste Boss Candidate

Ellis updated the board on the search for a new Water Pollution Control Facility superintendent. The previous superintendent abruptly resigned late last summer, and the facility is currently being managed by a member of the facilities staff with the assistance of Bob Trombley, who retired from the job several years ago.

Ellis said the search committee has interviewed four candidates for the job and “have identified at least one who is a very good prospect.”

At the November 25 meeting Ellis suggested that the committee might make a decision on whether to recommend the candidate the following day. However, a week later, he told the *Reporter* that the search committee was still conducting “reference checks,” and had not reached a final decision.

Rutter’s Park Done

Bruce Hunter of the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority, which administers the town’s federal Community Development Block Grants, asked the board to declare “substantial completion” of the Rutter’s Park redevelopment project, which was funded by a 2018 grant, in Lake Pleasant.

The board also, at the request of Hunter, voted to extend the timeline for spending that year’s grant to June 30, 2020.

Hunter then requested that the board transfer \$14,909.75 in un-

used Rutters Park contingency funds into the grant’s housing rehabilitation account. He said the original housing rehab projects envisioned under the 2018 grant involved “two units,” but the authority has completed work on four units, and might be able to fund two more with the money left over from Rutter’s Park.

Before Hunter left the table, Ellis commended the work he had done on the Rutter’s Park project, saying it had been “something more than exemplary.”

“It was complicated at times,” said Ellis, “and Bruce stayed on every detail of this project to get us to the outstanding result that we have today. I think people often don’t see the work that goes into making sure the work is done well and right.”

Other Business

Selectboard member Michael Nelson, briefly recusing himself from the board, requested the use of portion of Avenue A and Peskeomskut Park on October 24, 2020 for the Great Falls Festival, formerly Pumpkifest. He also requested a one-day beer and wine license for the festival, and the right to post a sign at the park two weeks prior to the event. The board approved both requests.

The board also approved the transfer of a liquor license from the current owners of the Crestview Liquors, Gregory and Margaret Call, to their son Brian, who will manage the store on Unity Street.

“Going to keep the family tradition alive?” asked selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz.

“Just trying to make it better,” said the younger Call. “He set a high standard for me.”

Town of Wendell LIBRARY DIRECTOR

The Town of Wendell (pop. 901) is accepting applications for the position of **Library Director**. The Library Director provides and promotes library services to the Wendell community. The Director works under the direction of and in collaboration with the Board of Trustees on present and future needs of the library and is responsible for oversight of the library’s budget, and for the day-to-day supervision of staff and volunteers. Position expected to begin May 2020.

The library director adheres to the policies and procedures of the Town of Wendell. Applicant should appreciate the role of a library in a small, rural community. This is a 32 hours/week, benefitted position with an annual salary range of \$27,800-\$29,900. Job description and application available at www.wendellmass.us/index.php/about/librarian-director-job-opening.html.

Deadline for submission of application is February 10, 2020. Send resumes to Sylvia Wetherby, Trustee chair, PO Box 236, Wendell, MA 01379, or librarianjob@wendellmass.us. (AA/EOE.)

TOWN OF MONTAGUE – COMMUNITY FORUM

The Town of Montague is updating its Hazard Mitigation Plan and invites Town officials, stakeholders, and the community to learn about Montague’s top priority actions to address natural hazards and the impacts of a changing climate.

A public forum to gather community feedback is scheduled for **Wednesday, December 11**, 2019 from 3:30 to 5 p.m. at the Montague Public Safety Complex, 180 Turnpike Road, Turners Falls (snow date is December 18).

For more information, contact Montague Town Planner Walter Ramsey at (413) 863-3200 x 112 or planner@montague-ma.gov.

LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here’s the way it was December 3, 2009: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

Student Intern to Fill Planner’s Role?

The town of Montague may look to an intern from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, as a possible alternative to hiring a new town planner, town administrator Frank Abbondanzio told the selectboard on Monday. The town planner position has been vacant since mid-November, when Dan LaRoche left to take a planning position at the Franklin Regional Council of Governments.

As of now, only a half-time planner’s clerk remains on staff in the town’s planning department. But the selectboard has been advised by the chair of the finance committee, John Hanold, to refrain from hiring a new town planner, at least in the short term, as one means of addressing the gap in town finances resulting from the loss of state aid during the present economic downturn.

“We’re playing phone tag [with UMass] right now,” said Abbondanzio.

But even as a budget saving measure, would a student intern provide the skill set needed to help foster the town’s economic development, planning, and conservation needs?

Ted Armen, interim chair of the Montague planning board, said he is open to an interim filling the planner’s role. “If it’s the right person,” Armen said. “I have kids that age, and I’m amazed how smart they can be at times.”

Proposed Charter School Slammed

The passion of parents for alternatives in public education collided with Franklin County’s established school districts on Tuesday, as the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education held a hearing on the proposed Discovery Charter School of Sustain-

ability. The parents’ group that developed the proposal for the Discovery School emerged from the encounter bruised, but not necessarily beaten.

About 100 people attended, and despite the overwhelmingly negative reaction from school superintendents, school committee members, administrators, and teachers, the parents’ group, and a handful of their supporters stood their ground and advocated for the proposed 260 student K-6 publicly funded charter school. The school is planned to draw students from throughout Franklin County, where public schools are already struggling to fill classrooms and balance budgets.

Students at the proposed charter school would focus on “sustainable practices in their lives, their school, and their communities,” according to the mission statement. But with sending districts paying the cost in lost state aid of more than \$7,500 per student enrolled, “to found a new elementary charter school in Franklin County – even one with sustainability in the title – would be the height of unsustainability,” as Whately school committee chair Nat Fortune put it.

Erving Open Space Plan Presented

Representatives of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) presented a draft seven-year open space and recreation plan at the Erving town hall on Monday. FRCOG assisted the town open space committee in preparing the plan, which addresses the town’s natural, cultural, and recreational resources.

The four main goals of the plan are to secure the quality of Erving’s natural environment; to maintain and improve its recreational facilities; to insure the town retains its traditional character; and to promote recreational tourism in the town. While the first three goals have been part of past open space plans, the last goal is new.

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GRANT from page A1

be expended for the pedestrian bridge and sewer pump station in the Turners Falls canal district in the town of Montague.” The appropriation became law later that year.

Tom Cusano, the New Hampshire developer who hopes to purchase the shuttered Southworth mill, said town officials asked him to submit a letter of support for the grant this summer.

“They asked me for input when they did the application,” Cusano said, “what it looked like we would have for occupancy of the building, how many people would work there, that type of thing. So we did some forecasting on that.”

Cusano said he believes the Southworth building’s sanitary sewer connection is still viable, and that the building’s wastewater treatment plant was in the middle of a maintenance upgrade when the paper company abruptly closed in 2017, but that his plans are not contingent on a new sewer pump station.

On the other hand, Cusano said, rebuilding the condemned Fifth Street pedestrian bridge would “definitely be beneficial, because

the parking lot is on the other side of the canal.”

While progress is slow, Cusano added that he expected Eversource to restore electrical service to the building this Thursday morning. “If everything goes smoothly, then sometime before the end of next week we’ll close on it,” he reported.

Curt Sherrer of Wild Child Cider, which owns the building across the street at 42 Canal Road, said his business would benefit from both restored pedestrian access and connection to the town sewer.

Wild Child scaled back its earliest plans after learning of the limits of the property’s aging septic system. Earlier this year Sherrer floated a plan to form a non-profit to rehabilitate the long-closed Sixth Street Bridge to help restore the connections, but said he abandoned it when he heard the MassWorks grant might be in the pipeline.

“We’re producing cider right now, but we can’t have the public in,” Sherrer explained. “Now we can focus on getting a tap room going. We have an event space for doing anything you can imagine –



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weddings, bands – and downstairs, we have space for a full-sized kitchen. My vision is that I would love to have a restaurant down there.”

Sherrer said pedestrian access and a sewer connection were “two things this mill, and some of the other mills over here, desperately need to get functioning again. It certainly speeds things up!”

Town officials declined to comment on the grant, citing the embargo requested by the state.



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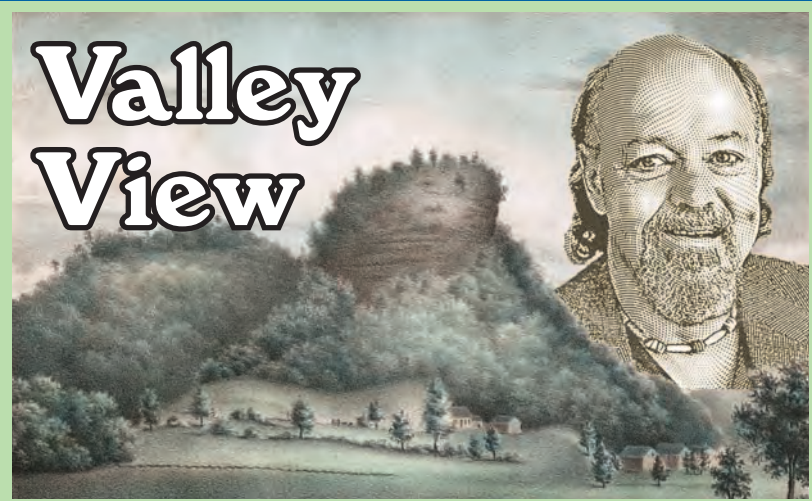
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DENISE MILKEY PHOTO



By GARY SANDERSON

GREENFIELD – Chub-Chub is dead. A spry, 8-year, 7-month-old English springer spaniel of world-class pedigree, prowess, and stamina, he uttered his pathetic death groan at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, ending a tortuous, 3½-day ordeal that I believe could have been avoided.

We buried him noontime Sunday. Grey skies, an extended snowstorm approaching to blanket his final resting place and cover up a troubling case of what I view as veterinary malpractice. Poor Chub-Chub suffered mightily, and rode it out to the end with dignity. He deserved better.

Now, with heavy heart, hot fury and dry eyes, let me recount this horrid tale of an incredible gun dog that left this world before his time – coincidentally on the final day of the 2019 pheasant season. He had another incredible season before suddenly taking ill overnight and shunning food. Three days later, he was dead.

Though I will not reveal names or places, I will present the facts of this case as a warning to all that you are never immune from medical error and misdiagnosis. Doctors are human. They make mistakes, some unfortunately attributable to physician arrogance. You know the drill: “I’m a doctor and you’re not. Trust my diagnosis.” Well, this one didn’t pan out.

I suppose tears have been absent because I have become hardened to death and dying. That can happen to a man who’s watched two dear sons fade away in hospital beds three years apart at age 28. True, it gets no worse than that, but this in many ways rivals it because Chub-Chub would have survived to hunt another day with the benefit of attentive listening and quick, accurate diagnosis. Timing was, in my layman’s opinion, crucial. The faster poisoning is discovered, the better chance of survival.

If only this doctor had listened to me, who had been with the animal from the womb, instead of relying on blood work that revealed positive readings for two tickborne diseases – Lyme and anaplasma – I think we could have found a way to beat the poison that killed Chubby, a swamp-busting dynamo that in adulthood never ran a covert where he was less than king.

“Why do you call him Chubby?”

wondered a medical assistant who treated him, already in decline, and knew a physical specimen when she saw one. He was in top shape at the end of pheasant season.

“Well,” I explained, “I’ve had him since he was born, and he was a little butterball as a pup. I’ve called him Chubby or Chub-Chub ever since. His registered name is Old Tavern Farm’s Rabble Rouser, more apropos.”

Why couldn’t the vet have respected my opinion, based on many credible factors, and my own insights into the animal himself? I think then we could have saved him, spared him the cruel death he was forced to endure. Finally, his tedious torture was mercifully terminated with two strained, audible breaths and that final death moan, a soft whine, that signaled the end for me and my stoic animal. Curled up beneath the leg rest of my leather recliner, he was exhaling a farewell gasp to me that said, “See you later, Buddy. I gave it my best shot and must now leave you.”

I had slept for three restless nights in that same leather chair, observing my dear four-legged companion, trying to nurse him back to health with medicine, food, water and tender loving care. The problem was that the dog was not suffering from Lyme disease, which he was being treated for with doxycycline and an anti-nausea drug. Chub-Chub had tested positive for both tick-borne diseases 18 months earlier and had never shown a faint glimmer of the lameness, lethargy and appetite loss symptomatic of the diseases.

Better still, he had over two pheasant seasons displayed exceptional agility and endurance while burning up punishing wetland cover that separates the men from the boys. He was a man, built for such cover, and he attacked it with extraordinary athleticism displayed by only the finest of his flush-and-retrieve breed.

A day or two before Chubby took ill, a field-trialer friend who’s seen the best and often hunted often over him marveled in the field that, “He’s still running like he did at 4. He’s in his prime, never seems to tire. In fact, I can’t remember ever seeing him breathing hard.”

Then, less than a week later, the animal is dead from Lyme disease? No freakin’ way. Find me an

see **VALLEY VIEW** page B4

Above: Denise Milkey shared this photo of the sunrise at Montague City before Sunday’s snow began.

ArtBeat by Trish Crapo

Anchor House: A Place to Do Your Thing (And Then Take Charge of Your Healing)

NORTHAMPTON – The building is large and nondescript, tucked behind a guardrail in a narrow, paved lot next to a gas station and car wash, shortly before the Interstate 91 entrance ramps at the south end of Pleasant Street. But inside the sprawling former screen factory, you’ll find Anchor House, a haven for artists founded in 1997 by sculptor Michael Tillyer and his wife Susan Foley.

Anchor House’s mission is to “subsidize the studio life and represent the work of artists who live with mental illnesses, to fight the stigma they face, and to bring new art to western Massachusetts and beyond.”

The project began simply, with Tillyer sharing a small studio upstairs in the building with other artists, and has expanded over time to include 4,000 square feet of downstairs studios, galleries, an experimental performance arena, and the New England Visionary Artists Museum, launched in 2017 to conserve artists’ work.

Community artists are encouraged to launch self-produced exhibits and performances in the space as well, and a small artists’ instructor collective is forming to teach class-



PHOTO COURTESY ANCHOR HOUSE

Artist Peter Mishkin paints in the shared studio space at Anchor House in Northampton.

es at the site. Involving visiting artists helps build community, Tillyer says, but it also builds parity. Anchor House artists exhibit on equal terms with better-known artists, such as Northampton painter Scott Prior and Holyoke artist Amy Johnquest.

Tillyer and Foley both worked in social services before launching Anchor House. Tillyer’s own experience with bipolar disorder provided both the motivation for the project and a sense of understanding that has helped fuel its mission, and most likely its success.

“It just so happened that things coincided at a place where I was coming out of a difficult depression

where I was wondering, ‘What’s next?’” Tillyer says. He adds that he’d only expected the project to last a couple of years, “but here we are, 23 years later.”

Two Area Exhibits

You can see some of Tillyer’s sculpture, as well as the work of Anchor House artists Genevieve Mae Burnett, James Brown, Ben Hotchkiss, Kevin Bouricus, and Jonathan Stark, in one of the galleries at Salmon Falls Gallery in Shelburne Falls, up now through December 31. This small exhibit offers an intriguing overview of the breadth of work

see **ARTBEAT** page B5

THE GARDENER’S COMPANION

The Season for Giving Thanks

tools we haven’t even seen. His home and yard is a virtual bevy of mechanical works, all housed on a mere quarter acre of land.

It’s a gas and electrically powered life.

He is a mechanical operator by definition, although I’d prefer terms like carpenter, gardener, landscaper, etc.

This all adds up to a terrific amount of noise, seven days a week. Even if he happens to be briefly bending his elbow at the downstairs bar or taking in a little wide-screen television fare, his son may be operating any of the above mentioned tools, as he has his own truck, sports car, and snowmobile, just for starters.

Blessed relief from sound can be found on Sunday mornings, late nights (but who’s up late then anyway) and the crack of dawn (ditto). Happily, our neighbor also works

on projects at other folks’ homes, so sometimes we catch a break for whole days at a time.

We “organic types” shovel our driveways by hand, dig the garden with a spade, and use rakes for leaf gathering. We also admit to owning one chainsaw and a riding mower.

We like to think we till the soil in a gentle way, and that our hand tools get a lot of use and help us keep up our muscles. We had been thinking about a leaf blower until we read recently that removing all the leaves from the yard is a bad idea, and that a scattering or so of leaves lets insect life go on in peace instead of exposing them to cold and a slow death.

Believe it or not, we need insect life too. They’re not all menaces to our crops and flowering plants. They, too, fertilize the lawn and garden with their excrement and

see **GARDENERS** page B4



By LESLIE BROWN

MONTAGUE CITY – Our neighbor owns every mechanized tool known to man.

The list includes: one pickup truck, sports car, motorcycle, and snowmobile; two riding lawn mowers; a lift with a basket; an automated door opener and an automated sensor with lights for potential burglars; a rototiller, a snow blower, a leaf blower, and a water gun for cleaning the siding and anything else; and a self-propelled doo-hickey.

There’s likely more that I’ve forgotten. No doubt there are some

Pet of the Week



IMAGE COURTESY DAKIN HUMANE SOCIETY
CHRISTOPHER CARMODY COLLAGE

“ATHENA”

Athena is a fun and energetic young dog looking for a home with adults and older kids (teens and up). She would prefer a home without cats as well. Give a call or stop by to meet Athena today!

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

Senior Center Activities

DECEMBER 9 TO 13

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 a.m. Aerobics; 10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise

T, W, Th: 12 p.m. Lunch

Monday 12/9
8 to 9:15 a.m. Foot Clinic (by appt.)
12 p.m. Knitting Circle

Tuesday 12/10
10:15 a.m. Chair Yoga
1 p.m. Cookies & Carols

Wednesday 12/11
11:15 a.m. Friends Meeting
12:30 p.m. Bingo

Thursday 12/12
9 a.m. Tai Chi
10:15 a.m. Chair Yoga
1 p.m. Cards, Games, & Pitch
4 p.m. Gentle Yoga

Friday 12/13
12 p.m. Breakfast for Lunch
1 p.m. Writing Group

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 12 p.m., with reservations required two 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 12/9
8:45 a.m. Step & Sculpt
9:30 a.m. COA Meeting
10 a.m. Healthy Bones
12 p.m. Congregate Lunch

Tuesday 12/10
8:45 a.m. S.W.A.P. Exercise
10 a.m. Stretching & Balance
12 p.m. Holiday Lunch Out
Yankee Swap

Wednesday 12/11
8:45 a.m. Line Dancing
10 a.m. Chair Yoga
11 a.m. M3 Class
12 p.m. Homemade Lunch
12:30 p.m. Bingo & Snacks

Thursday 12/12
8:45 a.m. Aerobics
10 a.m. Healthy Bones
12 p.m. Congregate Lunch
12:30 p.m. Holiday Movie

Friday 12/13
9 a.m. Quilters Workshop
TBA: Walking or Snowshoeing
12 p.m. Congregate Lunch

LEVERETT

For information, contact the Leverett COA at (413) 548-1022, ext. 5, or coa@leverett.ma.us.

Wednesday 10 a.m. Flexibility & Balance Chair Yoga at the Town Hall. Drop-in \$6 (first class free).

Friday 12 p.m. Senior Lunch. Call (413) 367-2694 by Wednesday for a reservation.

WENDELL

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

DECEMBER LIBRARY LISTING

Montague Public Libraries
Turners Falls: Carnegie (413) 863-3214
Montague Center (413) 367-2852
Millers Falls (413) 659-3801

Erving Public Library (413) 423-3348
Gill: Slate Library (413) 863-2591
Leverett Public Library (413) 548-9220
Wendell Free Library (978) 544-3559
Northfield: Dickinson Library (413) 498-2455

MONTAGUE PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Tuesday, December 10: Carnegie Library, Youth Advisory Committee Meeting. 4:30 – 5:30 p.m.

Saturday, December 14: Carnegie Library, *Gingerbread Party*. Children of all ages and their caregivers are invited to come make easy gingerbread houses. Candy, graham crackers, and icing will be provided for this fun, free program. 10:30 a.m. to noon.

DICKINSON LIBRARY, NORTHFIELD

Friday, December 6: *Chinese Checkers*: Can you beat Matt... at Chinese Checkers? 2 to 3 p.m.

Friday, December 6: Local retired teacher *Nick Fleck* facilitates a discussion about the *Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States of America*. 3 to 4 p.m.

ERVING FREE LIBRARY

Month of December: *Erving Library Fundraiser*, Friends of the Library's *Holiday Raffle*.

Weather, etc. sometimes causes changes in library events; you may want to call ahead to confirm events.

Stop by and see all the great gifts you can win.

LEVERETT LIBRARY

Sunday, December 8: *Vision for your Health: Tips and Tools from Yoga and Ayurveda* with *Nadya Tkachenko* of Sun Essence Yoga. Please RSVP for this session. 2 p.m.

Thursday, December 12: *Ukulele Strum-along* with *Julie Stepanek*. All welcome. 6:45 p.m.

Sunday, December 15: *Afternoon with the Author: Jill Franks*. Franks talks about her new book, *Every Stranger a God*. Set in northern England's Lake District, Dales, and Yorkshire moors, Franks recounts a literature professor's hike along the 192-mile Coast to Coast trail. 2 p.m.

Sunday, December 15: *Concert of Favorite Songs and Good Cheer with Beth Raffeld Trio*. All welcome. 4 p.m.

Saturday, December 21: *Solstice Talk to Celebrate Light* with *Bruce Watson*. With one eye to the skies and one on history, local author Bruce Watson will celebrate the winter solstice by discussing his book *Light: A Radiant History from Creation to the Quantum Age*. Along with celebrating light on the shortest day of the year, Watson will also explore light through the eyes of poets, philosophers, artists, photographers, and mystics. 2 p.m.

WENDELL FREE LIBRARY

No Sci-fi/fantasy Series Movie this month. Look for the new series in January, 2020.

Saturday, December 14: *Full Moon Coffeehouse* presents *Simon White and Rhythm Inc.* Proceeds to benefit Wendell Full Moon Coffeehouse. \$ 7:30 p.m.

ART EXHIBITS

Wendell Free Library: [*not necessarily*] *By the Book – Altered Books and Collage* by *Trish Crapo*. Through December.

SHEA THEATER NEWS

Welcome Yule Celebrates 35th Show

From combined sources.

TURNERS FALLS – The 35th annual Welcome Yule: A Midwinter Celebration will be presented at the Shea Theater on December 13, 14, and 15. Welcome Yule founding director Rose Sheehan returns to the Valley after a 20-year hiatus to mount this production in collaboration with current artistic director Liz Smith and music director Kathryn Aubry-McAvoy.

Sheehan, who has been coming out from Gloucester at least once a week since September to help with the production, first conceived the idea for a mid-winter pageant emphasizing folk music and customs in 1985, and for 15 years she served the company as artistic director. She shepherded its growth from a basement coffee house program at All Souls Church in Greenfield, to a full theatrical production that has enjoyed many years at the Shea Theater.

Sheehan says she is thrilled to return to direct the 35th anniversary show. "I've remained connected to all the folks in the community, and I've continued conversations with others over the past year, especially with Liz Smith, about her ideas for this show," she said.

Smith had an organizing visual concept of animals dancing, and followed that with ideas about using large-scale puppets. Sheehan, who has had an interest in the craft of puppetry and used large puppets in previous Welcome Yule productions, was enticed by these concepts, and decided her schedule could accommodate the long trek to western Mass.

The program's storyline centers on the wisdom of trees, the power of animals, and the deep magic of music. An original song composed by Sheehan's son, Colin de la Barre, served as the nexus for the story development. The storyline is carried throughout the production by the two children in the company, 10 and 13 years old.

"I created a story that is legend- or myth-based in its structure, about a special tree, one of the first of creation, and that because of this tree there is music in the world," Sheehan explains. "The two children unlock the mystery of this tree that exists in legend, and the mystery of a boy that disappeared, and how

they are connected."

Both of Sheehan's sons participated in Welcome Yule during their childhood throughout the 1990s. In recent years, Colin has performed as one half of the singing duo Meridian. He joins this year's cast as a featured singer, debuting a song whose central themes are the cycles of the year, the power of music and dance, and the ability of the animal kingdom to connect with creative expression in music and dance.

Over the years Welcome Yule audiences have come to expect mirth, song, dance and good cheer. This year's highlights will include rousing harmonies, lively dances, and the use of giant puppets throughout the show.

The Abbot's Bromley Horn Dance, a staple of the annual pageant, will be performed by the Juggler Meadow Morris Men of Amherst. The horns carried by the dancers are in fact a set of caribou antlers. Though the origins of this stately English folk dance are debated, one theory holds that it served as a ritual to ensure a plentiful deer herd in the year to come.

Another anticipated feature, a mummers' play, will also be included. The action of this comic folk drama centers on the death and subsequent revival of one of its characters. The speeches, delivered in rhyming couplets, are written for laughs, and the puns are sure to elicit a groan or two.

The youngest cast member is a third-generation Welcome Yule performer – her grandmother and mother have been regulars over the years. The producers note that this is an all-volunteer endeavor: none of the production team, directors, or performers are being paid. The drive and motivation for most is a combination of community expression and a simple *joie de vivre*.

Friday and Saturday's performances are scheduled to begin at 7:30 p.m. Sunday's performance is scheduled for 2 p.m. Tickets are \$15 for adults; and \$12 for seniors 65 and older and children ages 5 through 16 years old. Children under 5 years are free.

Tickets are available at Broadside Bookshop, Northampton; Amherst Books, Amherst; World Eye Bookshop, Greenfield; and at sheatheater.org. Reservations can be made at welcomeyule.org or info@welcomeyule.org.

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Gill: (413) 863-5730

MPD from page B3

appear to be under the influence. He was advised of complaint and will be going inside for the night.
6:03 p.m. Caller received report that kids are playing football on the TFHS football field and the lights are on. Caller would like officer to go ask them not to play on the field and turn the lights off. Involved parties spoken to by officers; will be turning lights off.
Friday, 11/29
7:52 a.m. Highly irate caller yelled into phone then hung up. Appears

road rage incident occurred after caller confronted and/or yelled at another driver on the bridge; other driver on bridge reportedly stopped on the bridge, flipped off and engaged back with the caller. Caller did not provide specifics re: time-frame, location, etc., but from prior calls for similar incidents from this caller, believed to be General Pierce Bridge. Area search negative.
5:20 p.m. A 65-year-old Greenfield man was arrested on a default warrant.



GARDENERS from page B1

consume other insects, keeping their numbers in check as well as feeding birds and other creatures we love.
Meanwhile, we awaken one morning to the start of a real nor'easter of a snowstorm: huge, soft flakes of hefty snow, challenging to lift in the shovel once we find it. We dig out the Jeep and shovel out the car parked in front of the shed. My car purrs happily in the garage, but lets me slide by to grab the beefy container of sno-melt.
We heft large scoopfuls of dense snow for an hour or so, and are grateful when our noisy neighbor comes by, drops the plow blade, and saves us several back-breaking hours we might have spent clearing out around the Jeep. My partner has an appointment in the morning made months ago with his ophthalmologist, so we need to keep things cleared out for him and the Jeep, which can go anywhere.
Now for a therapeutic session preparing turkey soup from the

Thanksgiving dinner we shared with 14 family members halfway up the state of Vermont. Oddly, this coastal storm has no impact in the "too-far North," as we call it, so my nephew has no trouble getting to the bus which will take him back to NYC after the holiday.
We cooked our own turkey on Friday so as to have leftovers to enjoy. The scent of turkey soup brewing on the stove top is mouthwatering, and we say a prayer for those less lucky ones who have no such a feast of their own.
This is indeed the season of thanksgiving for all we have, and for supporting those organizations which serve those who have not. Last year we helped to serve dinner at the Salvation Army. The sight of those shining faces as they enjoyed a full dinner, with two kinds of pie to boot, was all the thanks we needed.
So at this time of joy and family, let us not forget friends and family and those with none, and do what we can to give them joy and thanks as well.



VALLEY VIEW from page B1

expert witness who'd testify that dogs can die that quickly from either tickborne disease for which he tested positive and showed no symptoms.
"I wonder if [our vet] would have picked up on the poison?" my wife pondered after Chubby's death, referring to my longtime vet, whose office was closed for the holiday.
"Good chance," I answered. "We've known each other for almost 50 years and, although we may not agree on everything, I think he would have respected my opinion and looked for poison."
My previously mentioned hunting buddy, who was once married to a doctor, had another take. "What happened to you has happened to many," he said. "Doctors often see what they want to see. This one didn't listen to a word you said. Lyme it was, period. You should have challenged the diagnosis more vehemently."
The problem was that when I articulated my opinion that Chubby had "gotten into something" that upset his stomach, I never dreamed of deadly coyote bait, which may well have been the culprit, given the old-stand-by site I had hunted for the first time this fall on November 25. I was thinking of rotten carrion, farm garbage, or something else that would upset a dog's stomach and curb its appetite until it passed in a day or so. I had seen that scenario play out several times with different dogs over the years.
As soon as I realized this wasn't that, was likely more serious, I called the vet – just before noon on the day before Thanksgiving. Talk about bad timing. I knew I was up against it. The rest is history; sad, sordid

history that cost me an extraordinary gun dog and companion.
To me, there is no question that Chub-Chub died from poisoning, something insidious that quickly shut down his system. Trust me, it's no way to go. The average dog would have likely curled up into a fetal ball for three days and died. Not Chub-Chub. Though impaired and emaciated, he displayed noble spirit to the bitter end, still trying to get out into the backyard through the woodshed door to greet wood vendor Blue Sky no more than 20 minutes before exhaling his death moan. What an indomitable spirit he had. He was hurting badly at the time.
Prior to that, he had followed me from room to room and out to the brook two or three times a day until his horrid death. Out back, he'd walk gingerly to check out the brook, head high to detect the scent of overnight intruders. His nose was good as it gets.
As for the Lyme debate, I readily admit that the doctor who treated Chubby knows much more about the disease than I do, and that some of his symptoms did indeed suggest Lyme. But the tickborne disease did not kill him. The first time he had tested positive for the two diseases, I invited my vet to accompany me on my daily walk to watch him romp. He was healthy and robust, I implored, showed absolutely no signs of illness.
He didn't doubt me, admitting that only five percent of dogs that test positive show any symptoms. When I disclosed this prior positive test during my recent medical crisis and asked if it could finally be rearing its ugly head, the doctor said no. Chubby had been a carrier

COMICS

by denis f. bordeaux

T-RUMP

SURGEON GENERAL: THIS THANKSGIVING WE CAN BE THANKFUL OUR PRES. IS IN SUPREME CONDITION FOR 5 MORE YEARS OF HIS BENEVOLENT RULE.

HE IS A VERITABLE BULL OF THE WOODS. THOUGH A LARGE MAN HIS BODY IS PERFECTLY TONED MUSCLE, AND THAT HAIR! LUXURIOUS!

I TOLD THE PRESIDENT HE COULD EAT AS MUCH CANDIED YAMS AND MASHED POTATOES AS HE WANTED, WITH EXTRA GRAVY. IT'S ALL GOOD.

HAI! SUPER GENIUS STRIKES AGAIN. DID I NAIL THAT OR WHAT MORT? MY VOICE IMPRESSION WAS SPOT ON, ME, TEFLON DON, SLIPPED BY HEART DISEASE.

YES, YOUR PUFFINESS, NOW HERE DRINK YOUR GRAVY.

THANKSGIVING THANKS: THANKFUL STORMY DIDN'T GIVE ME THE CRABS, AND THAT MELANIA DIDN'T PULL A LORENA BOBBITT ON ME. PHEW!

THANKFUL MY FACT-RESISTANT BASE IS MORE GULLIBLE THAN EVEN I THOUGHT. LOVE YOU GUYS.... poor Saps!

THANKFUL VLADIMIR IS GONNA INTERFERE IN OUR ELECTIONS AGAIN. I NEED ALL THE HELP I CAN GET.

THANKFUL I HAVE DIRT ON SENATE REPUBLICANS SO THEY'LL NEVER DARE TO IMPEACH ME.

BUT MOSTLY I'M THANKFUL JEFF EPSTEIN GOT A CHANCE TO KILL HIMSELF, AND NOT A CHANCE TO IMPLICATE ME. IN OTHER WORDS: NO KID PRO QUO

THANK YOU J. EDGAR HOOVER

THREE DEGREES OF WARMING
by JANICE ROWAN

DOCTOR SHE'S FAILING FAST

WE HAVE TO REMOVE HER INHUMANITY IMMEDIATELY

EARTH

OVER THE HILL
Carolyn Clark

Henry, I'm stuffed. Wasn't Ann's pecan pie delicious?

It was. It put your mother's pecan pie to shame.

Shhh... Not so loud!

Thelma, your mother's been dead for thirty years!

yes, but she always had an incredible antenna system going for her. Sorry, Mom. Harry, say you're Sorry.

Submit your comics to editor@montaguereporter.org. Original, locally produced content only, please!

that showed no symptoms. Not unusual. This was new. He was showing symptoms of a more recent tick bite. What could I say?
On my way out the door after the six-hour, pre-holiday office visit, this doctor assured me that "Your boy will be back to normal in a couple of days."
When Chubby didn't seem to be responding to the antibiotic by noontime the next day and still wasn't eating, I called the office to report my concerns and was talked off the ledge by the doctor, who called at midafternoon. "Give it time," the vet said. "It can take 48 hours or more for the appetite to return. What I'm concerned about is fever. Take his temperature, and bring him in if he's feverish."
I took his rectal temperature. It was 101.6 Fahrenheit. Normal is 99.5 to 102.5. I forced myself to be patient, even though I thought a dog in peak condition like Chubby should respond to antibiotics quicker. I didn't want to be a pest, wanted to trust the doctor. But in the end, I knew I should have been more forceful and, even more importantly, had failed Chub-Chub.
Oh well... live and learn. I got burned, big time. Let's just say my opinion of veterinary medicine has forever changed. Call me a skeptic if you will; maybe even a cynic. Yes, they took my check, and I took their medicine. A bitter taste will for the rest of my life linger.
That, and Chub-Chub's pathetic farewell death whine, which will haunt me until we meet again in the Happy Hunting Ground.



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ART BEAT from page B1

coming out of Anchor House. There will be a reception this Saturday, December 7 at 3 p.m.

It’s also worth a trip to Northampton to see more of the work, and to take in the magnitude of Anchor House’s ambitions. Current shows include “Unbroken: Fifty In-line Compositions by Jonathan Stark,” in Galleries 1 and 2 and the Museum Wing.

December 6 begins an “Astonishing Collection of Vintage Poster Art,” gathered and restored by Juan Vazquez and Ted Eiseman, juxtaposed with original totemic masks. That reception will be next Friday, December 13 at 7 p.m.

Tillyer’s sculptures are intriguing assemblages that use wood, paint, and ordinary objects to bring to life figures such as “Professor Push Broom,” or the band of musicians Tillyer created for 2019’s Art in the Orchard event at Park Hill Orchard in Easthampton.

Stark’s intense, labyrinthine drawings are each made up of one meandering line that never crosses itself. The patterns call to mind brain tissue, or an impossibly convoluted maze which, once entered, might never reveal a route back out. View some of Stark’s multi-colored drawings at Anchor House through the cardboard 3-D glasses lying in the gallery, and they jump startlingly to life.

Ben Hotchkiss’s abstract oil paintings are highly detailed and energetic, resembling brightly colored circuit boards or maps of densely-populated cities. Anchor House has over a thousand of Hotchkiss’s canvases, lined up like record albums on shelves in a storage area that also houses all of artist and poet Genevieve Mae Burnett’s journals, dating from the 1950s to November of 2015, several days before she died.

A Life-Changing Experience

Eliot Cardinaux, a musician and composer who is currently attending the MFA in Writing program in poetry at UMass, makes use of a piano in the performance arena to compose and practice. He describes his early experience at Anchor House as “life-changing.”

“When I first came here, I was pretty unhinged,” Cardinaux says. “I’d been living with my parents after a stay in the psych ward, and I was not doing that great.”

Cardinaux had left New York City, where he’d been struggling to make a living playing jazz, and moved to a small apartment in Easthampton. He had no piano, and no place to prac-

tice his music. One day he came to check out Anchor House. “Michael gave me a key to the space,” he says, “and said, ‘Come here.’”

Cardinaux began to compose pieces that Tillyer describes as “a mixture of Chopin and John Cage.” Some of these pieces appear on Cardinaux’s CD, *Sweet Beyond Witness*, available from his publishing venture, The Bodily Press, in Northampton. Cardinaux also recently published *Around the Faded Sun*, a poetry collection, and will hold a book launch at 10 Forward at 10 Fiske Avenue in Greenfield this Friday, December 6.

There’s an “almost generational” aspect to the mentorship that happens at Anchor House, Cardinaux says, telling of meeting someone else there and realizing, “oh, this person also could use some support” – support that Cardinaux now felt capable of giving.

“It’s a very natural model,” he says.

“It’s so natural, it’s not a model,” Tillyer responds. “The thing is that, clearly, life is difficult. The path of life is difficult. But those difficulties are incidental to who we are. So, for artists, if you have events in your life, if you have cancer, that’s an incidental thing but you carry on. It’s the artist within you that lights your life. That’s so important here. It’s artists first.”

Tillyer says that what Anchor House provides is “an opportunity for us, for people, to come in and re-identify as the artist they are. Because there’s one thing that happens when you get a diagnosis: all of a sudden, the whole filter of the world sees you through that lens. You become a mentally ill person and not the person that you are.”

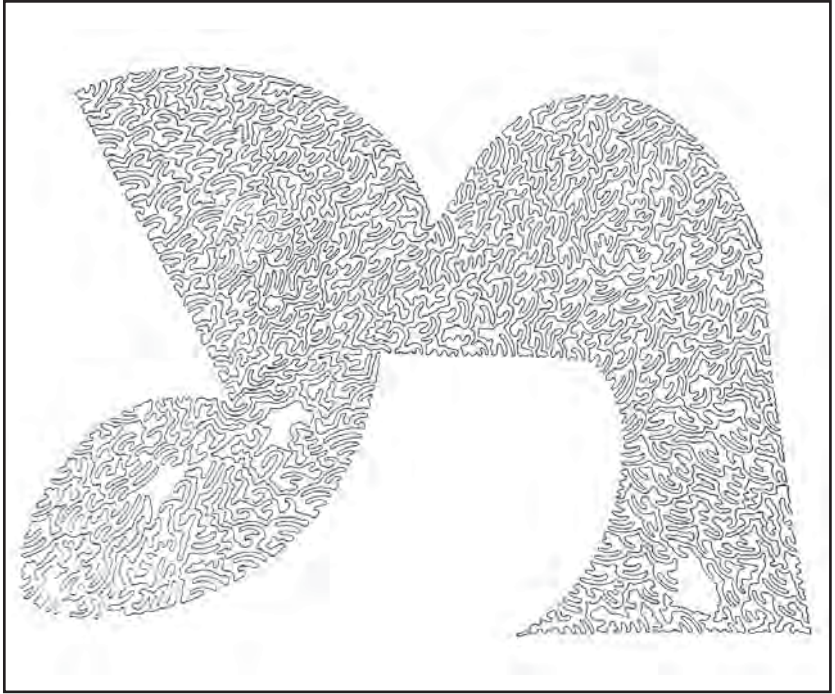
“And the other thing,” Tillyer continues, “is that therapists and doctors, they own the cure. They own that. And we have big medical care problems about that. But people own the healing. You know, like a Band-Aid will protect a wound, but the wound heals itself. It comes from within.

“So sometimes, if you can just make way, say to someone: ‘Here’s a place where you can do your thing, and then take charge of your healing.’”

Anchor House, 518 Pleasant Street, Northampton. Hours: Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, 1 to 6 p.m. Receptions held second Fridays of each month. For more information, call (413) 588-4337 or visit anchor-houseartists.org.



PHOTO COURTESY ANCHOR HOUSE



“Double Humps,” line drawing by Anchor House artist Jonathan Stark.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Three Deer, Two Dogs, One Drill, Squatters, Tows

Monday, 10/21

8:41 a.m. Drill on Lamp-lighter Way.

9:06 a.m. Caller states she can hear a siren. Confirmed that Northfield Mount Hermon is conducting a drill.

9:18 a.m. Assisted with lockdown drill at Northfield Mount Hermon.

2:09 p.m. Loose dog located by passerby at Main and Mountain roads. Unable to locate.

3:07 p.m. Located previously reported loose dog on Main Road.

7:43 p.m. Caller from unknown location wants someone to stop her husband from driving around intoxicated.

8:01 p.m. Caller from Gill Road cannot locate her husband and would like to report him missing.

Tuesday, 10/22

9:18 a.m. Disabled motor vehicle on French King Highway. Moved to French King Bridge rest area. AAA *en route*.

3:30 p.m. Motor vehicle lockout on Boyle Road. Entry gained, but no keys found.

7:50 p.m. Caller reported a vehicle almost ran them off the road while on the climbing lane on Route 2 in Erving.

Wednesday, 10/23

5:44 a.m. Traffic hazard on Main Road. 1-foot diameter log in northbound lane. Highway super has the information.

7:57 a.m. Caller from the French King Highway witnessed subjects at the house next door. The owners live in Vermont and have not been down in over a year. She is concerned the two subjects are squatting in the house.

Thursday, 10/24

10:15 a.m. Followed up on previous shift complaint

regarding squatters on French King Highway.

9:01 p.m. Greenfield PD took a report of a dead deer in the road area of the Wagon Wheel.

Friday, 10/25

2:25 a.m. Caller at South Cross and West Gill roads states he went off the road after hitting a deer. The truck is in a tree over the embankment. His wife came to pick him up, and he will deal with the tow in the morning. Caller advises he is not injured.

8:58 a.m. Loose cows reported on Green Hill Road.

9:13 a.m. Trash truck high topped on road at Main Road and Wyart Road.

Saturday, 10/26

5:42 p.m. Heavy smoke observed traveling across Route 2 and the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge. Located source coming from garage furnace end of Factory Hollow, Greenfield. Spoke with property owner who was aware of common problem upon start up.

5:48 p.m. Caller from Lamplighter Way needed information on tow company that took possession of their vehicle after a state police stop on Route 91. Rental company already aware and sending replacement vehicle.

Tuesday, 10/29

1:14 a.m. Caller from West Gill Road reports hearing what sounds like two men fighting.

Thursday, 10/31

1:28 a.m. Caller from Chappell Drive advises he had an argument with his father.

5:35 p.m. Safety hazard reported. Tree down across the road with no wires involved at Ben Hale and West Gill roads.

7:21 p.m. Report of a tree down, blocking the

roadway at Franklin and West Gill roads. No wires involved.

Friday, 11/1

7:42 a.m. Report of a tree on the power line. There is no sparking and the caller will contact the power company.

9:32 a.m. Caller reports a tree service taking up half of the northbound lane on Main Road.

2:48 p.m. Tree across road at Lyons Hill Road.

5:48 p.m. Caller reports erratic operator on French King Highway.

Saturday, 11/2

2:08 p.m. Caller from West Gill Road reports a stray just came into their yard. The dog is a beagle mix with no tags and appears to be wearing an invisible fence-type collar. Dog taken to shelter.

Sunday, 11/3

1:16 p.m. Follow up investigation conducted on Center Road for Sunderland PD.

Monday, 11/4

1:45 p.m. Medical emergency on French King Highway. Male fell, with a back injury.

2:03 p.m. Caller reports a lost wallet, possibly in Gill or Turners Falls. The wallet is a magenta/pink color with six slots for cards and had some bills in it.

7:51 p.m. Motorist on French King Highway stopped to report he had just struck a deer around the corner. Observed a small crack with a tuft of fur on the bottom passenger side of the bumper. Operator information gathered. Unable to locate the deer. Minor damage to the vehicle which left under its own power.

Friday, 11/8

7:13 p.m. Criminal complaint issued on Main Road to operator of mo-

tor vehicle with suspended drivers license.

Sunday, 11/10

10:35 a.m. Suspicious activity reported. Caller advises she heard one gunshot and believes there is a hunter on Mountain Road. She would like the police to conduct checks on the road in the future.

12:09 p.m. Report of a male slumped over the steering wheel of a vehicle on Main and Mountain roads.

1:26 p.m. Warrant arrest from motor vehicle stop on French King Highway.

3:51 p.m. 911 call in the vicinity of Elm Street. No information provided. Checked the area, unable to locate. Building secure.

Wednesday, 11/13

1:34 p.m. Conducted a welfare check at the bridge in Factory Hollow. Greenfield dispatch received a 911 call reporting a subject wearing a large backpack down on the rocks near the small bridge in Factory Hollow.

Thursday, 11/14

6:52 p.m. Caller on Main Road would like to speak with an officer. He is trying to sell his vehicle and the party there is now giving him a hard time.

Saturday, 11/16

12:44 p.m. Attempted to serve a warrant on Center Road. Negative contact.

3:39 p.m. Assisted in loading vehicle from last evening’s incident on Main Road.

4:39 p.m. Suspicious activity on West Gill Road. Montague PD advising their officer was flagged down and notified that a male party was hanging around a building. The party thinks they may have been attempting to break in.

MOVIE REVIEW

The Best of Enemies (2019)

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – In Durham, North Carolina during 1971, the integration of a school happened due to a couple of the most unlikely individuals, along with others, coming together. Which is probably why this movie, based on the true story, is called what it is.

The two “enemies” were Ann Atwater, a local civil rights activist involved with Operation Breakthrough, and C.P. Ellis, the president of the local Ku Klux Klan chapter. But before we see them come together, we get a look at these individuals’ lives. They both have kids, and we see them with theirs. Atwater is seen leading Operation Breakthrough, a civil rights group, trying to help someone with a slumlord problem. Ellis is shown at a KKK chapter meeting involving a youth group of theirs. This is our glimpse at their belief systems in action.

The town’s “black” school has a fire, which leads to them needing a new school, which Ann realizes a moment after the fire. The slumlord problem didn’t go well, so obviously this might be difficult, too.

It is decided that there will be something like a peace summit in order to deal with the integration of the schools. Which is a good way to describe it because the guy behind it has African Americans and white people sitting together during lunch. Ellis is asked to participate, because he represents a large group of the population in town. That is why Atwater is asked, too. She doesn’t

want to do it at first, but changes her mind. Ellis is pressured to do this by friends of his, knowing it doesn’t really make sense due to him being a Klan president.

Other people are involved who are part of groups on both sides of the issue. Ironically, at one point, the movie shows the whole “know your enemy” idea mentioned on both the activists’ side and the Klan side of things.

I think, in a way, this is why the integration of this school happened. The event happening the way it did shouldn’t be such a surprise. After all, the year was 1971, and the civil rights movement had been going on for a while. But still what was surprising is that it occurred with these two people.

In the middle of the peace summit, the Klan start to do moves that would get people arrested today. Ellis takes exception to one of the moves by a politician friend of his against a fellow working class man like himself.

Durham’s schools were integrated. If they weren’t, we wouldn’t have this story to tell. But you won’t believe who was the deciding vote, or the change of heart that overcomes C.P. Ellis. Ann Atwater shows him the appreciation that she has toward him for his part in all of this, and others follow along very nicely with her actions towards him as well.

Even if this weren’t such a unique and true story that actually occurred before being made into a movie, I probably still would have wanted to write a review for the *Reporter* to publish.

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WARREN ONDRAS PHOTO

NatureCulture: The Science Page

The Science Page is Powered by the Solar Store of Greenfield.



Contributions to NatureCulture are welcome. What are you interested in? Would you like to write about birds, weather, science of any kind? We need your input. Send articles for consideration to: science@montaguereporter.org. Thank you!
— Lisa McLoughlin, editor

Leave The Trees, Lower Your Taxes

By LISA MCLOUGHLIN

BOSTON – Chapter 61 is a Massachusetts property tax break program for people willing to commit to keeping all or some of their land undeveloped for a certain period of time.

By default, Massachusetts taxes property for its “highest and best use,” which is its development potential, even if it’s currently undeveloped. Chapter 61 is an alternative program that allows your undeveloped land to be taxed at a lower rate. This is because undeveloped land saves your town money by not using as many services, such as emergency services and schools.

There are three options for your land, depending on how you currently use it.

Chapter 61 Forestry is a good option if you’re interested in harvesting forest products including timber and Christmas trees. To do this program you need a minimum of ten acres (that’s ten acres of forest, not including house, driveway, etc.) and a forestry plan. You can make a ten-year forestry management plan together with a private forester, and the state forester needs to approve it. The land is then assessed at a value that is set annually by the Farmland Valuation Advisory Committee, much lower than what you would pay at full valuation.

Chapter 61A is for agricultural land including fruits, vegetables, ornamental shrubs, timber, animals, and maple syrup. It has a minimum of only five acres, excluding non-agricultural buildings. You can also put your forest timber land in 61A if you would rather not use Chapter 61, but it will still need a ten-year management plan under this program. If you’re not using the 61A option for forestland, you don’t need any kind of management plan. Again, the land is assessed at a rate set by the Farmland Valuation Advisory Commission based on the estimated market value of agricultural products it is capable of producing.

Chapter 61B is for two kinds of land: open space and recreation. It’s a good fit for landowners who take a “passive” approach to their land. Under 61B you don’t have to



Winter waterfalls in a Northfield forest.

manage the land or have a plan for it, although if you wish, you can still make a ten-year forest management plan and harvest wood from it. The minimum acreage is five, excluding structures, and taxes on the land in the program will be reduced by at least 75%.

If you pick 61B Open Space, you commit to keeping your land substantially wild, natural, or open, or maintained in a forest or pasture. No public access is required for this option, and you can make minimal improvements, such as trails.

The 61B Recreation option is for land used primarily for recreation that doesn’t interfere with environmental benefits, such as hiking, camping, boating, golfing, non-commercial sports, horseback riding, hunting, and archery. Excluded sports include anything in a stadium or structure, and horse and dog racing. Land in this category must be open to the public or to members of a nonprofit, though you may charge for access.

Caveats: when you enroll in a Chapter 61 program, a lien is put on your land giving the town right of first refusal when you go to sell (with some exceptions), and imposing penalties if you pull out of the program within ten years. If you pull out before ten years, you have

to pay either rollback taxes or conveyance taxes, though there is an exception for converting the land to a residence for the owner or a close family member. The penalties vary a bit from program to program.

Example of Savings

Say you had about 15 acres of undeveloped land in Montague, with an assessment of \$75,300. In 2017 the residential tax rate was about \$17 per \$1,000 in assessed value, so you’d pay around \$1,280 in tax.

If you moved all those acres into Chapter 61B you would have paid less than half that, \$488, and if they were in Chapter 61 or 61A you would have paid \$33. (Yes, that’s thirty-three dollars.) So you can see these programs are worth checking out!

For more information, and to try out a tax estimator that shows how much you could save, visit masswoods.org, a website from the UMass extension office with lots of information about land options and estate planning.

With about 63% of all forestland in Massachusetts privately owned, what you do with your forest matters. We need forest in order to store carbon and help make our planet healthy again, and it’s nice to know forest owners can benefit, too.

Protecting Your Legacy

By LISA MCLOUGHLIN

NORTHFIELD – After writing these three articles about the finances involved with forests, I felt the need to write about forests in non-economic terms.

Forests help us in a lot of ways that are difficult to put a price tag on. Some believe that until we can count the profit or loss of forests in economic terms, their benefits won’t get much attention. But here are just a few for your enjoyment in the meantime...

Forests vacuum up and store carbon dioxide, and provide about half of the oxygen we breathe on Earth. One mature tree provides oxygen for two to ten people every day! Trees provide a nice environment, and have even been associated with reduced crime rates in the suburbs. They muffle noise pollution, and filter the air

and water. Trees make food and medicine, and exposure to trees increases physical and mental health, mainly by reducing stress. Many people feel a spiritual connection to forests.

Beyond their direct benefits to humans, forests keep our planet’s ecosystem alive. Eighty percent of land-based biodiversity exists in forests. Their structure helps mitigate severe weather: tree roots are essential to keeping soils in place during rains and floods, and trees can serve as windbreaks in cleared areas, move surface water into the soil and aquifers, and make cool shade. Forests that are left alone to grow store the most carbon.

Forests are necessary for a healthy planet. New England is losing 65 forested acres a day. Enjoy forests responsibly.

Land Conservation Creates Jobs and Economic Growth

By LISA MCLOUGHLIN

WASHINGTON, DC – The USDA Forest Service Legacy Program (FLP) is a federal conservation program that seeks to protect traditional forest uses and intact working forest landscapes. The program awards grants that pay for conservation easements, and purchases land to keep it in forest. A requirement of the program is that the land be managed to provide economic and social benefits to the public.

UMass studied the FLP land in four areas of the country, including northern New England. In our area, 56 FLP projects conserved 1,297,416 acres, for an average cost of \$298/acre for protection or purchase.

Estimates of the economic contributions of this land are

enormous. In the area of recreation, they provided 282 jobs; timber, 2,140 jobs; and syrup, 140 jobs, for a total of 3,560 jobs.

In dollar terms, “value added” is the input to gross regional product including wages and proprietor income. The estimates for the New England FLP lands are about \$183.7 million.

While the report emphasizes that these are large areas of land and that the benefits vary quite a bit, the average benefit is \$140/acre of “annual value added to the regional economy from economic activities on FLP land in the study areas,” making their payoff time around two years, after which all the benefit goes right into the regional economy.

For more information, see familyforestresearchcenter.org

December 2019 Moon Calendar

First Quarter
Wednesday,
December 4

Full Moon
Thursday,
December 12

Last Quarter
Wednesday,
December 18



New Moon
Thursday,
December 26

Winter Solstice
Saturday,
December 21
at 11:19 p.m.

*Annular eclipse. Creative commons photo by Luc Viatour.
On December 26, an annular solar eclipse will be visible from Asia and Australia: a solar eclipse in which the Moon’s antumbral shadow traverses Earth (the Moon being too far from Earth to completely cover the Sun). During the maximum phase of an annular eclipse, the Sun appears as a blindingly bright ring surrounding the Moon.*

OPINION

Forests are Good

By LISA MCLOUGHLIN

FRANKLIN COUNTY – If you love your land, you probably have some ideas about how you’d like it to be 10, 20, or 100 years from now.

The title of this article comes from a great, free booklet made by the UMass Forest Extension office. Reading this booklet before going to a lawyer will lay out some options to think about. You can ask for a printed copy by calling Professor Paul Catanzaro at (413) 545-4839, or print it out or read it online at masswoods.org.

The booklet contains the stories of 15 local landowners with different family situations, and how they decided what to do with their land. It is full of short and to-the-point articles articulating why you need an estate plan, how to talk with your family (including a discussion on

fairness), different estate-planning tools and when they’re useful (depending on what your goals are), how land trusts can be helpful, and a discussion of taxes.

Even if you do decide to leave the land to one or more people, you can control its future by putting a conservation restriction on the land, ensuring it will stay wild or be developed or used in ways that you feel comfortable with.

You can find more options and information about passing on your land, and on making your land part of your plan for financial security, at masswoods.org. The people involved with the extension office have many resources to offer, including setting up informational community meetings with you and your neighbors.

Another good resource is your local land trust. A list of land trusts can also be found on the UMass website.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

EVENTS

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5

Hubie's Tavern, Turners Falls: *Open Mic Night*. 7 p.m.

Looky Here, Greenfield: *The Big Draw*. Figure drawing session with a model. \$ donation. 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *Walls of Sound*. Alexander Meszler performs a piece on the sanctuary Estey organ incorporating field recordings, video projection, poetry, and scientific research to raise awareness of the negative environmental impact of a US-Mexico border wall.\$ 7 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Mr. Drag and how the Grinch Stole Karl*. A “delightfully twisted” re-vamp of the well-known tale. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Pothole Pictures, Shelburne Falls: Movie, *Hairspray*. Director John Waters’ story about a Baltimore teen trying to break into a TV dance show. 1988. Preceded by *Sue Kranz*, singer-song-writer, at 7 p.m. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Yarn*. Bluegrass. \$. 8 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Eliot Cardinaux Book Release*. Featuring *Nellie Prior*. Music and reading. \$. 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Whalom Park, Bobbing for Apples*. 9:30 p.m.

North Village Smokehouse, Millers Falls: *TNT Karaoke*. 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7

First Congregational Church, Greenfield: *Climate Change Theater Reading*. Short play readings on climate change with incidental music and talk back session. 10 a.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Mr. Drag and how the Grinch Stole Karl*. A “delightfully twisted” re-vamp of the well-known tale. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Pothole Pictures, Shelburne Falls: Movie, *Hairspray*. See Friday's description. Preceded by *The Frost Heaves & Hales*, live music, at 7 p.m. \$. 7:30 p.m.

St. James Church, Greenfield: *Dance Spree*. Freestyle boogie: no shoes, no alcohol, no rules. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *She Said!, Curtis Rich Revue*. Concert and release of *Let Your*

Love Shine, the documentary about the all-female local band She Said, with local filmmakers *Stephanie Baird* and *Hannah Brookman*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: Dance party with producer *Mary Jester*. \$. 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8

Looky Here, Greenfield: *Early Bird Music Series #6: Grey Matter, Lahnah, Ram, and Strange Fate*. \$. 7 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Palberta, Chris Weisman* (solo jazz set), *Human Host*. \$. 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Voo Karaoke*. 8 p.m.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 9

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Voo Open Mic*. 8 p.m.



Sharon Katz & The Peace Train is a multicultural South African band that helped Nelson Mandela spread a message of peace and reconciliation. The group creates melodies from South Africa's diverse cultures, fused with rock, folk and funk, to tell a story through music and dance. They will perform at the Mount Toby Friends Meetinghouse in Leverett on Saturday, December 14 at 7:30 p.m. Pictured: Sharon Katz, playing guitar.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Music in the Morning*. Children's music series. Live, interactive music by educator *Marcy Gregoire*, accompanied by movement specialist *Hilary Lake*. Puppets, costumes, musical instruments. 10 a.m.

Guiding Star Grange, Greenfield: *Contact Improv Jam & Class*. Live music from *Jason Cohen*. Lesson at 6:30; jam from 8 to 10 p.m. \$. 6:30 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls:

Crooked Still with *Lulu Wiles*. \$. 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Comedy with Jon Ross*. In the Wheelhouse. 8 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Salsa Wednesday*. With *McCoy* and *DJ Roger Jr*. \$. 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Owsley's Owls*. Grateful Dead music. 9:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Sadie's Bikes Fundraiser* with a fix-a-flat clinic at 5:30 p.m., followed by *Marlene Lavelle*, a cajun band, *The Old Fashioneds*, *Julia Read*, *Alpha Error*, and *Funeral Cone*. Raffle, dance party with *DJ Sub-Dweller*. \$. Doors at 5 p.m.

Arms Library, Shelburne Falls: *Comedy Play Reading*. “I Can’t Hear You When the Water is Running” is a set of four, one-act comedies written by Robert Anderson in 1967. Actors will read these plays in a free performance at the library.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Welcome Yule*. 7:30 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Mark Schwaber, Revenant Sea*. \$. 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Dean Ford and the Beautiful Ones*. \$. 8 p.m.

North Village Smokehouse, Millers Falls: *TNT Karaoke*. 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14

St. James Church, Greenfield: *Greenfield Drum & Dance*. African dance, followed by a Drum and Dance instead of the usual Dance Spree. \$. 6 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Masala Jazz*. \$. 7 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Welcome Yule*. The story this year focuses on the wisdom of trees, animals, and the magic of music. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Wendell Town Hall: *Simon White & Rhythm Inc*. Wendell Full Moon Coffeehouse presents a great night of reggae, dub, hip hop, funk, dancehall, and soul from Wendell's own *Simon White* and *The Rhythm Inc. Band*. Dessert-O-Rama with your favorite treats, all to benefit the Coffeehouse expenses. Open mic before the show. \$. 7:30 p.m.

St. James Church, Greenfield: *Dance Spree*. Freestyle boogie: no shoes, no alcohol, no rules. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Mount Toby Friends Meeting House, Leverett: *Sharon Katz & The Peace Train*. Multicultural South African band that helped Nelson Mandela spread a message of peace and reconciliation. Melodies from South Africa's diverse cultures fused with rock, folk, and funk to tell a story through music and dance. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Ugly Sweater Party*. \$. 8 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Nemesis, Home Office* (multimedia installation), *DJ Lucie Rosenfeld*. \$. 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *John Sullivan Band*. 9:30 p.m.

EXHIBITS

Barnes Gallery, Leverett Crafts & Arts Center: *Resident Artist Group Show*, an eclectic holiday sale by studio artists at LCA. Through December.

Brattleboro Museum & Art Center: Exhibits include *Fafnir Adamites: Interfere (with); Doug Trump: By Rail; Maria Elena Gonzalez: Tree Talk; Gordon Meinhard: The Lives of Tables*; and *Thelma Appel: Observed/Abstract*. Through February.

DVAA Gallery, Northfield: *Season of Light*. Member holiday show. Through December.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Junior Duck Stamps*: Come see the top

entries for the statewide 2019 Junior Duck Stamp competition. Through December 22.

Greenfield Gallery: *Paul Hoffman, Paintings and Illustrations*. Poetic dreamscapes informed by a lifetime of world travel. Through January 18.

Herrick Gallery, Wendell Free Library: *[not necessarily] By the Book*: Altered books by *Trish Crapo*. Through December 21.

Hosmer Gallery, Forbes Library, Northampton: *Coalesce (Premier) & Precarious*. Paintings by Alice Thomas. Through December.

Looky Here, Greenfield: *The Art of the Montague Reporter*. Exhibit of cartoons and illustrations from our pages. Through December.

Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne Falls: *Michael Tillyer and the Anchor House Artists*. A curated show of work by artists who have been members of the Anchor House, a studio and workspace for artists who live with mental illness. See ArtBeat column in this issue for details. Also on display, works by the Vermont Glass Guild artisans. Reception Saturday, December 7, at 3 p.m. with saxophone music by *Loren Feinstein*. Through December 31.

Shelburne Arts Coop, Shelburne Falls: *Tiny Treasures* group show. Paintings, ceramics, leather, paper cuts, jewelry, wood and ornaments by member artists. Through January 27.

Memorial Hall Theater

POTHOLE PICTURES

Friday & Saturday
December 6 & 7 at 7:30 p.m.

HAIRSPRAY

Live music, 7 p.m.: Friday, singer-songwriter
Sue Kranz; Sat., the frost heaves and hales

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CALLS FOR ART

Nina's Nook in Turners Falls invites artists to submit erotic art for Triple SSS 2020: Sensual, Sexual, Smut. Submit up to three jpegs to eroticart2020@gmail.com by January 15 for the February show. A \$10 participation fee is asked at drop off to help with expenses relating to the reception.

Where do you live? Where are you from? Who gets to make the map, and what gets left out? Exploded View announces a call for art on the theme of “You Are Here.” Open to all media; send three jpegs along with descriptions and dimensions of the work and name, address, phone number to explodedviewma@gmail.com by December 15 to be juried into the show, scheduled at the *Great Falls Discovery Center during January and February 2020*.

Artspace in Greenfield welcomes artists and art instructors with ideas for exhibits and programming at the center. If you have an idea for a class, a musical project, a gallery exhibit, or what have you, please contact the office at (413) 772-6811 or email info@artspace-greenfield.com.



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WEDS 12/11 9:30 pm
Owsley's Owls
(Dead night)



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THE AUTHORS' CORNER: ROALD DAHL

By IZZY VACHULA-CURTIS

TURNERS FALLS – Happy December! My sister and I recently tried out for the Turners Falls High School and Great Falls Middle School play, *Matilda*. In preparation for our auditions, we read *Matilda* by Roald Dahl.

In today's article, I will review the book *Matilda*, talk about the upcoming production of *Matilda*, and interview the two girls who were cast as Matilda in the school production!

Matilda was published in 1988, unlike some of the more modern books I usually review. The Matilda book is complete with illustrations on almost every page. *Matilda* is about a little girl who has rude and selfish parents, while their daughter, Matilda Wormwood, is sweet and highly intelligent. For example,

Matilda is only five years old, but can multiply 482 times 7, and reads literature such as *Moby Dick* for fun.

Matilda convinces her parents to let her go to school, and when she arrives, she learns her principal is an angry, irrational bully named Ms Trunchbull. Matilda's teacher, Miss Honey, is tremendously different from Ms Trunchbull. Miss Honey is super sweet and kind towards all her students, and is one of my favorite characters in the book!

Matilda is super funny, too. Matilda's parents are *really* funny, and they always pick on Matilda for being stupid because she is little and doesn't know anything, when really the opposite is true. They want her to watch more television and stop reading books.

I would recommend *Matilda* to a younger audience (maybe 8 to 10), but it's also really funny and enjoy-

able for all ages.

In the spring, Turners Falls High School and Great Falls Middle School are producing the musical version of *Matilda*. Kimberly Rose, the director, made the decision to create two casts for the show – a "purple" cast and a "blue" cast – to give more students the opportunity to have a role. Ms. Rose also decided to let 5th graders from both Sheffield and Gill Elementary Schools participate in the musical, because she wanted younger students to play Matilda and some of her friends.

I got the role of Hortensia, one of Matilda's school friends, in the purple cast. My little sister, Markie Vachula-Curtis, got the role of Matilda in the blue cast! I interviewed Markie, as well as Adeline Mayo, who is the Matilda for the purple cast.



Adeline Mayo (left) and our correspondent's sister Markie (right) will play Matilda.

Izzy V-C: What role did you originally audition for, or were hoping to get?

Markie V-C: The part I wanted to get was Matilda or Lavender. Lavender is Matilda's best friend.

Adeline Mayo: I auditioned for Lavender, and the directors asked me to audition for Matilda, too!

IVC: What was your reaction when you found out you received the role of Matilda?

MVC: I was really happy. I was like exploding with happiness!

AM: Basically I jumped up in the air and started crying, and everyone gave me a big huge hug! It was a really exciting moment for me. I was shaking the rest of the day!

IVC: Have you been in any other theater productions, or is Matilda your first one?

MVC: I've been in more, but they were for Ja'Duke, a dance studio and theater company. My favorite role I've gotten at Ja'Duke was Kanga in *Winnie The Pooh*!

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AM: Matilda is my first theater production. I was not expecting to get the lead role for my first play!

IVC: Have you ever read the book Matilda, or seen the movie? If so, what was your favorite part?

MVC: Yes, I have seen the movie, and read the book. My favorite part of the movie was when Mr. Wormwood's hat got stuck to his head, because Matilda had super glued it on, and he couldn't get it off! My favorite part of the book is when Matilda uses her magic powers to trick the Trunchbull into believing a ghost is going to get her.

AM: I've only seen the movie – I'm planning on reading the book! My favorite part of the movie was when Matilda learned how to use her powers.

IVC: Who are your favorite and least favorite characters in Matilda, and why?

MVC: My favorite character is Matilda herself, because I feel like she was really smart, and funny, too! My least favorite character was probably the cops, because they were kind of boring. The cops were some of the people who were parked outside of the Wormwoods' house because Mr. Wormwood was selling unreliable cars.

AM: My least favorite character would be Ms. Trunchbull because she's a really rude person and put Matilda in the chokey [a closet in which the Trunchbull puts kids who "misbehave" or who she doesn't like] for no reason. Matilda is my favorite, for her intelligence and kindness.

Thank you so much, Adeline and Markie! Make sure to mark your calendars for the last weekend in March and first weekend in April so you can see *Matilda* in the spring. Happy (early) Holidays!

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