

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 18 – NO. 46

also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

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EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

OCTOBER 22, 2020

Area Boarding Schools Vary In Approaches to Pandemic



Visitors approaching the checkpoint at Northfield Mount Hermon School's single entrance are instructed to scan a QR code to access a health screening form.

By LILY REAVIS

FRANKLIN COUNTY – Faced with economic uncertainty, pressure from students and families, and the rapidly growing pandemic, western Massachusetts' independent boarding schools were forced to act quickly while planning for this academic year. Some schools, like Northfield Mount Hermon and Deerfield Academy, opted to invite students back to campus. Others, wary of the complications in forming a COVID-free "bubble," chose to move all courses remotely.

Boarding school officials largely agree on why these variations occurred. Factors like international student enrollment, active furloughs, and endowment all play crucial roles in reopening processes.

"Boarding schools – particularly New England boarding schools that a lot of people see as very sim-

ilar – are actually very different," says Stephanie Luebbbers, head of Stoneleigh-Burnham School in Greenfield. "Our circumstances are different, our missions are different, our communities are different, our financial resources are different. All of those things come into play when a school is making large decisions."

Northfield Mount Hermon has invited roughly 665 students back to its rural campus in Gill this year. With the students' arrival, the school also introduced new contingency planning and strict social distancing guidelines. Students, staff, and faculty are all required to undergo continual testing through a partnership with the Broad Institute, an education-focused COVID-19 testing lab located in Cambridge. Students have been on campus for just over two months, and the school has yet to encounter a positive test.

Deerfield Academy, which is

see **BOARDING** page A4

How COVID-19 Has Affected Western Mass High Schools' Favorite Sport: Field Hockey



Turners Falls' Paige Sulda (left) and Franklin Tech's Keira Stevens (right) race to the ball during the Thunder's 6-0 home win over the Eagles last Thursday.

By HALEIGH GREENE

GILL-MONTAGUE – The Coronavirus has no doubt affected the whole world. Many restrictions and safety precautions have been put into action to better the chances of the community's health and welfare. Daily activities like traveling, errands, meeting with friends and family, the classroom routine, and school sports have been highly affected by this pandemic.

In western Massachusetts, the school committees and sport administrators have voted whether or not to hold a high school sport season this year. Some sports with

low physical contact that are played outdoors, such as field hockey, have been granted permission to hold a reduced and modified season. While some local schools, such as Smith Academy, are choosing not to have a fall field hockey season, other schools are, including Turners Falls, Greenfield, and Athol.

The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) has created strict guidelines for field hockey's retrofitted season. In order to provide the safest conditions for those participating, new MIAA rules have been fashioned.

These new rules include that

see **HOCKEY** page A6

State Presses Trinity for Details on Farren

By MIKE JACKSON

MONTAGUE CITY – Two months into the four-month notice Trinity Health of New England provided of its intention to close the Farren Care Center in December, some aspects of the proposal are coming under closer public scrutiny.

The Farren has been managed since January by iCare Health Network, a Connecticut-based for-profit company. Trinity hopes to shut down the Farren, transfer the majority of its long-term care residents to an

underutilized nursing home it owns in Holyoke named Mount Saint Vincent, and then pass that facility along to iCare, along with its special license to care for residents diagnosed with serious psychiatric disabilities.

The state of Massachusetts, which reimburses the non-profit for most of the residents at the Farren at a higher-than-typical rate through Medicaid, has been reviewing two separate aspects of the arrangement: Trinity's draft closure plan for the Farren, and the suitability of iCare to acquire Mount Saint Vincent.



Last Wednesday the Division of Health Care Facility Licensure & Certification replied to the draft closure plan, citing feedback at two public hearings last month and asking the company for more detailed information on a number of points.

see **FARREN** page A5

ERVING SELECTBOARD

Police Chief Screening Committee Appointed

By KATIE NOLAN

On Monday night, meeting using GoToWebinar, the Erving selectboard chose six members for the police chief screening committee, which will review applicants to replace police chief Christopher Blair.

The board had previously decided to form a seven-member committee consisting of one selectboard member, a police chief from a neighboring town, a town employee, and four citizens. Letters of interest were received from six citizens.

The selectboard appointed chair Jacob Smith, town administrator Bryan Smith, and citizens Ryan Betters, Scott Bastarache, Jason Robinson, and George Moonlight Davis. The board asked Bryan Smith to identify a local police chief who might be interested in serving on the committee.

After the appointments were completed, Jeffrey Rollins, who had submitted a letter of interest, asked

see **ERVING** page A7

Officers at Wendell Polls To Encourage Mask Wearing

By SARAH ROBERTSON

WENDELL – After some Wendell residents refused to wear facial masks to vote early inside town hall this week, a constable will now be providing masks at the front door, while poll workers will have to make other accommodations for those who still refuse.

"We did have some voters who

insisted on voting without masks, and when that happened they were allowed to do so because there was no formal effort to stop them," said selectboard chair Daniel Keller. "We now have a constable present at the door during all early voting hours and through the election. The constable advises that masks should be worn, and offers a

see **MASKS** page A6

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Town Picks Up PACE Despite Gas Discomfort

By JEFF SINGLETON

On Monday, the Montague selectboard endorsed the town's participation in a state program designed to help commercial property owners convert their buildings to more efficient and "clean" energy, despite criticism that the program would fund natural gas hookups and equipment.

The property assessed clean energy (PACE) program, which has been adopted in a number of other states, is administered by a state

agency called MassDevelopment in collaboration with the Department of Energy Resources. It facilitates bank loans for clean energy upgrades, such as solar power and air-source heat pumps, in exchange for a "betterment assessment" on an owner's property tax bill that will be used to repay the loans through the Montague town treasurer. In theory, the energy savings will offset the cost of the loan payback.

The program is targeted to commercial property, but also can be

see **MONTAGUE** page A7

Volunteers Stack Wood Near Burn Dump, Plant Trees Near Elementary Schools

By JEFF SINGLETON

TURNERS FALLS – "I'm lousy at stacking wood," said Jim McGovern, who was enthusiastically but somewhat defensively pitching in at the local "Wood Bank" in the town of Montague. McGovern happens to represent the town in the US Congress, so we could not resist asking him if he would not prefer to be here stacking wood on a cool but sunny Saturday morning in October than in, say, Washington DC.

After a long pause and raised eyebrows, McGovern responded: "Yes! At least I am getting something done here." There followed a short diatribe on the gridlock in Washington, President Trump, and Republican Senate leader Mitch McConnell.

No wonder Representative McGovern was having difficulty stacking wood.

A few feet away, State Representative Natalie Blais and Senator Joanne Comerford were hard at work and just as happy despite the majority their party now holds on Beacon Hill. "It's so exciting," said Comerford.

Blais commented on the number of local volunteers who were also at the scene, which included town tree committee members, students from the University of Massachusetts forestry club. Even this reporter helped stack wood.

see **WOOD** page A8

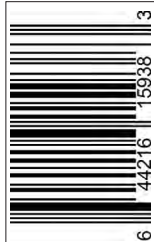


State senator Jo Comerford and US representative Jim McGovern help stack wood at Montague's wood bank.

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Pandemic Work-Arounds

By **NANCY FOLBRE**

National news media have reported that many parents can’t work because of pandemic-related childcare and school closures. It’s great that they are publicizing a very real problem, but the words they are using are all wrong. The problem is not that parents are having a hard time working. They’re having a hard time making money. Taking care of family members is work. Parents’ workload has increased, not decreased.

The official vocabulary of economics defines work as “work for pay,” literally devaluing some of the most productive activities we all engage in. According to the American Time Use Survey, almost half of all work hours in the US – defined as activities that someone else could, in principle, be paid to perform – are unpaid.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted a feature of the social safety net that has long been taken for granted – commitments to family, friends, and neighbors and, especially, to children. Time devoted to unpaid care is rewarding, but also costly. Mothers of young children are particularly likely to experience more stress, less leisure, and lower earnings than other people.

Women are also more likely than men to be employed in the “care sector” of the economy – jobs in health, education, and social services that involve personal, first-name interaction, even when physical contact is supplanted by digital face time. These are the jobs most disrupted and complicated by the pandemic. They are also jobs in which many employees are especially vulnerable to infection.

Paid care jobs have always relied to some extent on unpaid collaborators: teachers have depended on parents to help children adjust to school and do homework; doctors

and nurses have expected family members to help patients transition from hospital to home care. With the pandemic, however, the need for collaboration has intensified. Parents must coordinate online learning for their kids, and telemedicine also requires additional effort. My partner and I just bought a blood pressure monitor and need to learn how to use it because our annual “telemedicine” check-ups can’t perform this function.

I worry that many people are being ground down by increased demands on their time, even as others experience increased financial stress.

As an economist, I have researched these issues for years, and I keep tabs on household surveys that provide some information about how families are being affected by the pandemic. Most of the surveys rely on yes/no or multiple-choice answers, so they don’t paint a clear picture of how people are actually coping with new pressures. Social distancing has made it hard for me to connect with people outside my local neighborhood.

So, I thought it would be interesting to ask *Montague Reporter* readers who are interested to share their experiences with me via email at economist.montague@gmail.com.

What are the challenges you face? How are you coping with them? Do you have suggestions about ways we could help each other out? Alternatively, feel free to vent about what’s going on or to challenge everything I say above. You can keep your emails anonymous if you prefer.

I hope to write a follow-up op-ed or two sharing whatever I learn, and will try to relate it to current research on the national picture.

Nancy Folbre is a Professor Emerita of Economics at UMass-Amherst. She lives in Montague.

CORRECTION

A photo caption in last week’s edition (*Faces and Places*, page A8) contained an error. Stacey Hamel, the photo’s subject, has been advocating for safety barriers on the French King Bridge since her stepson Bryan committed suicide at the site in 2018. “I call him son because I raised him from age

9,” Stacey told the *Reporter*.

Due to an editorial error at our office, our caption mistakenly identified Bryan as her “son-in-law.” We apologize to our readers, and to Stacey and her family, for the error. We are always grateful for the opportunity to set the record straight when a mistake has been made.

Published weekly on Thursdays.
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NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION



Hannah Rose, hailing from Hatfield, played a solo set at the Great Falls Farmers Market in Peskeumskeut Park in Turners Falls on a recent Wednesday. The market will go dormant after next Wednesday, October 28; Holyoke band Eavesdrop will play at 5 p.m. that afternoon to close the season.

Letters to the Editors



Yes On Sunshine

As I sit on my deck with the sun rising, shining on the sugar maples creating the most glorious color spectacle, I realize that there is something to be truly thankful for.

After a less than pleasant summer of heat and drought, Mother Nature has come through in all her splendor at a time when we all need a boost to our morales.

Peg Bridges
Montague Center

No On Question 2

Why I voted against ranked choice voting (Question 2):

1. The true goal of ranked choice voting is to give more votes to fringe parties and candidates, which I tend not to support.
2. Those supporting ranked choice voting are not honest about the true goal but make all sorts of unsupported other arguments, like that it will somehow reduce money in politics, or partisanship, or make your vote count more.
3. There is also the argument that if Florida had ranked choice in 2000, then Ralph Nader’s second votes would have gone to Al Gore,

Jeff Singleton
Turners Falls

No On Symbols of Brutality

I often visit the Big Y on King Street in Northampton when working in that area. Today I was making a small purchase, and saw that the employee helping me was wearing a mask with a “Thin Blue Line” flag on it.

This caught me by surprise; most of the customer-facing jobs I’ve held have not allowed overt political symbols or slogans to be displayed by employees, let alone symbols as upsetting and controversial as I believe this one to be.

I was about to ask to speak to a manager when I looked at the employee’s name tag and saw that they were, in fact, the assistant store manager.

In addition to violating the US Flag Code (4 U.S. Code §8, d and g), I believe this symbol to be a tacit endorsement of police brutality and racist policing policies, a statement that protecting the reputation of the police is more important than protecting the lives of members of our community.

Once back in my vehicle, I called Big Y customer service and spoke with a representative. After explaining my concerns, I was told that Big Y policy is to not infringe on the free expression of their employees, which includes the wearing of political slogans or statements of political support.

I asked the representative if that policy extended to

racist symbols or hate speech, only to have the policy repeated to me again.

After several more questions, I inquired if an employee would be allowed to wear a symbol like a swastika while working at a Big Y store, and was told it had never come up. I asked if the policy would, as written, protect such an action by an employee. After I politely but firmly insisted they give me a direct answer, I was told that it would.

I believe in freedom of expression, and I believe in First Amendment protections firmly, but do not believe it extends to private places of business, or of endorsements of violence, racism, and hate. While I appreciate Big Y’s attempt to respect the diverse views of their employees, I cannot help but be very upset that they would push that so far as to protect employees who wear openly racist and violent symbols.

For this reason, I and my family will no longer be shopping at Big Y stores. I write this letter so that others may be made aware of the behavior of a manager of a Big Y store, and the company policy that allows and encourages it, and make their own decisions about where to shop.

Andrew Irving
Montague Center

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(ORIGINAL CONTENT ONLY, PLEASE)

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By NINA ROSSI

Saturday is the last day to **register to vote** in the coming presidential election on November 3. The League of Women Voters will be at the Greenfield Public Library on Saturday, October 24 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. to answer questions, offer registration information, and help register people to vote. The League is non-partisan, neither supporting or opposing candidates or political parties at any level of government.

Mike's Maze in Sunderland is hosting a "GCC Day" at the popular corn maze this Saturday, October 24. Members of the Greenfield Community College Foundation will be handing out candy to maze-goers, and the Maze will donate \$2 from every ticket to the Foundation.

The Friends of Great Falls Middle School and Turners Falls High School are hosting their first ever **virtual pumpkin decorating contest** for students in those schools. Grab your carving tools or paints and create your best pumpkin design!

For those that are in need of a pumpkin, a limited number will be available this Friday, October 23 from 4 to 5:30 p.m. in the parking lot next to the football field. They hope to provide one per student.

Carve or paint your pumpkin on or before Monday, October 26, and submit a picture to *friends.of.gfms.tfhs@gmail.com*. The photos will

be subject to popular voting process through the Friends' Facebook page. Prizes from local businesses for first, second, and third place winners will be awarded on October 30. Students may enter more than one pumpkin, but can only win once.

Stagehand, a live **theatrical video game** that plays out on Zoom, is being offered by Eggtooth Productions, the Academy of Music, and the Shea Theater on October 22 through 25 at 7 and 9 p.m. each night.

The Nolumbeka Project is hosting a Zoom event this Sunday, October 25, at 1 p.m. called **Indigenous Voices of the Berkshires**. Deborah Spears Moorehead and Annawon Weedon offer "A Wampanoag Perspective 400 Years after the Mayflower." A link to the program may be found on the Project's website: *nolumbekaproject.org*.

Also on Sunday, October 25, venture up to Brattleboro to attend a Pumpkin Painting and Carving Party in the socially-distanced Backlot Cinema at **Epsilon Spires**. The event features a special musical performance by the Lovelights Theatre Troupe (of local Turners Falls fame), a vinyl DJ, costume contest, a "Polaroid Photo Booth," and local seasonal foods.

Each ticket includes a pumpkin, children under 5 are free, and the event will be held from 3 to 5 p.m. Get tickets in advance to save a

spot, because attendance is limited: *epsilonspires.org*.

A three-day **virtual job fair** runs Monday, October 26 through Wednesday, October 28. It's sponsored by the Franklin Hampshire Career Center, so log on to *masshiredhcareers.org* to find out how to participate, and what kind of jobs and training are available.

Eavesdrop will be playing live music at the Great Falls Farmers Market next Wednesday, October 28, the last market of the season. It was a good year for the market, with vendors reporting much higher sales than the previous year, according to market manager Annie Levine.

30 Poems in November! is recruiting writers, poets, and anyone who cares about immigrants to sign up to write and raise funds for the Center for New Americans annual November Write-a-Thon. Participants sign up to write a poem each day in November and share their participation with friends and family.

Now in its 12th year, 30 Poems in November! raised \$58,000 last year to support the Center's free classes in English for speakers of other languages. Participating writers receive daily poetry prompts from event chair Sarah Sullivan, and invitations to attend virtual writing workshops to write in community. Sign up at *cnam.org/event/30-poems-in-november*.

The 2021 Northfield Authors and Artists Festival seeks entries in an **online art show** called *Honoring Nature*. Artists may send up to three images of their work in .jpg or .png format, along with name, town, and a brief statement about how the work honors nature. Files should each be less than 2 MB each in size, and there

are no restrictions on type of media. Submit through *www.authors-andartistsfestival.wordpress.com*.

The LAVA Center in Greenfield is extending their **Saturday Salon** series through November and December. Every Saturday between 1 and 4 p.m. you may enter the gallery and indoor market place at 324 Main Street to shop for locally made arts and crafts. Capacity is limited, and all COVID precautions must be followed. They are also looking for more vendors; contact *vanessa@localaccess.org* if you're interested.

There will be a Light Up the Fairgrounds **Drive-through Holiday Spectacular** this year at the fairgrounds on Wisdom Way in Greenfield. The event will feature 30 juried, dazzling light displays created by community businesses, individuals, and organizations.

Organizers are seeking thoughtful, well-crafted holiday light displays for the three-weekend-long event. There is no cost to enter, but entrants will be responsible for all costs incurred to create the display. Entries will be juried to avoid duplication and ensure balance. Displays will be eligible to win cash prizes. Attendees will cast individual votes and prizes will be awarded at the end of the show, which will run the last weekend in November and the first two in December.

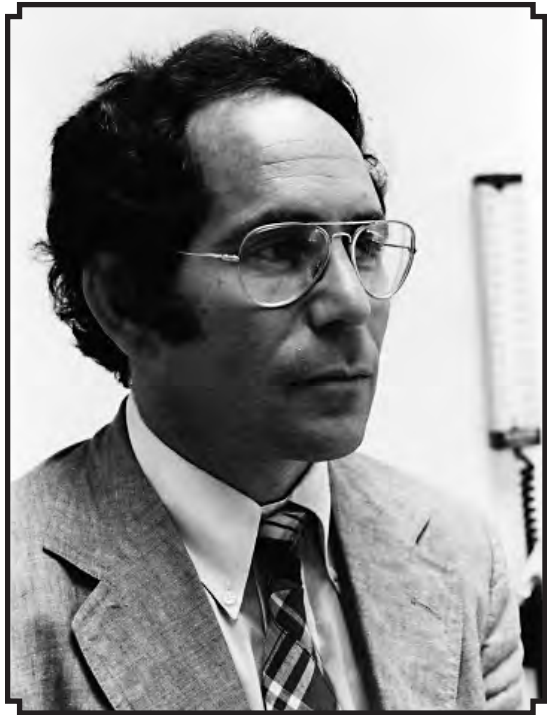
Proceeds from entrance fees will be donated to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Franklin County, the Franklin County Sheriff's Office Regional Dog Shelter, and the Franklin County Fairgrounds. Complete contest rules, event information, and entry forms are available at *www.whai.com*, *bear953.com*, and *bbbs-fc.org*.

Send your local briefs to *editor@montaguereporter.org*.

OBITUARY

Dr. Allen Ross

2/15/1943 – 10/13/2020



MONTAGUE – Dr. Allen Ross died the morning of October 13 at the age of 77 in the company of his children at Quabbin Valley Healthcare, Athol.

Born February 15, 1943 to Harold and Mary Ross in Norwich, CT. In his childhood, Allen was a little league player, and sailor in Long Island Sound. He attended Andover Academy, and Oberlin College, where he starred in the play *The Hairy Ape* by Eugene O'Neill. Allen attended Georgetown Medical School, started as an infectious disease specialist in New York City, and served as chief resident for the emergency room at the Lincoln Memorial Hospital in the Bronx.

His love of small-town country living brought him and his family to Montague, and to the Faren Memorial Hospital. Allen worked with local inventor and builder Jim Slavas to build a one of a kind post-and-beam house on Taylor Hill with spectacular views of the surrounding hills, where Allen ran many early mornings

throughout his life.

Teaming up with several other doctors, Allen helped found Connecticut River Internists in Turners Falls, where he practiced medicine with a thoughtful human connection focus. He was known for running behind schedule, taking time for silly jokes, extra-long conversations with patients' family members, and an attention to detail. He was proud to be "Doc" to hundreds of families in the area.

Allen was similarly connected in his time outside work. He helped renovate and restore the Montague Book Mill, now a community anchor and landmark. In addition to being committed to seeing the old mill come back to life, he had the stone terraces and deck built, and partnered with the Blue Heron Restaurant. Allen also helped compile a video history of the building, documenting its start as an old grist mill and then a machine shop making the stamps for baseball bats, including the Louisville Slugger.

His devotion to conservation also included service on the Board of Directors of Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust, where he served as Treasurer. He was steadfast in his work to protect the land along the Connecticut River including Red Fire Farm and his own property on Meadow Road.

Allen cared about history and the environment, but he also cared deeply for his town, serving as Selectman for the town of Montague. He helped support plans to revitalize Turners Falls as an affordable and beautiful place to live and also a center for the arts. Many mornings he could be seen walking with his dog down to the Montague Mini-Mart to buy the newspaper, building stone towers "cairns," and picking up

any roadside trash along the way.

As a lifelong athlete, running the New York Marathon over ten times, and dozens of 10K races, Allen helped start two local road races, the Montague Mug Race and the New Year's Day Sawmill River Run. He felt that exercise was a wonderful way to bring community together. Allen was also a frequent participant in the Josh Billings Triathlon in Lenox, MA, the Greenfield Triathlon, and local canoe races including multiple top-forty finishes in the Rat Race. Allen finished four General Clinton 70-mile races. His many canoe and running partners described his unflagging enthusiasm and competitive spirit.

Allen was a devoted father and grandfather, taking his family on canoe camping trips, downhill ski trips, and hikes in all kinds of weather. It was not unusual to hear him say, "There is no such thing as poor weather, just poor preparation." Allen leaves behind his wife, travel partner, scrabble opponent, and favorite baker, Norma Johnson. He also leaves behind his two children Daniel Ross and Emma Ellsworth, five grandchildren, and numerous paddle and running buddies.

The family will donate Allen's property on the Connecticut River to Mount Grace Land Trust to be made publicly accessible in his honor. Allen would take great pleasure in knowing that generations of people will share his delight in this peaceful spot to launch their boats, and watch the bald eagles soar over the river.

A memorial to Allen Ross and a dedication of the "Allen Ross Memorial Canoe Put-in" will be held in the Spring.

Witty's Funeral Home, 158 South Main Street, Orange, is assisting the family. You may offer your sympathy online at *wittysfuneralhome.com*.

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BOARDING from page A1

similar in size and enrollment to NMH, also chose to bring students back to campus this semester. Many of the two schools' COVID-19 prevention protocols are similar, with Deerfield students also undergoing repeated testing and following health-related guidelines.

In early September, Deerfield Academy reported its first positive student COVID-19 test result, although it may have been a false positive. The student produced two negative results immediately following the positive, and none of the 18 identified close contacts tested positive.

On October 16, however, Deerfield Academy reported another positive COVID-19 case on campus, which was recorded on the school's COVID-19 dashboard. Attempts to reach the school's administration were unsuccessful as of press time, but information available on the Academy's website states that the school enters a quarantine period after each positive case.

"When we have a positive case on campus, there will be many emotions and many questions," reads the Deerfield Academy Positive COVID-19 Case Protocol. "One of the best ways we can support our community health is by refraining from creating a communications crisis with inaccurate information. Deerfield Academy is committed to communicating promptly and transparently with all

community members and families, as well as with the greater community, but please allow the school time to ensure that accurate information is being shared."

Keeping Distance

Other independent boarding schools in the area have made different plans for this academic semester in light of the pandemic. Stoneleigh-Burnham, which is usually home to roughly 140 students, is spending the first half of the year off-campus, in part due to its large proportion of international students. At the all-girls' academy, international students make up 45 percent of the total enrollment. Luebbers says that returning to in-person classes this year wasn't an option, as dozens of students would be unable to re-enter the country.

Instead, Stoneleigh-Burnham School is using a new online education platform, Canvas, for remote learning this year. Although the school usually operates on a trimester system, administrators are thinking of this year in halves. If students are invited back to campus at all, it won't be until at least January 2021.

"What we said to families is that we're building a plan to have students back on campus for the second half of the year," Luebbers said. "We haven't figured out all the particulars, nor have we announced a calendar, but it's our intention to have them here." She added that

the plans will also depend on state, national, and international information and guidance.

For a small school like Stoneleigh-Burnham, inviting students back to campus comes with more serious conversations about how space can be best set up to ensure physical distancing. Students at Stoneleigh Burnham all live on the upstairs floor of a single building and take classes below, oftentimes sharing bathrooms and hallways in the dorm. At a larger school, physical distancing of students could be accomplished much more easily.

"Our classrooms are small, so we're going to have to mothball quite a few classrooms," Luebbers says. "If you think about social distancing, even while wearing masks, in many of our classrooms you would have a teacher and two students. So we have a lot of work to do on that."

Administrators understand that emotions are fraught among students and families, as well as faculty and staff members, this semester. Parents, however, seem to understand and appreciate the plans set forth by the schools. Luebbers says that she hasn't experienced any complaints about the school's contingency planning.

Building a Bubble

Northfield Mount Hermon, just nine miles northeast of Stoneleigh-Burnham, invited students back to campus in August. With

over 600 students and a boarding rate of 83 percent, the school has implemented strict travel and testing policies.

Academic bubbles are difficult to build and maintain – no students are permitted off campus, rigorous testing is required, and the surrounding communities are rife with anxiety about potential outbreaks. At NMH, day students are also allowed on campus, which increases the school's need for fast and effective sanitation capabilities.

Over the spring and summer, administrators at NMH developed protocols for every aspect of the campus bubble. For students to be able to return to dorm buildings and attend in-person classes, the school had to first complete "a lot of preparation to set up the campus in a way that would be conducive to student safety," according to Philip Hood, the school's chief advancement officer.

One of the first changes to be implemented was the closure of two public roads which previously served as campus access points. The school has received approval from the Gill selectboard to close the roads through December at minimum. Now, visitors can only enter and exit via the main gate on Route 10, where a welcome hut has been set up on Lamplighter Way. Upon arrival, all visitors including day students must present a health screening, which includes a fever check see **BOARDING** next page

NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

New Police; Storm Aftermath; Tax Questions; Squatter?

By JOSH HEINEMANN

Ed Chase has retired as Wendell's police chief, and the Leverett department began its role as Wendell's department for a 90-day trial period on October 15.

The original intention for the 90-day trial was for Leverett officers to come to Wendell only in response to a call, but the Wendell selectboard has received so many complaints recently about people driving too fast that they decided to ask for some patrols in town as well. At a prior meeting, road commission chair Phil Delorey said he thought enforcement was needed.

The idea of a mailing to Wendell residents about the speed enforcement was suggested, but postponed until the regular townwide newsletter, scheduled for December.

Wendell will pay \$3,667 per month – \$44,000 divided by 12, rounded up – to Leverett for the police service. The details of a finished contract between the towns have not been fleshed out, as the relationship is new, but the board sent a memorandum of understanding to Leverett to begin the process of establishing the mechanics of administration.

At the board's October 14 meeting, chair Dan Keller suggested that the police succession committee would be a start for a liaison between the towns.

Selectboard member Gillian Budine said that Leverett officers should learn Wendell's bylaws. Town coordinator Nancy Aldrich said her assistant Joy Gorzocoski had compiled the bylaws, but they are not compiled as they relate to policing.

Leverett chief Scott Minckler had been unable to attend the meet-and-greet that followed Wendell's September 26 special town meeting, and Keller suggested 2 p.m. this Saturday, October 24 for Wendell citizens to meet him on the Wendell common. Since the meeting, Minckler agreed to that time.

Selectboard members signed a letter thanking Chase, and planned to get signatures from earlier members of the board, including Ted Lewis, Margot Culley, and Jeff Pooser if he can be found.

Windstorm Effects

Erratic closing of roads and loss of electricity

that resulted from the sudden wind and rain on October 7 brought up a concern for finding out how residents are faring when services and access are interrupted, and communicating hazards.

After the 2008 ice storm, neighborhood captains took on the job of checking on their neighbors, but fire chief Joe Cuneo wanted a more formal and accountable structure. A reverse-911 system, which could warn people of road closures, is expensive, and would not reach everyone in town because some residents use cell phones, and the new voice over internet (VOIP) phones need electricity to work.

Cuneo and emergency management director Lonny Ricketts are invited to the next selectboard meeting on October 28 to discuss how to check on residents during emergencies and warn them of hazards.

Forestry Concerns

Assessor Anna Seeger Zoomed in for a discussion about whether the property tax exemption on agricultural equipment applies to forestry. She said the board of assessors voted to follow state Department of Revenue guidelines.

Logger Jake Doody called in as well, wanting to know whether his equipment would be taxed. Seeger asked for a joint meeting on the topic with the selectboard, finance committee, and assessors as soon as possible.

In an email sent after the meeting, Seeger wrote, "I could see how this could be confusing to some because there are areas of life where logging is included with farming. For example CISA (community supported agriculture) includes loggers and saw mills. However, when it comes to financial tax assessment, the DOR guidance is clear that commercial logging is not agriculture."

Wendell's new tree warden, Cliff Dornbusch, called in wanting clarification of his authority and responsibility. Town coordinator Nancy Aldrich referred him to the state website.

Dornbusch, an arborist and tree worker, asked whether he could hire himself, and if he could charge for his work and expenses. His tree warden budget has enough money to cut only two or three trees. His responsibility coordinates with the road crew and highway commission, and the board suggested that he talk with them.

Corrine Baker, the previous tree warden, had called for a survey of dangerous trees in town – trees likely to fall onto wires, houses, or roads – but that survey has not been completed.

Selectboard member Laurie DiDonato wondered if that survey would leave the town liable if some of those trees identified were not removed. Aldrich said that New Salem, which had taken a similar survey, only had to show reasonable progress to keep insurance costs even.

Other Business

The second round of applications for reimbursing towns for extra costs related to the COVID-19 pandemic is coming up.

Budine said Wendell's share of an air-handling system at Swift River School is \$35,000, an expense that should be allowed in the grant. If it is not, the school, and then Wendell and New Salem, will be responsible.

Moderator Katie Nolan asked if microphones for use at outdoor town meetings could be covered.

Treasurer Carolyn Manley reported that the three town-owned properties taken for unpaid taxes and recently sold at auction will bring in \$98,000.

Cuneo had not yet answered an email about a practice burn of the fourth property, at 40 Gate Lane. Manley said the "No Trespassing" sign there was replaced with a picture of a cat and the words, "Please Don't Kick Me Out," which led to the speculation that someone may be squatting there.

Keller suggested that the road crew should board the house up, and agreed to go to the property and check it out.

Selectboard members said they are looking forward to the end of their time serving as the town's Municipal Light Plant (MLP) board, and to their task of appointing a new MLP board. The salary for MLP board members will be \$0, and its manager will receive a stipend, in line with most town positions in Wendell.

DiDonato said the broadband committee has spent time developing job descriptions for the MLP board members and manager. Several people have expressed interest in serving on the MLP board, and Keller said they should submit letters of intent.

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BOARDING from prev. page
and a symptom questionnaire.

Inside the NMH gates, all students, faculty and staff are required to adhere to campus safety policies. “Even when walking alone, our precedent right now is for students to be wearing a mask and practicing social distancing at all times,” says Hood.

In the dorm buildings, some rooms are single occupancy and others are double. Upon move-in in early August, students were assigned to “pods” along with others in nearby dorms. These pods moved together throughout the first few rounds of testing – students only left the dorm buildings with their pod members, and returned together after eating meals.

According to the school’s emergency protocols, each individual on campus has a “pod space” which they are required to return to in the event of an outbreak. For boarding students, these spaces are dorm rooms. Day students who commute to campus have designated pod spaces, which they can return to throughout the day.

Aside from some specific athletic programs like cross country, individual dorm rooms are the only place on the NMH campus where students are allowed to remove their masks while on campus, Hood says. Because of that, day students are required to

leave their masks on at all times. In classrooms, the library, common areas, and the dining hall, mask and physical distancing policies remain.

Cycles of Testing

Perhaps the most important facet of the Northfield Mount Hermon operating plan is the school’s COVID testing protocol. The school partnered with the Broad Institute in Cambridge – which also performs testing for MIT and Harvard, as well as 100 other schools – to complete all tests.

Broad brings the tests back to Cambridge, where they are generally analyzed within 48 hours. Back at Northfield Mount Hermon, all faculty, staff and students have an app which alerts them of their test results in real time. The on-campus health center is also made aware of all results, which helps keep the school’s COVID-19 dashboard up to date.

As of October 1, NMH students had undergone four test cycles, which are mandatory and paid for by student families. The school has not yet had positive cases in any community members, including faculty and staff.

Should any test return positive, all students would report to their pod spaces, and faculty would commence contact tracing. Hood says that boarding students would

then likely take courses remotely until a negative result followed, and day students told not to come back to campus during that time. If students needed to be quarantined for a significant amount of time, there are pre-arranged methods to deliver courses remotely, which vary by subject.

“In the event that we did need to remove students from campus because of a catastrophic breakout, we have made those plans,” Hood says. The current plan is a 48-hour campus evacuation procedure, similar to what many schools and colleges underwent in March. “Of course, that’s the red button that no one wants to push,” Hood adds.

Western Massachusetts is home to a number of prestigious and independent boarding schools, all of which have separate conditions to consider in regards to the COVID-19 pandemic. As of now, the bubble system appears to be working at Northfield Mount Hermon and elsewhere. Remote learning, which remains more common in higher education, also plays an important role, especially for schools with higher international student rates like Stoneleigh Burnham.

“We’ve seen an array of plans from boarding schools in northern New England,” Luebbers says. “Each school has its own unique situation.”



MONTAGUE ENERGY CORNER

Make Your Home Cozier for the Winter

By SALLY PICK

MONTAGUE – Despite the limits of COVID-19 safety precautions, homeowners and renters can reduce chilly drafts and wasted energy by taking advantage of Mass Save’s weatherization incentives for 75% to 100% off qualifying insulation, depending on your income.

The program also offers 0% HEAT Loans for a broad range of energy upgrades, like efficient heating systems and appliances. With more people working from home, it’s an opportune time to tap Mass Save’s programs to lower ongoing heating and electric costs, while enjoying a cozier home.

Mass Save contractors performing weatherization installations take COVID safety precautions recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), such as wearing masks and social distancing, and Mass Save requires all participating contractors to be trained in safety measures to protect customers and contractors alike.

The program currently offers homeowners and renters safe, free, virtual energy assessments to help identify energy and cost-saving improvements. To participate in a virtual energy assessment, you must have full access to the house and the ability to install recommended energy-saving products given out by the program (i.e. lightbulbs), be comfortable working with an energy specialist over the phone, and either be able to use technology such as Facetime or send photos of your home by email. If you meet these requirements, you can schedule a virtual energy assessment by calling Mass Save at 1 (866) 527-SAVE.

For those not able to perform a virtual energy assessment, Mass Save can schedule in-person assessments. When possible, increasing ventilation in spaces where Mass

Save contractors are working can help reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19. The Environmental Protection Agency recommends, “For double-hung windows (the most common type), opening the top sash of one window and the bottom sash of another... [to encourage] ventilation. Even when using a single window, partially opening both the top and bottom sash can help improve ventilation.” Opening several windows and doors for cross ventilation is more effective, but if it’s cold outside, you could, at minimum, run a fan blowing out an open window during the assessment.

FYI, Mass Save and their participating contractors are already very busy performing energy assessments and upgrades, so I recommend contacting them as soon as you can, to get on their schedule before winter.

If your home has barriers to moving ahead with weatherization upgrades, such as knob-and-tube wiring, asbestos, or vermiculite insulation, Mass Save offers sizeable grants for removing those barriers: up to \$7,000 to remove knob-and-tube wiring or vermiculite, and up to \$4,000 for removing asbestos.

Following your energy assessment, Mass Save may provide you with free energy-saving items, including ENERGY STAR® LED lightbulbs, advanced power strips, low-flow showerheads and faucet aerators, and efficient thermostats. If you have a virtual assessment, they will ship items to your door.

Before insulating your home, a Mass Save contractor should first seal up gaps and air holes, at no cost, such as in your attic and basement and around doors, to prevent the chimney effect of warm air rising through your home, pulling cold air into living spaces through those cracks. Combined, these small holes and cracks in a home

typically add up to a continuously-open window the size of a basketball! After Mass Save plugged up air leaks in my house, including a big gap around the chimney in my attic that was pulling warm air up the inside of the walls from downstairs, and added weather stripping and door sweeps to my doors, I immediately noticed that my home felt warmer and less drafty.

Next, they’ll install qualifying insulation where possible. The highest-priority areas for adding insulation and slowing the chimney effect are your attic (first priority) and basement (second priority), along the rim joist, where the basement ceiling and sill meet exterior walls. Installers can add insulation to the walls of most homes from outside and may be able to install attic insulation with minimal access to your home.

Renters may receive the same free energy-saving items as homeowners (like LED lightbulbs and low-flow showerheads) after participating in a virtual or in-person energy assessment. Income-eligible renters will be directed to the energy programs at Community Action Pioneer Valley, and may qualify for no-cost ENERGY STAR® certified refrigerators, freezers, and/or dehumidifiers to replace old, inefficient ones. With your landlord’s permission, Mass Save or Community Action can seal air leaks and insulate your building at significant discounts or no cost to the owner, depending on the income levels of renters in the building.

For more information about the incentives and rebates that Mass Save offers, or to schedule an energy assessment, call 1 (866) 527-SAVE (7283). You can read more about their energy assessment programs and incentives at www.masssave.com.

Sally Pick is a member of the Montague energy committee.

NOTICE OF COMMUNITY INFORMATIONAL SESSION

The Montague Planning and Conservation Department will moderate a remote meeting with the principals of **Greenhouse Cannabis Group, Inc.** d/b/a Greenhouse Mobility Solutions, who are planning to locate a web-based cannabis delivery business within a storefront at **41A East Main Street** in Millers Falls. The specific use will be an administrative and technology development office. No cannabis products will be stored or sold on-site. The project will require a Zoning Special Permit and a Host Community Agreement from the Town of Montague as well as a license from the State Cannabis Control Commission. This is an initial chance for dialogue between the community and the project proponents.

Wednesday, November 4, 2020 at 5:30 PM
ZOOM Meeting ID: 987 1493 6923 Passcode: 387266
Dial In: 1 (646) 558-8656

More information and direct links can be found at www.montague-ma.gov

FARREN from page A1

The Division is requiring Trinity to assess each resident’s needs and “document sufficient preparation and orientation” to “transfer or discharge” them safely from the Montague City care center; and to show plans for staffing during the closure, “securing the campus,” and assisting Farren staff.

Trinity has said Farren employees are welcome to apply to work at Mount Saint Vincent. State representative Natalie Blais has said she has secured assurances from Secretary of Health and Human Services Marylou Sudders to support a plan for six-month severance pay and job placement aid from MassHire for those who do not make the transition to Holyoke.

The Division is also requiring Trinity to make a plan to test all residents for COVID-19 within three days prior to their transfer.

The company must respond to the Division’s requests by October 28. “We are working on a comprehensive action plan to address all of the areas that the state asked us to respond to,” Trinity spokesperson Christine Looby told the *Reporter* this week.

Hopes for a Delay

“We consider DPH’s rejection of the closure plan as presented to be a significant victory,” said David Roulston, a Greenfield attorney who currently serves as a guardian for six Farren residents. “We couldn’t ask for anything better.”

Roulston has been working alongside family members of residents, former Farren employees, and other guardians to pressure the state to slow the timeline of the closure.

“We’re hoping that DPH takes a long look at this, and we can then bring the political battle to Beacon Hill, and to the governor’s office,” Roulston said. “If he can suspend the right to a jury trial in this COVID-crazy environment, and suspend the right to go to church, he certainly has the authority to stop this process.”

On Monday, the *Boston Globe* published a lengthy article on the proposed Farren closure of the Farren and Mount Saint Vincent sale. The *Globe* piece ran through the numbers, and raised the basic question of whether the Holyoke facility would be prepared to accommodate the Montague patients by December.

Trinity told the newspaper that 58 of Mount Saint Vincent’s 125 beds are now in use; iCare’s plan is to transfer in 92 Farren residents over a four-month period. The majority of the Holyoke nursing home’s current charges, who tend to be significantly older but not in need of the same degree of specialized care, would be displaced elsewhere.

A spokesperson for the state Ex-

ecutive Office of Health and Human Services did not answer a question from the *Reporter* as to whether the timeline for the Farren closure is now expected to extend past December, but confirmed that the closure is a separate process from the review of iCare’s suitability to acquire Mount Saint Vincent.

A Done Deal?

Sister Kathleen Popko, president of the Sisters of Providence, the Catholic order that has historically been involved in operating both care centers, told the *Globe* that in the long run Mount Saint Vincent is intended to take care of the special-needs residents the state has been sending to the Farren. Sister Popko also pointed to difficulties in hiring qualified staff at Montague in explaining the need to close the facility.

iCare’s suitability application for takeover of Mount Saint Vincent, filed in late August, also states that the Farren’s “location has had a limiting effect on the labor pool,” and also explained that “critical service areas... such as laundry, food service, and boiler plant” had made the building “highly inefficient from a staffing perspective as well as a heating and cooling perspective” since the closure of its once-connected hospital facility.

As for the Holyoke home, the document asserts that Trinity “expressed a desire to exit MSV in May 2020 following a significant drop in census as a result of COVID-19. The resident census was nearly 120 about 12 months ago and is now under 70.”

According to state data, over 30 positive cases have been detected at Mount Saint Vincent, resulting in 13 deaths, all before July.


iCare’s application included financial data showing that Trinity ran Mount Saint Vincent at a \$705,816 operational deficit in 2018, the last year for which a balance sheet was included, and a business plan projecting a \$234,122 operational surplus for the first year under its new ownership.

The projections in iCare’s plan were based on specific assumptions about patient transfers from the Farren – and specific patient reimbursement rates during and after the transfer period – laid out in an agreement signed by the company’s chief financial officer and Amanda Cassel Kraft, the state’s acting Medicaid director, on July 30. Trinity would not go public with its plan to close the Farren until two weeks later.

“I knew they were laying the groundwork and grooming state officials for this, so it doesn’t come as a surprise,” said Roulston of the August announcement. “But if public input has any meaning at all, no firm decision should be made until the people who are really affected are consulted.”



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The Turners Falls High School field hockey team stretches before a home game, masks on, physically distancing, amongst the fall scenery.

This Month in Turners Falls Sports

By MATT ROBINSON

GILL-MONTAGUE – With apologies to Maria Grever, “What a Diff’rence a Year Makes.”

I won’t go into detail how the world has changed over the last eight months, because you’ve lived it. I will, however, speak a little about the Turners Falls field hockey team, who are currently on top of their game.

After getting knocked out of the playoffs by Smith Academy last year, TFFH has put together a string of victories before suffering their only loss against perennial top dog Greenfield.

The COVID-shortened season began on October 2 with a 6-1 road win against Mahar. In that game, Brynn Tela scored three goals and gave an assist, Brooke Thayer, Paige Sulda, and Jade Tyler also scored goals, and Hannah Marchefka added two assists. In goal, Haleigh Greene kicked away four shots on goal.

With the opening day win under their belts, they traveled to South Deerfield on Tuesday the sixth to take on the reigning Western Mass Champions. The Frontier Red Hawks have a storied tradition, and for the last several years, they have played Greenfield for the Western Mass Championship. But this is a new year.

“I didn’t know Turners was that good,” one of the Frontier fans exclaimed as Turners built a 2-1 half-time lead. But they are that good. Powertown doubled their lead in the second half, taking the game 4-2

Field Hockey

TFHS 6 – Mahar 1
TFHS 4 – Frontier 1
TFHS 6 – Pioneer 1
TFHS 1 – Mohawk 0
TFHS 6 – FCTS 0
Greenfield 5 – TFHS 2

and unseating the lofty Red Hawks in the process.

New guy Logan Addison scored three goals in this one, with Marchefka slapping in the other. Tela and Thayer helped out with assists.

Turners then played their home opener on October 9 against the Pioneer Panthers, defeating the Cats 6-1. Blue was firing on all cylinders in this game. Passing was crisp, attacks were coordinated, and although most of the action was in enemy territory, when the Pioneers did drive into Turners’ side, the defense rose up to break up the play.

This was a total team effort, with six players scoring points. Tela (3), Thayer, Sulda, and Addison put up goals while Kaylin Voudren, Olivia Whittier, and Tela gave assists.

With their three-game winning streak on the line, Turners headed up the trail to take on Mohawk. This was a close one, as both teams were kept out of the net for most of the game, but Sulda hit pay dirt in the fourth quarter to give the visiting Thunder the 1-0 win.

Although both teams had difficulty scoring, Turners kept the pressure on throughout most of the game. The Mohawk goalkeeper was forced to make 16 saves while Greene had only two shots come her way.

Powertown’s next challenge

came last Thursday, October 15 from cross-street rivals Franklin Tech. The play was in Tech’s end for the entire opening quarter, but Turners could never finish their attacks as Tech goalie Kiera Baleno made one spectacular save after another.

But the Eagles simply couldn’t keep up. Turners scored three goals in the second period and three more in the third for a final score of 6-0.

Tela and Whittier each scored two goals and gave an assist, while Thayer and Addison both scored single goals. Greene and Cady Wozniak shared goaltending duties, and both made one save.

Then, this Tuesday, Greenfield came to town.

Powertown came out hot, forcing most of the action in the Green zone, but the Wave’s D kept the ball away from the goal. With Powertown unable to capitalize, the first quarter ended in a 0-0 tie.

Green mounted their first attack into Turners’ territory early in the second, and scored on that first attempt. Their second goal came shortly thereafter. Green intercepted the ball in their own end and ran a disorganized attack all the way to the Thunder net.

This game-changer gave Greenfield confidence, and Turners found themselves playing back on their heels, desperately throwing their sticks and bodies against Greenfield’s unrelenting attacks.

These individual heroics kept the margin at 2-0 going into the second half. Although Powertown managed to score two goals in the second half, Green topped them with three

HOCKEY from page A1

only 14 players are allowed to play on the field at one time, while beforehand the number of players was 22 – a 37% decrease in the number of active players.

In order to participate in daily practice, each player is asked a list of “Yes” or “No” questions in order to determine whether players have COVID-like symptoms. In addition, during every practice coaches and players must wear a mask at all times. Each player is responsible for their individual ball, and at the end of each practice is required to thoroughly sanitize it.

Even the bus ride to the game has been majorly changed. Presently, the whole team including coaches are allowed to travel on the bus to games. However, on every seat there is a duct tape “X” specifically placed to signify where each person is confined to sit. Masks must be worn at all times.

Fans and parents are now allowed to attend games, but they are required to stay within their vehicles, and distant from the field.

During the game, there are four 15-minute quarters, instead of two 30-minute halves. This noticeable change in time param-

eters has allowed for more breaks during game time, which allows for more strategizing among coaches and players. Which poses the question: Is field hockey the same sport, with all of the current COVID amendments?

Possibly the *most* gut-wrenching change for the competitive field hockey athlete is the fact that there will not be a Western Mass Field Hockey Championship.

Through the eyes of an active player, field hockey is not the same sport as it was due to the coronavirus. I feel more pressure on the field hockey field. The constant fear of “shut-down,” and the possible loss of an already short senior season, is a constant reminder of the changes in the game I love.

Some changes are more tolerable than others, and what COVID will *not* change is my ability to create hilarious memories, turn close friendships into family, work immensely hard, and make a positive experience, even in this time of great inconvenience.

Haleigh Greene is a senior studying journalism at Turners Falls High School.



MASKS from page A1

mask at the door.”

Wendell resident Mary Thomas was first in line to cast her vote last Saturday morning. She said a man arrived after her without a mask, so she offered him one, but he refused.

“He followed me inside where the poll worker offered him a mask. Again he said, ‘They don’t work,’” Thomas said. “I explained to him that masks are meant to protect the people around us from any virus we might be shedding, whether or not we have symptoms.”

“The poll worker and I are both senior citizens,” Thomas continued. “We were indoors in a confined public space, where we’re told the aerosolized virus spreads most easily. I got very nervous, voted quickly, and left as soon as I could, but the poll worker had to stay.”

On May 2, the state issued a public health

mandate requiring anyone over the age of two to wear a mask covering their nose and mouth indoors, in public, and anywhere where social distancing is not possible. Anyone who violates the order could receive a civil fine of up to \$300.

According to Wendell board of health chair Barbara Craddock, the town has issued no fines to date for failure to wear a mask indoors in public spaces.

“Never-maskers are more likely to pick up the virus and pass it on. Far more likely than people who wear them whenever they are appropriate or those who might forget now and then. It’s math,” said Douglas Tanner, chair of the Wendell finance committee. “So those who think it’s their ‘right’ are endangering my life in exchange for a little inconvenience on their part. It isn’t a matter of personal choice any more than driving on the wrong side of the road.”

Naked-faced voters may still cast their ballots at the town hall if they arrive on Election Day or during early voting hours, according to Keller. Under a new protocol, they will first be offered a mail-in ballot form to complete outdoors, but if they still refuse, the voters will be directed to an isolated table designated for the un-masked. Before that happens, the town hall must be cleared of all other voters, and some poll workers will be given the option to leave the room.

Wendell took cues for this plan from New Salem town clerk Stacy Senflug, who in turn had consulted the Secretary of State’s Elections Division for further guidance after unmasked voters attended the annual town meeting and primary in her town. An attempt to reach the legal counsel at the Elections Division for comment was unsuccessful as of press time.

Across the country and in western Mas-

sachusetts, early voting is being encouraged to reduce long lines at the polls and make social distancing easier. In Wendell, early voting began on October 17 and continues through October 30, every day of the week from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., except on Wednesdays, when it takes place from 6 to 8 p.m.

In Montague, early voting is taking place through October 29 at the Gill-Montague senior center. (See page B2 for hours.)

“We haven’t had to deal with that yet. Everyone in Montague has been perfectly perfect,” town clerk Debra Bourbeau told the *Reporter*. “This is going to be our third or fourth election with COVID, and we haven’t run into that all year long.”

“If and when that day comes,” Bourbeau added, “we’ll offer a mask to them.... We cannot disenfranchise them from voting for not wearing a face mask.”



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ERVING from page A1
whether additional members could be added. All three board members said no.

Later, Rollins asked the board to read aloud all of the letters of interest. Board member William Bem-bury said that copies of the letters were available as part of the public record, and that the board had made its decision, and would move on to other topics. Board members Jacob Smith and Peter Sanders concurred.

The board also reviewed a draft policy for the police department’s drug recognition expert (DRE). According to the International Association of DREs, a DRE is “a police officer trained to recognize impairment in drivers under the influence of drugs other than, or in addition to, alcohol.” Officer Adam Paicos has been a certified DRE, working with other county departments “for years,” said Bryan Smith.

The policy would establish how the officer would work with other towns, and whether and how Erving would be reimbursed for the service.

Bem-bury asked whether the officer would be available for Erving patrols while acting as DRE, and whether he would be paid overtime for court appearances. He recommended that the program should be evaluated after operating for three to six months if the DRE works in other towns. Sanders asked whether other towns would pay for the officer’s time, and who would pay for DRE training.

The board decided to continue the discussion on October 26 with Paicos and acting police chief Robert Holst present.

Streets and Streetlights

Bryan Smith reported that the street and sidewalk construction project at River, Warner and Strachan streets was “going well... until paving last week.”

The paving was installed to conform with metal drainage and sewer structures already in place, but the structures had not been adjusted to allow for the correct grading of the pavement. During the recent rain the project engineer, highway superintendent Glenn McCrory, and Smith observed water sheeting across the road, rather than flowing into the catch basins. Smith said he would meet with the engineer and the contractor to discuss the problem.

Erving has received three responses to a request for quotes (RFQ) for installing streetlights. The lowest bidder was a contractor whose previous work did not satisfy the selectboard, and the next two bids were for the identical amount.

Bryan Smith contacted the state attorney general’s office, which replied that the town could either use a coin toss, ask the two remaining contractors to provide new quotes, or cancel the project.

The board decided to use a coin toss. Bryan Smith said he would contact the two contractors and involve them in a virtual coin toss.

A different project, to repair the decorative streetlights in Erving Center, received only one contractor bid. Although the town had estimated the project at \$10,000, the bid was for \$80,000. The selectboard decided to fail the bid. Bryan Smith said he would talk with the bidder, and find out why there was a significant difference between the town’s estimate and the bid.

Other Business

The board reviewed draft procurement documents for the design of several projects: a dry storage shed for the department of public works; office space for the same department; and the renovation or expansion of the town hall.

The board approved releasing an RFQ for up to \$30,000 for the

first two projects by November 4, but citing numerous ongoing projects, decided to delay a decision on the town hall upgrade until an unspecified date.

The board reviewed three bids for designing a new virtual server for the town and migrating the town’s data onto it. The lowest was rejected because it considered only two of the six tasks specified. The other two were significantly different: \$2,500 from Suzor IT of Athol, and \$18,448 from Northeast IT of Westfield.

Bryan Smith said he had discussed the project with Suzor, and said he felt the company had a good understanding of what needed to be done. Planning assistant Mariah Kurtz said Suzor’s references had checked out positive. Still, Smith and Kurtz said Suzor still needed to answer several questions, so the board decided to revisit the bids on October 26.

The board approved a \$3,400 estimate from Brodeur-Campbell Fence Co. of Springfield for repairing the historical building fence, and installing a new fence along the west side of the West Main Street municipal lot.

The board considered seasonal snowflake, star, and penguin lighted designs for mounting on Erving Center light poles. Members said they liked many of the designs, and seemed ready to select several of each, with a preference for at least one penguin.

Kurtz recommended “all matching or mostly matching” designs. The board asked her to select two penguin lights and one other light design to fit the \$3,500 budget.

Jacob Smith said he had attended the October 8 drive-through winter flu vaccination clinic at the Erving Senior Center, and praised the organizers for an “efficient and well-organized” event. Bryan Smith said 164 people received flu shots.



MONTAGUE BOARD OF HEALTH STATEMENT

Regarding Halloween

The Montague Board of Health wants to convey their point of view on how to keep Halloween both spooktacular and safe this year for all Montague residents!

Halloween door to door trick or treating is happening at the discretion of individual households located in Montague, with the following safety tips:

- The limit of indoor gatherings remains at a maximum of 25 people with social distancing protocols in place.
- The limit of outdoor gatherings at private households and private backyards remains at a maximum of 50 people with social distancing protocols in place.
- Outdoors gatherings at event venues and in public settings will have a limit of 100 people in Step 2 communities, which Montague is.

The annual Rag Shag parade has been **canceled** for this year, and the committee hopes to see everyone in costume for the parade in October 2021!

Sincerely,

Daniel Wasiuk, Director of Public Health
Albert Cummings, Chair, Montague Board of Health

MONTAGUE from page A1

used for apartment buildings of five units or more. The betterment assessment remains with the property via a lien even if the building is sold.

Montague’s energy committee (MEC) was split on whether the town should enter the program, and energy liaison Ariel Elan strongly opposed it. The sticking point for Elan and some other members was that it could be used to fund natural gas upgrades.

Julie Cowan, an official at MassDevelopment serving the “western region,” attended the meeting. Cowan explained PACE to the selectboard, noting that she had attended a meeting of the MEC last winter and discussed the program with members individually. She called the program an “important development tool” for the town.

“We’ve all seen the news where other parts of our state have enjoyed property values that have increased dramatically over the last few years, and we haven’t had the benefit of that in western Massachusetts,” she said. “PACE would provide a different type of finance that is less reliant on the property value.”

Peter Chilton, a co-owner of Nova Motorcycles in Turners Falls, said that he had investigated applying for a bank loan for a solar array, but found that the down payment and monthly cost were more than the business could afford. Chilton said the business had not committed to the PACE program, but “right now, it is the only option.”

Elan began her presentation by stating she was a strong supporter of the original goal of PACE, which was partly to reduce the use of greenhouse gas emitting fuel sources like fossil fuels. She said she was “deeply sad” that the program which finally emerged from the legislature would also fund “pipeline extensions” from commercial gas lines, as well as the installation of natural gas equipment.

Referencing the successful opposition to natural gas pipeline that was proposed to run through Franklin County a few years ago, Elan expressed concern that state laws benefiting energy industries were “put there by those industries as a direct result of their influence over government officials and staff.”

Chris Mason, also of the energy committee, supported Montague’s adoption of the program. Mason said he did not believe that natural gas would be chosen by businesses in most situations because there is a moratorium on new hookups, and because air-source heat pumps run by electricity would likely prove less expensive

“The three of us that voted [for the program],” he said, “I guess that we just did not see a practical danger in having natural gas as part of this.”

Selectboard member Mike Nelson said he shared Elan’s concerns about natural gas, but “would hesitate making that an impediment. It sounds like there are many benefits to moving forward with this.”

Chair Rich Kuklewicz said he had opposed the natural gas pipeline, and that Elan had made a strong case, but he did not think there was a great danger of numerous businesses adopting natural gas.

Town administrator Steve Ellis said the program would not put a strain on the treasurer’s office, which collects taxes, fees and assessments. “We don’t expect it to be a high uptake program,” he said. “It would not be an unreasonable burden to our staff.”

The vote to adopt the program was unanimous. The approved resolution states that the town “strongly prefers renewable energy systems and energy efficiency projects are used before natural gas is considered.”

According to a MassDevelopment spokesperson, Monday’s vote means property owners in Montague “could apply for the program.”

Healthy Halloween

The board of health met jointly with the selectboard to present its weekly review of local COVID-19 data and any changes in state policy. Health board chair Al Cummings read an official statement on Halloween. Halloween events will take place “at the discretion” of residents, with indoor gatherings limited to 25 persons and outdoor ones to 50. The annual rag shag parade in Turners Falls will be canceled, but the health board “wants to see everyone in costume next year.”

The selectboard executed an agreement with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments to establish a town flu clinic. The town will receive \$1,500 to support immunization, but no date has been set for beginning the program.

The town will also be receiving a “medical-grade vaccination freezer” through federal funding channeled through the state Department of Public Health and thence via the Mohawk Area Public Health Coalition. The freezer can be used to store a COVID vaccine.

Other Business

At the beginning of the meeting the selectboard held a moment of silence for former member Al Ross, who passed away last week. Kuklewicz also noted the passing of Montague Center resident Alan Fiske, who was the oldest resident in Montague.

The board approved a request by police chief Chris Williams to appoint Shawna Williams to a temporary position as full-time patrol officer to replace Lee Laster, who is currently on injured on duty status. The appointment will last for a year, and the chief said the appointee will be considered for a permanent position if Laster retires. He noted that he and Shawna Williams are not related.

The board also approved the appointment of Justin Moody to the position of Detective.

At the request of Brian McHugh of the Franklin County Regional Housing and Re-development Authority, the board approved a \$3,000 change order for additional design work on the Spinner Park restoration project, and \$3,249.96 to the same firm for other design work.

The board briefly discussed reducing 2021 food and alcohol license fees to compensate businesses which have not yet been able to open, or have achieved only limited service during the past eight months. Kuklewicz floated the idea of reducing fees by 50% for some establishments, but the issue was tabled until the next meeting.

In a review of the latest development in the state FY’21 budget, Ellis noted that the budget the Governor proposed leaves the town nearly \$52,000 ahead of the estimates for local aid used at the recent special town meeting. He said that the state budget might be finalized by Thanksgiving.

Ellis reviewed the latest information on the General Pierce Bridge project. He said that the construction company was a “bit behind,” and that the bridge might not close until mid-to-late winter. The expected completion date is October 2023. Ellis said he was disappointed at the impact of incentives for early completion, and the closing of the pedestrian sidewalk on the bridge was being considered, but would come before the selectboard.

Ellis said the town has issued a “certificate of substantial completion” for the new Department of Public Works garage, “but of course there is a punch list [of extra work], which there always is.” Kuklewicz said he was concerned about foam taped to the corners of some “personnel doors” to protect them from damage. Ellis said he would make sure the doors were added to the punch list.

The next scheduled selectboard meeting is scheduled for October 26.



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WOOD from page A1

The venue for this event, which had the appearance of an advertisement for the American tradition of hard work in the fields and forests, was the Montague Wood Bank, located off of Sandy Lane in Turners Falls. One actually has to take a left at the end of Sandy Lane and go down a muddy road to get to the wood bank, which has been pushed further east into the woods by a project to cap the old Montague burn dump.

The wood bank is a collaboration between the Montague tree committee, the town Department of Public Works, the University of Massachusetts, and the state Department of Conservation and Recreation. Wood bank volunteers split the wood, much of which is provided by the DPW, and stack it into half-cord containers to season. It is then allocated to low-income residents, presumably for their woodstoves. The Gill Montague Council on Aging screens applicants, and recipients are responsible for picking up the wood.

Sean Mahoney, a member of the Montague tree committee as well as an employee of the state conservation department, was in charge of greeting the public officials and directing traffic. Mahoney has helped start a number of wood banks in the region, including ones at Petersham and Athol. He said that last year the local bank was able to distribute 23 half-cords.

David Detmold, a longtime Turners Falls activist and a found-

ing member of the tree committee, thanked everyone for coming and gave a brief speech welcoming the political luminaries and volunteers.

Fiona Hill, a University of Massachusetts senior and president of the school's forestry club, told the *Reporter* she had been working at the Montague wood bank for the past three years. Her major at UMass is Forest Resource Conservation, but her career goal is to become a veterinarian, she said, shrugging her shoulders.

Planting New Ones

More volunteerism had been on display earlier that morning, along Davis Street on the northeast side of the Sheffield-Hillcrest school campus. Local residents, members of the tree committee, and the family of town planner Walter Ramsey planted six trees financed by a grant from the US Forest Service and the state Department of Conservation and Recreation.

An organization called the Franklin County Land Trust has played an important role in applying for and implementing the grant. Melissa Patterson, director of outreach and education at the land trust, was directing the Saturday morning event, which she called "a great partnership with the town."

When the volunteers arrived at approximately 8:30, each tree sat next to a series of "generous" holes which had already been dug by the town Department of Public Works. The top of the hill in Turners Falls is



EDITE CUNHA PHOTO

Left to right: State representative Natalie Blais, state senator Jo Comerford, US representative Jim McGovern, Montague tree committee member Sean Mahoney, and UMass Forestry Club members Logan Abbey, Fiona Hill, and Carly Bell pitch in.

essentially a giant glacial outwash, so the holes were virtually all sand below the six-inch mark. Several tree committee members told this reporter that only oaks were chosen for planting because "oaks grow in this area naturally."

A local expert named Jeff Warren, who described himself as a professional landscape architect, gave a brief seminar on planting trees.

The holes needed to be filled a bit so the top of the root balls would be at, or even slightly above, ground level. Roots around the edges of the root ball needed to be loosened. Then the trees went into the ground, and the holes filled. Finally a layer of mulch was placed on top of the planting area, with a circular berm around the edge to hold water.

According to Patterson, 197 trees

have been planted since the program began.

The tree planting was a bit more of a family event than the wood stacking, with young children digging and filling holes with small colorful shovels. No political luminaries were in attendance, and this reporter did not hear any comments about Donald Trump or Mitch McConnell.



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FEATURES@MONTAGUEREPORER.ORG OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER OCTOBER 22, 2020

Above: Reader Don Plante shared this photograph of Unity Park and Barton's Cove above the dam.

From Bohemia to the Bay State, Part II Life in Early Turners Falls

By JIM BRIDGMAN

TURNERS FALLS – The owners of the John Russell Cutlery understood that their employees required diversions to relieve the drudgery of working long hours in the factory. Fearing that unhappy workers could become disgruntled and raise trouble, the leaders of the community promoted numerous social activities to keep the hardworking but lowly-paid immigrants content with their lot in life.

The yearly calendar in Turners Falls was punctuated by events such as picnics on Memorial Day, a rag shag parade on the Fourth of July, strawberry festivals, and Christmas pageants. Sporting events were encouraged. An indoor roller skating rink opened in 1884 and was all the rage for a number of years. People swam in the Connecticut River on hot summer days and skated on the frozen river in winter.

“Running hose competitions,” in which firefighting teams competed to see who could be the fastest to pull a length of hose down a track on a small two-wheeled cart, were a popular form of entertainment. Turners Falls produced a running hose team called the Shamrocks that was so successful it twice won the world



Avenue A in Turners Falls from an early postcard.

championship. Joseph and Mary Schulda’s grandson, Joseph Koskuba, served as one of the captains of the Shamrocks.

In 1874, a wealthy benefactor of the town built the Colle Opera House, a vaudeville theater that was a mecca of entertainment for many years. It could seat 1,000 people and offered weekly theatrical performances and entertainments of all sorts. Plays, minstrel shows, magicians, lectures, stereopticon shows, boxing demonstrations, and, by the turn of the century, moving pictures, graced the halls of the Colle.

The performances could at times

be riotous, and so could the audiences. From time to time the *Turners Falls Reporter* chastised the public for leaving the theater in a state of shambles after a performance, and the editor especially censured the habit of “hawking and spitting” tobacco on the floors.

The Bohemian residents of Turners Falls also formed their own social organizations. Most of the male members of the Bohemian community belonged to either the St. Václav Society or the St. Joseph Society, benevolent groups that raised money for the widows of

see **BOHEMIA** page B5

BOOK REVIEW

Lee Uttmark Wicks, *Muriel and the Grocer’s Daughter* (Levellers Press, 2020)

By RICHARD ANDERSEN

MONTAGUE CENTER – Lee Wicks’ *Muriel and the Grocer’s Daughter* may be the most creatively imagined memoir ever written. It’s a continuously fantastic read by one of our very own residents.

All writing starts with a voice. All good stories are told in voices we cannot stop listening to. We hear them as if the writers are speaking almost directly to us – and they are! You feel as if you’re developing relationships with these writers. You also feel as if you know the people the authors are writing about, not as characters in stories but as flesh-and-blood human beings.

In *Muriel and the Grocer’s Daughter*, two voices speak to us in alternating narratives. The first belongs to Muriel – named after a cigar the once-hatcheck-girl sold Frank on their first date. She’s Barbara’s mom. Barbara is author Lee Wicks’ first name, which she hates. She goes by her middle



name instead.

Frank is Muriel’s husband and Barbara’s dad. He owns a grocery store in Brooklyn; that’s also where they live with Barbara’s two younger brothers in a brownstone.

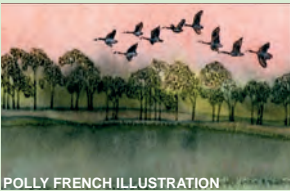
Brooklyn: three-and-a-half million people squeezed into 87 square miles. If Brooklyn were a city, it would be

the third largest in the United States. Most of its people in the decades immediately following World War II were not the celebrities found in Brooklyn today. From 1945 to 1969 – Barbara’s years – they survived on hard work, little money, and true grit.

I know this because I lived in Brooklyn during the same time as Barbara. We’re just about the same age. Barbara’s mom wasn’t the only woman to sport an occasional black eye. Domestic violence was so common it was seen as normal. No one questioned it. There wasn’t even a name for it. So many women “walked into a door” that the saying became a punch line for numerous jokes, and the men who brought home flowers on days that weren’t designated for celebrations were known as “jokes” themselves.

You grew up fast in Brooklyn. Muriel is continually giving survival advice to Barbara that she doesn’t want to hear: “If someone asks you a personal question, you don’t have to answer; just say ‘why do you want to know?’” “You can never trust Catholics. They let the pope run their lives.” “Having sex is not an accomplishment.” “Get over yourself and stop whining.”

see **BOOK** page B3



WEST ALONG THE RIVER OCTOBER PASSAGE

By DAVID BRULE

ERVINGSIDE – October 8. The aftermath of the windstorm last night was no big deal down here on the Flat in my snug valley bowl along the river. However, Lake Pleasant, a mile away up there on the edge of the Montague Plains, did not fare so well. Today is an ironic juxtaposition with the fury of the storm: overhead is a bright, clear impossibly blue sky; down here, the orange and gold maples blaze with October colors. The grandfather oaks will hold their green for a few more months.

I can tell the date by who flows through the trees in the back garden. Birds are true to their annual calendars. There’s constant movement these days outdoors with warblers, all faded yellows and greens, worn summer plumage, moving through. They’re joined by a wave of white-throats down from their summer home in Wendell. They call and scratch the earth like a flock of small chickens, barely visible within the rustle and piles of golden leaves under the lilac.

A warbler hit the window on the front porch, likely mistaking the holly reflected in the windowpane for the real thing. She dropped down dead on the arm of the Adirondack chair neatly where I could find her. It’s a magnolia warbler that I haven’t yet brought myself to bury. I hate to throw cold, indifferent dirt on the bright butter-yellow gold of the tiny breast. But I’ve got to do it today.

Still, something has made that required ritual easier. Another magnolia warbler the exact same size and hue moved through the asters a minute ago. I took that as a message, a sign that I should really bury her sister. A message that other lives will go on.

My dead warbler went into a shallow grave near the back woodpile. I pointed her facing south, where she would have been safe

and far away, had it not been for the mistake at the window.

October 12. One gray day among October’s glory days. Just the same, there’s constant movement across the yard in spite of a sunless chill. Small brown forms scratch among the leaves, white-throated sparrows and a cousin white-crowned flip leaves or pick at a seed mixture tossed at the foot of the rhododendron.

The summer catbird is still here, and a hermit thrush, rich brown back with a russet tail, visits the deck, lifts an impertinent tail feather, and zips over to perch on the kayak floating on a pond of green grass, waiting for the next trip out onto the river.

A wall-eyed woodcock spent the early hours drilling pencil-sized holes in the earth at the edge of the lawn. He lifted up on whistling wings to drop down as suddenly into the brush and saplings a few yards away. I disturbed him when I was walking the perimeter of the fenceline looking for bear sign.

Bear visited last night, but chose not to come inside the fence. I don’t think he picked up the scent of bird feeder since it’s taken in every night, and he also might have sensed the presence of dog. Nicky, our Siberian, patrols the fenceline of his domain regularly and keeps making sure his own pungent scent can be picked up loud and clear. This yard belongs to him. He marks his territory, as did brother bear down in the woods along the path.

Bear left a good-sized pile of scat as his own calling card, and claim to the territory.

Most of our winter’s wood is fresh stacked near the back door, where we can easily get it to bring in for the Glenwood cookstove over the next 90 days of winter.

Sapsuckers argue and joust in the heirloom Baldwin apple tree they’re trying to claim as their

see **WEST ALONG** page B4



The west-flowing Millers, or Pagnag, River. Paguag is Nipmuc/ke for “clear flowing water,” as well as the name of the Nipmuc/ke fort that was located a mile upstream from present-day Millers Falls.



“MAGGIE, SHERIDAN & CASEY”

Maggie is a street-smart momma! She is friendly and loves treats; several families in a neighborhood were giving her lots of food. She had a few kittens – Casey and Sheridan. They were following Maggie around trying to learn the ropes. However, they have not been able to fully trust people. They are very shy and quiet and would prefer to watch you from afar. They are slowly learning from Maggie that people aren’t bad!

Maggie, Sheridan, and Casey need to go home together. We are requiring previous experience with working with feral kittens. The adoption fee for all three will be \$399.

If you are interested please e-mail Dakin at springfield@dakinhumane.org your name and phone number and tell us your previous experience with feral/outdoor kittens. For more information, call (413) 781-4000 or see www.dakinhumane.org.

Senior Center Activities

OCTOBER 26 THROUGH 30

GILL and MONTAGUE

The Gill Montague Senior Center is closed and will reopen when advised by state and local authorities that it is safe to do so. This measure is taken not lightly but with the utmost concern for the most vulnerable in our community.

The Council on Aging staff will be available for referrals and information from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Mondays through Thursdays, at (413) 863-9357 by telephone, and coa@montague-ma.gov by email.

ERVING

Erving Senior Center director Paula Betters writes that the Center is closed until further notice:

“All programs are canceled or postponed. With that said, I will be here or at least checking my messages daily. I want anyone to call me and leave a message if they have any questions or concerns regarding food or other services. I

will call them back and if we can help with services of any kind we will do so. I am working with other agencies so we can be sure to keep our seniors healthy & safe.”

Paula can be reached at at (413) 423-3649 or paula-betters@erv-ing-ma.gov.

LEVERETT

Leverett senior activities are currently canceled. Further updates are being distributed via TTY telephone and email. For more information, contact the Leverett COA at (413) 548-1022 x 5, or coa@leverett.ma.us.

WENDELL

Wendell senior activities have been canceled. The Wendell Senior Center is closed. The Senior Health Rides program is also suspended until advisories change. For more information, call Nancy Spittle at (978) 544-6760.

Local Supermarket Senior Accommodations

Supermarkets in Massachusetts are now required to provide special hours for seniors and immunocompromised shoppers. Call ahead – this information is accurate as of April 8; hours and accommodations are still changing.

Big Y:	Senior hours from 7 to 8 a.m.	(413) 772-0435
Foster’s:	Senior hours from 7 to 8 a.m.	(413) 773-1100
Food City:	Senior hours from 7 to 8 a.m.	(413) 863-9591

Green Fields Market: Senior hours from 9 to 10 a.m. Curbside pickup available. Order by 8 p.m.; order ready for pickup between 1 and 6 the following day. Delivery also available. \$6 per delivery inside Greenfield. \$8 outside Greenfield. (413) 773-9567

McCusker’s Market: Only six customers allowed in store at a time. Curbside pickup available. Order between 12 and 1 p.m. for pickup the following day. Delivery available. \$10 per delivery. Email pickup@franklincommunity.coop (413) 625-2548

Stop and Shop: Senior hours from 6 to 7:30 a.m. (413) 774-6096

Montague Early Voting Hours

The Town of Montague will be offering **Early Voting** for the November 3 General Election. Early voting will take place at the Gill-Montague Senior Center located at 62 Fifth Street in the village of Turners Falls.

Early voting hours are as follows:

Week 2:

Saturday, October 24: 8 a.m. to noon
Sunday, October 25: 8 a.m. to noon
Monday, Tuesday & Thursday, October 26, 27 & 29: 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Wednesday, October 28: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Election Day Voting, November 3: polling hours are 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. at all precincts.

A **Ballot Drop Off Box** is located at the front door of Town Hall located at 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls. It is brand new, safe, and secure for voters voting by mail who wish to hand deliver their ballots instead of using the mail. The box is checked daily throughout the day.



Sex Matters

a sex-positive health column

by **STEPHANIE BAIRD**

Last month I focused on female genital care and this month I will look at caring for male genitals. As a reminder, I am only able to cover a small amount of what folks may experience. My hope is that reading this article may prompt those of you who have been suffering silently with concerns to seek help. We do not need to live with pain or discomfort if solutions are available!

Let’s start with basic cleanliness. Many of the same hygienic techniques apply to the genitals of both sexes. Medical professionals recommend washing using regular soap and thoroughly drying the penis and scrotum daily, plus changing into fresh underwear after a shower or bath and after vigorous exercise.

To avoid things like jock itch (a.k.a. “crotch rot”), fully drying your special stuff is essential – use a towel or even a gently warm hair dryer if that feels good!. It is also helpful to inspect the region regularly for any bumps, scratches, warts, abrasions, lumps, etc. If you notice anything new, painful, or alarming, make a doctor’s appointment ASAP. It is better for your long-term health to catch problems as they are beginning.

Unfortunately, folks of all genders often put off seeking medical care in the genital zone due to *erotophobia* (fear of anything sexual), embarrassment about talking to medical professionals about these more private concerns, and sometimes just plain fear about what the diagnosis might be. This is despite the esteem often afforded to penises by their owners. Catching any symptom early, however, is the best chance to avoid a serious problem later.

As discussed for female genitals last month, sexually transmitted diseases (STIs) can cause many unpleasant symptoms for male genitals. Using a condom properly with non-monogamous or less well-known partners can go a long way to preventing such issues. Many penises may experience an STI such as human papillomavirus (HPV), chlamydia, or herpes, yet never show any symptoms. Other STIs, including gonorrhea and syphilis, quickly manifest symptoms such as painful

urination, discharge, or sores.

HPV is especially tricky due to the lack of obvious symptoms and its overwhelming presence in humans. However, something that seems as innocuous as HPV can lead to cancer in any body: male, female, transgender, non-binary. Luckily, most individuals under age 30 are likely vaccinated for HPV, and the CDC recommends that everyone, regardless of gender, get vaccinated around age 11 or 12 and up to age 26. The hope is to decrease the number of infected folks of this most common STI from 79 million to 0.

If you are sexually active with multiple partners and unsure of their safer sex practices, it is essential to visit with your doctor annually, if not more often, getting tested for STIs whenever in doubt.

Prostate cancer is another issue that can arise in males, young and old, although the risk increases as one ages. While it is not known what specifically causes prostate cancer, some factors include a family history of cancer, ethnicity, as well as obesity. Symptoms may take a long time to appear. Symptoms that are noticeable include trouble urinating, decreased force in the stream of urine, blood in semen, discomfort in the pelvic area, bone pain, and erectile dysfunction.

Things like daily exercise, eating a diet full of vegetables and fruits, and maintaining fitness can help prevent cancer. You may find more information on the Mayo Clinic website.

Erectile dysfunction can occur for a variety of reasons and at any age. Some common reasons include performance anxiety and life stress. Some penis owners may need to feel emotionally connected and safe with their partner for erections to occur. However, erratic dysfunction may be a sign of increasing cardiovascular issues. For erections to occur, there must be adequate blood circulation to the penis, healthy penis nerve endings, and interest in sexual activity.

Vascular diseases account for most of the medically-based erection issues, and may be an early warning of impending heart failure. The nerve damage that often accompa-

nies diabetes can also reduce erectile functioning. Over 200 types of medication can impair erectile functioning, as well as tobacco, drug, and alcohol use. If there is any question of a vascular issue impacting erection, make a doctor’s appointment ASAP.

For erectile dysfunction related to anxiety or stress, learning and practicing relaxation techniques can go a long way to restoring pleasure and confidence. Last month I discussed pelvic floor physical therapy for bodies with ovaries, uteruses, and vaginas. This can be just as useful for everyone else’s, too. In fact, most of us eventually carry stress in the form of an over-tightened pelvic region (although I’m guessing maybe Elvis Presley put his stress elsewhere). So, taking the time to learn and experience deep relaxation in the pelvic and genital region can be life-changing (and might turn you into a musical icon, lol).

Northampton Sex Therapy Associates has a wonderful handout on “relaxing your pelvic muscle” for easy erections. Essentially, folks with penises can locate the contraction of this muscle by trying to stop the flow of urine briefly, or by “twitching” the penis. Once this muscle group is located, initially spend about three seconds tensing this area, then release that tension, spending another three seconds in the relaxed state. Continue lengthening the time of relaxation between contractions, as well as developing a continuum of awareness from 0 (relaxed) to 10 (tight).

There are several more steps involved, so contact a pelvic floor physical therapist – I know of several good ones via Cooley Dickinson in Hadley – or a sex therapist for more information and instruction in these techniques. Learning and practicing such techniques correctly can greatly enhance your sexual pleasure!

Happy relaxing and finding bliss!

Stephanie Baird is a certified OWL facilitator, and an EMDR psychotherapist and consultant who encourages her clients towards thriving sexual health. She welcomes feedback and suggestions at sexmatters@montaguereporter.org.

Montague Community Television News

We’ll Edit Your Videos!

By **MICHAEL SMITH**

Along with most businesses, MCTV encourages people to stay at home and limit visits to the station. Keep an eye on our Facebook page for updated station hours.

One way to connect with your community from the confines of your quarantine is to make videos! It’s easy to film a tutorial, a public service announcement, a story or a hike by using your phone, computer or one of MCTV’s cameras that are sanitized and available for pickup. Any editing can be done by MCTV staff editors, or you can try it at home!

Residents of Montague can find MCTV on Channel 17, and the MCTV Vimeo page is available online. Email hannahbrookman@gmail.com for editing assistance or filmmaking questions.

Something going on you think others would like to see? If you get in touch, we can show you how easy it is to use a camera and capture the moment. Contact us at (413) 863-9200 or infomontaguetelevision@gmail.com between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. We’d love to work with you!

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BOOK from page B1

And Muriel doesn’t limit herself to platitudes: “You and your father... if you have so much in common, maybe I should just trade bedrooms with you. You sleep with the snoring and the cough, and I’ll take your room. He’ll never miss me.”

Barbara can’t wait to grow up and get out of the house. When she graduates from high school, she goes as far away as she can: Emerson College in Boston, where she spends most of her time trying to gain from senior Spalding Gray the affection she never got at home. Yes, that Spalding Gray! He was offbeat even then.

After they have sex in his bedroom, she has to sleep in a different bed that is separated from his by a bookcase, because he doesn’t want anyone to see him while he sleeps. Decades later, enjoying the fame that came to him from *Swimming to Cambodia*, he performs another monologue called *Thirty-Seven Beds*. The one he shared with Barbara and the one he didn’t share with her aren’t two of them.

It’s times like these that Muriel’s voice is never far from Barbara’s consciousness. She puts it this way: “You hear your mother’s voice all the time now. You don’t see her often, but she’s rented a room in your brain, the part that holds both guilt and anger.”

I cite this sentence because it is one of dozens of sentences that speak to Lee’s extraordinary talents as a narrator. Many of us have said – and have heard people say – “I sound just like my mom,” but how many of us have ever heard this sentiment expressed as Lee constructs it?

She even goes so far as to create a six-foot-tall, soft-sculpture doll made of muslin that she names “Stuffed Muriel.” She plans to embroider the metaphor with all the hurtful words her mom ever said to her. Around one of the breasts she envisions, “Why should a man buy a cow if he can get the milk for free?”

This combination of funny lines that grow out of sad experiences relieves some of the tension that exists between Barbara and her mom, but after each brief reprieve, the humor works to increase the tension between the two. For Barbara, Stuffed Muriel is an exorcism.

And lest we think that Lee’s narrative talent is limited to finely-wrought sentences and thought-provoking visuals, check out her use of a sec-

ond-person address for a whole section of her memoir:

“You live on the first floor... You can walk to a nearby pond... You look cozy and engaged.... The book said you would stare at every toe and finger for hours and never get bored, but you did. You do. You have a hard time being a child in the moment, pretending to thrill at another knock-knock joke or a game of Chutes and Ladders.”

That kind of technique is not easy to do for very long, but Lee pulls it off beautifully without missing a beat.

And there’s more narrative pyrotechnics to come. Right after Barbara’s marriage to her first husband Steve – a relationship that her mom says is “like watching a train wreck in slow motion” – Lee creates a one-act play starring Muriel and her husband Frank, who are commiserating on the daughter they just lost and the “brat” they just gained. The most positive comment they can come up with comes from – you guessed it – Muriel: “I guess we have some things to be grateful for. At least she’s not pregnant.”

What follows is a hilarious satire of the kind of people who populate places like Deerfield, Exeter, and Andover, where Steve teaches courses in photography. The scalpel with which Lee wields her understated yet always biting cultural criticism is sharpened even further when she moves to Amherst. Think of an angry Jane Austen, only funnier. We know these people first hand. Some of them are us.

But there are also three “angels” in Lee’s book that merit special mention because of the roles they play in Lee’s happy ending: Jim Foudy of the *Daily Hampshire Gazette*, an unnamed hero in the UMass human resources office, and an empathetic manager at Pelham Auto Service. These three people are of the kind that welcome opportunities to improve the human condition. So is Lee. Together they walk the talk while we talk the walk with them.

Muriel and the Grocer’s Daughter is available through levellerspress.com. *Amherst Books and Broadside Books are stocking it; the Jones Library and Montague libraries will have it catalogued soon; and you may order and pick up from Lee Wicks in Montague Center by emailing wickswords@yahoo.com.*



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Brass Knuckles; One-Hour Parking; Bicyclist Struck; Car Over Guardrail; Loud Wedding Party; 15 to 20 Pigs

Monday, 10/12

4:27 p.m. Motorist reporting that a cat has been struck by a vehicle and is dead in the road near Bob’s Auto on Avenue A. DPW supervisor notified.

Tuesday, 10/13

1:45 a.m. TFFD advising they are en route to Light-life Foods for a reported gas leak; request Berkshire Gas be contacted. Berkshire Gas en route. FD advising location reporting 70 parts per million. MPD and Berkshire Gas on scene.

4:23 a.m. Advised of a vehicle repossession on Seventh Street.

11:08 a.m. Caller from South Prospect Street reports that one of his house windows is broken; piece of asphalt in vicinity; suspects DPW may have kicked it up while mowing. Advised of options.

12:47 p.m. Caller reporting road rage incident in Montague Center; states that she flipped off someone who was driving erratically, and the male driver stopped and confronted her with brass knuckles, stating, “You’re lucky you’re a woman,” then drove off. Officer spoke with caller and advised her of options; advised to call MPD in the future if she observes an unsafe driver.

6:53 p.m. Caller states that a black Chevy truck hit a light pole at Walgreens and did some damage. Vehicle is reportedly trying to drive away but has a flat tire. Officer advises no damage to pole and no impairment of driver.

Wednesday, 10/14

11:45 a.m. Owner of Basically Bicycles requesting more checks on cars parking along Third Street; signs state that parking is for one hour, but cars stay all day.

1:21 p.m. Following a vehicle stop at Family Dollar, a 43-year-old Turners Falls man was arrested and charged with operating a vehicle with a suspended license, subsequent offense.

3:12 p.m. Multiple 911 callers reporting a bicyclist struck by a vehicle on Farren Avenue. MPD units, AMR, and TFFD advised. Party removed to hospital.

3:12 p.m. Shelburne Control requesting MPD officer check the traffic flow on the General Pierce Bridge; stated that they took a call reporting that the lights are not cycling properly. Officer watched lights cycle three times; all appears normal.

8:03 p.m. Report of two-car accident at the Fifth Street bridge; no apparent injuries; fluid coming from underneath one vehicle. MPD units, AMR, and TFFD advised. Officer reports that only one vehicle was involved and that the vehicle struck the bridge. Vehicle towed.

Thursday, 10/15

9:39 a.m. A 44-year-old Turners Falls man was arrested on a straight warrant.

11:53 a.m. 911 caller states that he found a small, white, fluffy dog walking around with a limp. No collar. Animal control officer notified and responding. ACO located dog and its owner.

6:58 p.m. 911 open line; young child can be heard playing with phone. No answer on multiple callbacks. Officer advised.

7:09 p.m. Greenfield PD took 911 open line call; advised them that MPD just confirmed a misdial from the same residence. Officer stated child was still playing with phone

when he left.

7:28 p.m. Report of erratic vehicle operation on Turnpike Road; vehicle is about to pass MPD. Officer off with vehicle in front of Turners Falls High School. A 24-year-old Orange man was arrested and charged with operating a vehicle with a suspended license and operating with no inspection sticker.

10:36 p.m. Caller states that a couple of male parties are playing loud music from a vehicle in front of Subway and that one of them smashed a glass bottle in the road. Unable to locate.

Friday, 10/16

8:42 a.m. Caller from Federal Street advises that his daughter left the gate open and his dogs (a Rottweiler and a pit bull) got loose; called back later advising dogs have been located.

9:14 p.m. Report of dead raccoon at Greenfield and Hatchery roads. Referred caller to DPW.

3:35 p.m. Caller from Montague City Road stating that her black and white cat is missing; requests call if anybody locates her. Units advised.

6:31 p.m. Caller states that she just hit a deer on Turners Falls Road. No injuries; light vehicle damage; deer still on scene with injuries. Officer advised. Deer removed from area.

11:21 p.m. Caller states that a tree is down across one lane of travel near the wastewater treatment plant on Greenfield Road; doesn’t think any wires are involved. Officer was able to move tree behind guardrail.

Saturday, 10/17

2:05 a.m. 911 caller states that a car is tipped over a

guardrail on Main Street; unsure if anyone is inside or not. Officers advised; Shelburne Control notified for MCFD. One occupant in vehicle. Officer cut her from seatbelt; advises uninjured. Vehicle towed. Report taken.

9:53 a.m. Caller from West Chestnut Hill Road reporting 15 to 20 pigs on her property; does not know who the owner is. Unable to reach ACO. Owner located; pigs returned.

11:35 p.m. Caller reports a party on Norman Circle that has been going on for twelve hours now and is still very loud. Officer located source (wedding reception); they turned music down and were advised of the complaint.

Sunday, 10/18

1:51 a.m. Officer conducting vehicle stop on Third Street. Plates are showing a black Acura, but they are attached to a green Mazda Miata. Officer clear; vehicle has been moved down street to operator’s father’s house. Summons issued.

10:14 a.m. 911 caller from East Main Street reporting harassment from female who lives in the building. Female could be heard yelling in background. Female called a few minutes later on the business line to report harassment from the male caller. Both parties advised of options.

12:22 p.m. 911 misdial from Our Lady of Peace Church. Could hear someone saying “hit cancel,” then line disconnected. On callback, spoke with male party who advised misdial. Officer confirmed misdial.

5:19 p.m. 911 caller reporting black car driving very fast in Keith Street neighborhood. Area checked; unable to locate.

Artist Profile: Maricella Obundo, Muralist

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – I came upon Maricella Obundo when she was getting ready to paint an electric meter by the Walgreens near my house with some kind of mural. I talked to her and mentioned that I like doing profiles on artists. I also was curious about whether she had done this sort of thing around town, because I had seen other such items like this. She said that she had, and also gave me her number to talk to her later for an interview.

Shortly after that, I saw a finished side of the meter. She had painted a nice-looking forest scene on it, with a river in the middle. Another side had a forest scene made up of the colors blue, purple, and green with a lake on it.

Maricella told me that she been doing this for 25 years. “I did a

couple of painting training courses in Costa Rica,” she said. “I grew up with these feelings – the passion to paint and create – because I love to create.”

In connection with having painted more electric meters, she said she had done four last year. One is called “Poet’s Seat Tower.” The one by Walgreens is called “Four Seasons.” She told me that one took two days.

I also asked her why she paints these objects, and she said: “Because I love to paint around the town. Because I love to see paintings, and so people can enjoy my artwork like me.”

Speaking of people enjoying the art, she does murals in her own dining room, which she invites people over to see. She considers them part of her homeland, and the jungle of Costa Rica. Her artwork

is in the Museum of Art in Coral Springs, Florida. As for other people’s opinion of her art, the words are “That’s marvelous.” Another way people see her art, apart from going to that museum, is on Facebook, which her friends and family can see.

I personally think her artwork – at least the one that is on that meter – is rather cool looking. Other people probably would think the same thing as well. I get why she calls it the “Four Seasons” – it’s supposed to be like the four seasons of the year. Her art interests me enough that I would like to see the one she calls “Poet’s Seat Tower.” Maybe it’s called that because the Tower is in the mural.

This article was a lovely find for me to, like I said, literally stumble upon. I hope people reading this article will understand why I was so interested in doing a profile on her.



Maricella Obundo paints an electrical transformer box in Greenfield.

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#27: Pappy, Zeke & Ezra (& Elton) ... and Virginia Below

By J. BURKETT

TURNERS FALLS – This M/M/M column will be a little different, as we are talking about a band from the 1930s... and also about music of Brooklyn in the 1940s, and a little about the ‘50s and ‘60s.

Pappy, Zeke, and Ezra (and Elton) were a vocal group in the 1930s and early ‘40s. The Decca label issued some of their 78s from 1935 onward.

I’ve been looking into this band for awhile... okay, mostly because one of the members was my great-grandfather. But it has been an interesting search, and maybe one that some readers will be interested in.

It seems that the “Pappy, Zeke, and Ezra” phenomenon started in 1928. They appear to be a hillbilly type band, but in reality were not hillbillies at all. Elton was the closest to that kind of reality, as he was born in the Ozarks, but was last to join. It was supposedly started as a gag... but the gag stuck.

The band was formed by the original “Pappy,” who was really Thomas Murray, a professor of English literature at what was known at that time as Leland Stanford Junior University in California. Zeke was a conservatory-trained musician, once known as the “Mystery Organist,” and Ezra was an ex-vaudeville trouper.

They started out west, originally as “the Beverly Hill-Billies.” They performed on the radio, played in movies, and were booked for vaudeville. At one point they had a long run at the Chinese Theater in Hollywood with a film called *The Hell’s Angels*. The band was an added attraction to the film, but by the end of the run there, their name was headlined as they got more and more popular.

In 1933, the band headed east, as “hillbilly” kinds of bands seemed to be more and more of interest there. It was there that Theodore Below replaced Thomas Murray as “Pappy.” They played often in the New York area, and could be seen in Times Square at one point, promoting one of their 78s by playing on the back of a truck that was full of hay. They also toured overseas, supposedly playing for Queen Elizabeth II once, and may have toured the States.

It’s been a few years since I last Googled the band, and some new information was available this time. A copy of their first 78 is finally

available online, which I’m glad to have been able to hear before this was printed. Not my favorite of their songs, but you can really hear my grandfather’s unique baritone on the B-side. (The A-side was a cover of a popular movie theme song.)

Elton Britt went on to have a solo career doing Country music in the ‘50s and ‘60s, and my great-grandfather, or “Mr. B” as my family affectionately refers to him, went on to do more vaudeville and traveled around the country acting in small plays all over the states.

Virginia Below was born in Brooklyn in the ‘20s, then moved to Florida in the ‘50s. She is 92 and is my grandmother!

I have been wanting to talk to her about the music of her youth – and about Pappy, Zeke & Ezra.

MMM: *Where should we start? I was hoping we could talk about the music of your youth...*

VB: How about with Sinatra? I saw him the first time he performed at the Paramount, and he was thin as a stick. The Paramount was his big starting place in NY... That night all these girls started screaming when he was singing. I thought that was because they thought he was so bad!

I saw him other times too, and saw him in Long Island at one of his last shows. It was so sad, because he was so drunk. I also saw Gershwin, Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey, and also Benny Goodman. I used to see quite a few singers and bands at hotels when I was young, too.

MMM: *Wow, that’s amazing... Also, I wanted to talk to you in this interview about my Great-Grandfather’s band “Pappy, Zeke & Ezra” (& Elton). Did you ever see them?*

VB: No, they were before my time. One of the members of his band was a yodeler! That was Elton Britt... That’s something that is missing these days... I wish there were still yodelers around. They traveled around the world... and were supposed to have played for Queen Elizabeth II. They didn’t play normal places. But they played the Steel Pier in New Jersey. Also they would play on the radio quite a bit.

Mr. B. would get a lot of fan letters from lonely women. They would fall in love with his singing. I got a big kick out of those letters.

MMM: *So my Grandfather*

would travel a lot growing up, right? Because his father was always moving with music and acting?

VB: Yes, Mississippi, Tennessee, California, Reno, Nevada. *[Papa, in the background: “Dad was working here, there and everywhere, so we moved!”]* Mr. B. made them move a lot.

It made Papa very shy, but he learned all kinds of things. A girl who would do magic shows taught him magic. Someone taught him shooting, too. He could shoot buttons off my dress.

I did get to hear Mr. B. singing, he had a piano. They would carry it out to the backyard on the weekends. They seemed to really enjoy life. It was exciting to me, because my family was really quiet.

MMM: *And you knew Christopher Plummer too, right? And he would play music sometimes?*

VB: I waited on him when I was a waitress in Naples, FL when he was filming the movie *Wind Across The Everglades* [in 1958]. He played us music on the piano of the club there. His favorite song was “My Funny Valentine.”

We spent time with him when they were shooting the movie. He said if I went to see him perform in New York to let him know. And I did see him, at a play. He brought me around back and introduced me to the cast...

MMM: *Oh, I understand now... cool. Do you have anymore stories about music from your youth?*

VB: Well, Glenn Miller and Benny Goodman were my favorites growing up... and I loved the Jitterbug at dances. I started high school in 1941. Every Wednesday after school there would be dances. My school was a tough school [John Adams], a lot of the kids’ families were connected to the Mafia.

There was a dance band for social functions, and also a different band that played in the auditorium that was semi-classical. I wanted to play an instrument, but my dad wouldn’t let me. He said it would be bad for my mouth. The people who bought their instruments would pay a quarter a month until they owned it.

MMM: *How about Grandfather – would he play an instrument?*

VB: He took guitar lessons. *[Again in the background: “I wasn’t any good!”]*

MMM: *What was the music like in Florida when you moved there?*

VB: Well there was a lot of Coun-

WEST ALONG from page B1

own. Six squirrels take their chances in trying to outrun Nick, who scatters them every chance he gets, when he’s in the mood and not snoozing in the sun. He runs those squirrels up the maples, where they chatter and talk trash like so many angry temple monkeys, mocking the dog who can’t climb trees like them.

Beaver have been dining on invasive Japanese knotweeds down along the west-flowing river, although they’ll never consume enough to make a difference. Wood ducks eyeball us as we step out from the alder screen along the shore. We step back in discreetly before they leap up in sudden flight. We don’t want to cause them to be alarmed and fly up into the danger of shotgun range, down river from our sanctuary.

I’ve got few outdoor chores left to do, although I’m fooling myself to think that any list will ever be done: there are still the spindly maple saplings cut last year before the ticks emerged. They’ve been drying down along the paths through the woods. They make good kindling, and help keep the heavier chunks of oak going in the firebox of the woodstove. I’ll be scrounging for windfall branches left over from last week’s storm.

Over yonder the October river runs sullen today. There’s barely enough water to raise the usual tinkling and chiming song as it washes over riffles among the river stones.

October 16. A misty day along the river. Color is still holding out across the valley, not yet beaten down by rain, although there is a certain fragility of foliage right about now. All it will take is another wind and rain storm for the color to be drained away.

The trumpet vine in the trellis is still green, bright against the background of the burning bush, that beautiful invasive planted by my Irish grandmother 70 years ago. Elsewhere, shades of sumac reddening to a pale tinge of orange.

Birds out here are quiet after the tidal wave of yellow-rumped warblers has ebbed. A few guests who will spend the winter with us are already dropping in: Wendell’s juncos and white-throated sparrows of the high timber pine tree line are arriving down here in the sheltering valley of free eats on the Flat.

And lo! A buzzing flock of pine siskins, not expected until February, drops down into the yard in a chattering flock of ten. These mites, smaller even than chickadees, nest in the lofty hemlocks far to the north where they rarely encounter humans. Exceptionally tame, they visit the potted Norfolk Island pine only a few feet from my chair. I could almost touch them, and have, in the past.

The little pine is out here to catch some of the mist of the morning, but appears to the inquisitive siskins as a likely source of food to explore. They probe a few of the piney branches of needles, busily chattering and ignoring me, my book, and my coffee. Then, *shazam!* They’re gone like wisps of smoke.

Like counting the rings on the woolly bear caterpillar, the real bear rummaging around the neighborhood last night, or scrutinizing the heft of the squirrel’s tail, were these unexpected guests a sign of a hard winter to come?

October 20. By now we are already into another aftermath. The brilliant days of New England’s autumn glory are beginning to recede in the rearview mirror. We are heading for the somber gray days evoking the drab Pilgrim and Puritan gloom of November.

The oaks will outlast the maple and birch, recently shorn by a 24-hour rain. Green does persist, and some red remains too. Lingering warblers, like faded ornaments animate bare branches, slipping in and out of green boughs that haven’t gotten autumn’s memo.

Or if they have, like some of us, they are choosing to ignore it.



try-Western music. It wasn’t what you call danceable music. Most bars did have live music, though.

There was a fellow who would play in bars. He was from Mexico. He would make his own clothes and played a good piano.

The radio stations were a lot different, too. New York was a lot more sophisticated.

MMM: *So New York was more interesting... That makes sense.*

VB: My Aunt Kate lived in Brooklyn where they would have a lot of dancing in their basement. They also played a lot of Italian opera.

I used to love to dance with my father. He was so light on his feet. My father liked popular music but not swing or classical. My brother married an Italian girl, she was a good dancer, and they went to a lot of dances too.

Street musicians would walk up and down the street – mostly “oompah music” – and would knock on your door and hold out a hat. There would also be organ grinders, with the wheel they would turn... and some would have monkeys... that would run up the side of your house to collect money. Those were usually spider monkeys.

MMM: *And there would be more*

music in the Bowery area?

VB: There was a Gypsy section in the Bowery, and all the windows were whitewashed. You would see them with long skirts. They would play music... not Gypsy music, but popular songs and things like that.

There was also a place in the Bowery where they would play Jewish music. I went to hear music there once, but it was all sung in Yiddish, so I went home. It was just that I didn’t understand them.

There was a song back then: “The Bowery... the Bowery... they play such things and they do such things in the Bowery. I’ll never go there anymore.”

MMM: *Anything else?*

VB: They used to have dances in the place where they also had the big fights. (Not at the same time!) They had polka bands and people would dance up where the ring was. They would have dances at people’s families’ places, too.

Also, I really liked Gershwin. He would play at Radio City Dance Hall, and I would see him there. He was a band leader that made a beautiful show. Also, I did like Cuban and Latin music back then, too.

MMM: *Thanks for sharing your memories!*

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BOHEMIA from page B1

deceased members, among other causes. Most of the Schulda men were members of the St. Václav Society.

Rowdy Village Streets

The men of Turners Falls worked hard in the cutlery all day, and some of them reveled in the streets and saloons all night. An 1872 item in the *Turners Falls Reporter* stated, “For heaven’s sake, Messrs. Selectmen, give us some police officers who will put a stop to the rowdiness which disturbs the peace... every night of the week.”

The Bohemian immigrants were among those who enjoyed their beer, a habit they brought over from the old country. Several of Joseph and Mary Schulda’s grandchildren were known to overindulge, and “acute alcoholism” and “cirrhosis of the liver” appear as the cause of death on their death certificates.

Even Andrew Schulda, Joseph and Mary’s eldest son, was involved in one drunken incident. One time he and some friends had gathered at Harry’s saloon on Third Street, and upon leaving the bar in the early hours of the morning, a fight erupted. The newspaper reported that a man named Tom Bagley stealthily approached Andrew from behind and stabbed him in the hand. Bagley was arrested and brought to court, and Andrew received sixty dollars in damages.

In addition to gangs of drunken revelers, the streets of Turners Falls were plagued by packs of dogs that got into fights, scared horses, and occasionally attacked people. As early as 1872, the *Reporter* was documenting news of vicious dogs: “A dog was seen on Second Street the other day who had actually two tails. One of them, however, had previously been used by an ox, and was carried in the canine’s mouth.”

In 1886, Joseph Schulda was the victim of a dog attack. “Joseph Schulda, an aged and respected Bohemian gentleman, was attacked by eight dogs in front of the cutlery block the other day and badly bit-

ten,” the newspaper wrote. “The village is full of worthless curs that are continually biting and snapping at pedestrians or peaceful canines, and an effort is being made to have the dangerous nuisance stopped. The town has certainly many unlicensed dogs, and an order has been given to have all such destroyed.”

Perils of Childhood

Childhood in Turners Falls could be a risky time. The *Reporter* regularly announced that “the grim reaper” had been busy among the young people of the village, carrying off previously healthy children with such diseases as measles, mumps, meningitis, and diarrhea.

The pages of the *Reporter* are full of notices of children being hurt or killed through accidents. One Bohemian neighbor, Mrs. Josephine (Mazanec) Korbel, who lived on Second Street, accidentally scalded her fifteen-month-old son while sterilizing some milk. Traumatized by the incident, Mrs. Korbel ran down to the banks of the Connecticut River and threw herself into the water. She was rescued by a nearby workman, but the little boy died.

In 1894, a similar accident happened to the grandson of Philip and Mary (Schulda) Koskuba. On November 7 of that year the *Reporter* wrote, “A little son of Joseph Koskuba died on Friday from the effects of falling into a pail of scalding water more than a week previous. The child was just at that mischievous, exploring age and fell into the water while the mother’s back was turned an instant, but the injuries were not expected to prove fatal.”

Turners Falls was a new town, and children found the steady array of construction sites an irresistible attraction. The *Reporter* often ran items about children falling from the upper floors of partially finished buildings or hurting themselves on piles of debris.

Horse-drawn vehicles and bicycles were another source of danger. In 1901, Joseph and Mary Schulda’s twelve-year-old grandson Frank Schulda was run down by a “care-



The members of the St. Václav Bohemian Society of Turners Falls, circa 1904.

less bicycle rider” and his face was “much cut and bruised.” He carried the scars for life.

His cousin, Helen Schulda, was not so lucky. In 1906, when she was five years old, she was run down by a horse and carriage. She lingered for about a month, but eventually succumbed.

Grinder’s Consumption

Life for the cutlery employees and their families was difficult, but for no one was life more dangerous than for those men employed as grinders at the cutlery. Constant exposure to the tiny particles of silver dust, raised by the grinding of the rough silver, meant an almost certain early death for most grinders, including several members of the Schulda family.

Grinder’s consumption was a form of pulmonary tuberculosis that affected almost every man employed in the grinding and polishing departments of the cutlery. Despite efforts by the owners of the company to keep the air in the factory circulating, the manner in which the grinders sat hunched over their wheels made it almost impossible for them to not breathe in the dust.

The dangers involved in the grinders’ occupation were not unknown. As early as 1887, Dr. Francis J. Canedy in nearby Shelburne Falls warned of the risks:

Investigations made at Sheffield, England, fix the average period at which grinders can work at thirteen years. The first symptom which manifests itself is cough, soon followed by shortness of breath upon exertion, as walking up hill. During all this time an inflammatory process is going on in the lung, which results in a gangrenous or purulent condition; the patient having fever, and often a terrible cough. During this attack the patient is confined in bed from ten to twenty weeks.

After six weeks an abscess forms in the lung, and, when the puss is expectorated, improvement begins. The progress of some cases is exceedingly slow, some of the patients living ten years or more after being compelled to leave the shop by their cough, most of the time in chronic invalidism, and dying at last from the exhaustion dependent upon pulmonary disease.

Despite Dr. Canedy’s research, for many years the management of the cutlery tried to downplay the dangers of being a grinder. As late as 1904 a company spokesman claimed that grinders’ consumption was a myth, and that those grinders who died of consumption were “destined to die of pulmonary troubles anyway.”

All eight of Joseph and Mary Schulda’s sons worked in the cutlery, and it appears that most of them worked in the grinding department. Seven of the sons died young, between the ages of 27 and 52, most of them of lung ailments. Only one son lived to an age that we today would consider elderly. He died at 73.

Passing of the Elders

On Valentine’s Day in 1891, Joseph and Mary Schulda celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Before Joseph’s death in 1898, they would celebrate 57 years of married life together, an impressive record for that time. At some point during the 1880s they walked over to George Chapman’s photographic studio on Avenue A and had their portrait taken, the only known photograph of either of them.

During the course of their marriage, Joseph and Mary had experienced tremendous personal changes, with many causes to celebrate

and many to mourn. They had made the great sacrifice of leaving their homeland in middle age to provide a brighter future for their children and grandchildren. As they entered their old age, they had many reasons to be grateful.

However, the fact that so many of their children, and even grandchildren, predeceased them – many of them due to grinder’s consumption – must have given them pause when weighing whether it had all been worth it. The move may have been good from an economic point of view, but the price on the health of the family was certainly heavy.

Joseph died on October 11, 1898, at the age of 81. His obituary described him as “a very much respected Bohemian citizen and a leader of his countrymen here.” It went on to say, “He was a dignified old gentleman with courteous manners and had the respect of all who knew him.”

Mary Schulda also died at age 81, four years to the day after her husband’s death. The *Reporter* stated, “she had been in excellent health up to a short time before her death.” They are both buried in unmarked graves in St. Mary’s Cemetery.

The Family Today

Joseph and Mary Schulda’s descendants were prolific, and within 50 years of the family’s arrival over 200 of them were living in Western Mass. Many members of the early generations of the family married Bohemian spouses, the children and grandchildren of other immigrants from the Klatovy area.

Their descendants today carry such names as Baxa, Koskuba, Korbel, Svatora, Prokop, Neidl (Nadle/Neydl), Ulrich, Szama, Mazanec, Kubovec, Tremel, Hastaba, Boudo, Janda, Vladish, Engerman, Hruska, Valenta, Houdek, Rubash, Eichinger, Duda, and, of course, Schulda.

This is an abridged version of an article originally published in the September 2020 issue of Naše Rodina (“Our Family”), the quarterly journal of the Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International, and is reproduced here with their permission. For more information on this organization, see their website at: cgsi.org/cgsi-quarterly-journal.

Next week in Part III, three cousins – all descendants of the Neydls, Tomans, and Schuldas – tell how they discovered their connection to each other.



PHOTO COURTESY EUSS NEYDL

House #22 in Koryta, home of several generations of the Schulda family, taken in July 2020.

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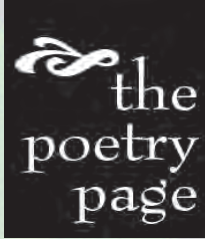


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It is difficult
to get the news from poems
yet men die miserably every day
for lack
of what is found there.

- William Carlos Williams

edited by Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno
Readers are invited to send poems to the
Montague Reporter at: 177 Avenue A
Turners Falls, MA 01376
or to: poetry@montaguereporter.org

October Poetry Page

Intimacy

The head and neck of the snake drape your left shoulder rides your collarbone
its forked tongue embraces the areola of your left breast you're telling me to lie
against the pillows while you station easel water color pigments nearby your back
turned the body of the snake twines down your spine wraps around and under its
tale disappears in the moonlight of your left thigh your caduceus the red ring
the eye unflinching each shimmering scale in layers of inked marquetry details
you're pushing watercolor pigments over paper lift an edge drain highlands fill
wetlands form ridges of brow line and chin left side you smear dark pigments
in water shade the side of my face one spark of light the speck of raw paper in
my left eye your skill alarms my insecurity and I wonder to myself tongue to tongue
with the serpent you lift your head your eyes flash you say so boyish aren't you
the detail the tattoo imposing you ask me again to tell you the dream of the serpent
it's many dreams I say in one I'm in a hibernaculum I feel I should be afraid repulsed
subtle energy says I don't have to be it's a choice they're many around and over me
in another waves of fear roll through me like the movement of tension and release
I have no arms or legs can't defend myself or run everything seems above me all the boots
hooves coming down there is only my mouth the urge to strike out and have you ever
dreamed you could fly seems as I rise from the earth i have to negotiate power lines over
asphalt bent over your work considering you push shadow and light into the fibers
do you think of past lives does it weaken one to ask is it more potent to live the
unrealized reality as Rilke suggests live the question live the habitually unconscious
potency of impermanence the fall blue asters and I want to burrow under

- Al Miller
Montague Center

A Grief Observed (pace C. S. Lewis)

The long grey road stretches ahead,
It is evening, no traffic, everyone is dead.
A cul-de-sac of memories, of meditation,
Static, it never reaches a destination.

Not even the curtains twitch
Nor do doorstep salesmen pitch
Their latest idea
For Utopia —

There is no point.

Time enough to ponder highs and lows
While belief in peace and insight grows.

The mind with the heart combines
To navigate a darkened future
Where each morning brings new torture
But which, shuffling awkwardly, the soul refines.

And then, a new landscape,
One of hope and escape
Unfolds; a life at last less dispiriting
A grief observed and now less limiting.

- Julian Nangle
Dorchester, Dorset, England

Father Salvatierra's Quest

*"This little book is too dirty to be immoral. Garbage is not immoral,
no matter how you turn it."*
Father Salvatierra, commenting on
Nicanor Parra's *Poemas y antipoemas*

Searching for a mere morsel of immorality
you take the can in your hands,
first turning it gingerly,
then excitedly discarding the lid

you spill the ordures onto the floor,
proceed directly to rifling the debris.
Heedless of the scraps that catch
on your gaudy rings, you sift the litter

through splayed fingers,
pausing a moment to crush the rotten plums.
It seems a useless quest
but then — on the point of resignation —

you spy them gleaming like red ripe jewels.
A dog in heat, you plunge in up to your wrists,
clawing away the bones, innards and eyeless sockets,
seize them roughly in your stout pink hands.

Then, in a gesture of contentment
sit back on your haunches, chortle to yourself
about how they were just teeth, wrenched from gums
uttering those frightful, filthy sounds.

- Cristóbal Aserrador
Mexico City
(translated by C. Sawyer-Lauçanno)

Old Story

What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence.

Here where language cannot go.
Yet you, too, must speak

You, Our Story, you must speak us.
Speak the words to keep the continuation continuing.

Return.
Return Now.

Old Story.

Constant in this turning toward and not away from suffering, and yet —
not grasping at the suffering either.
As a Story you speak, and we — we have to say something.

So it is.
So it has always been.

This is our all.
May it be so.
Old Story.
Yet one continuous moment.
Not two.

- John High
Brooklyn, NY

Contributors' Notes

- Cristóbal Aserrador (Mexico and France) is the author of several collections of verse. This poem is from his forthcoming collection *Incapacidades* (Barcelona: Vuelta, 2021). Chris Sawyer-Lauçanno edits this page.
- John High is the author of more than a dozen books of poems and several volumes of translations of Russian poetry. His latest book is *Without Dragons Even the Emperor Would Be Lonely: Ensos, Parables & Koans* (Berkeley, Wet Cement Press 2020). The poem on this page is from his forthcoming book *Scrolls of a Temple Sweeper*.
- Al Miller, our featured poet last month, received the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star with “V” Device from action in Viet Nam. He appears in the film *Straight Talk: Vets in the Classroom*, produced by Robbie Leppzer and narrated by Kris Kristofferson. Al co-authored and performed in the 2010 play *Ambush on “T” Street*, and was the 2015 winner of the Amherst Writers and Artists prize for poetry with his poem “David.” Al has spoken in classrooms about his war experiences for more than thirty years, and from August 24 to October 3, 1989 he fasted on the US Capitol steps for reconciliation with Viet Nam and his own soul. His work appears in *War and Moral Injury: A Reader*. He lives in Montague with his wife and best friend Suzanne.
- Julian Nangle, poet and bookseller, lives in Dorchester, England. His newest verse collection is *Poppy and Other Poems of Grief and Celebration* (Paris & London: Aly-scamps Press, 2019).

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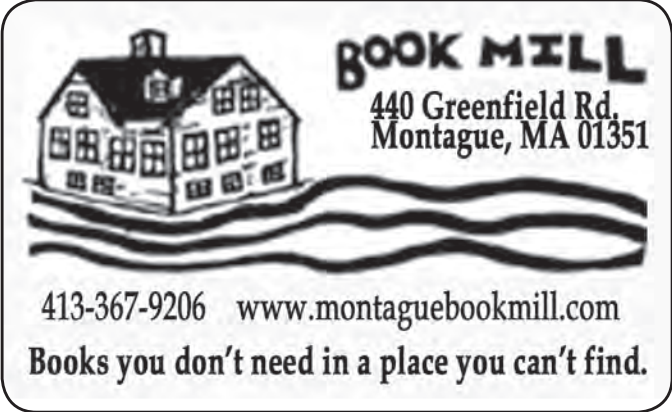
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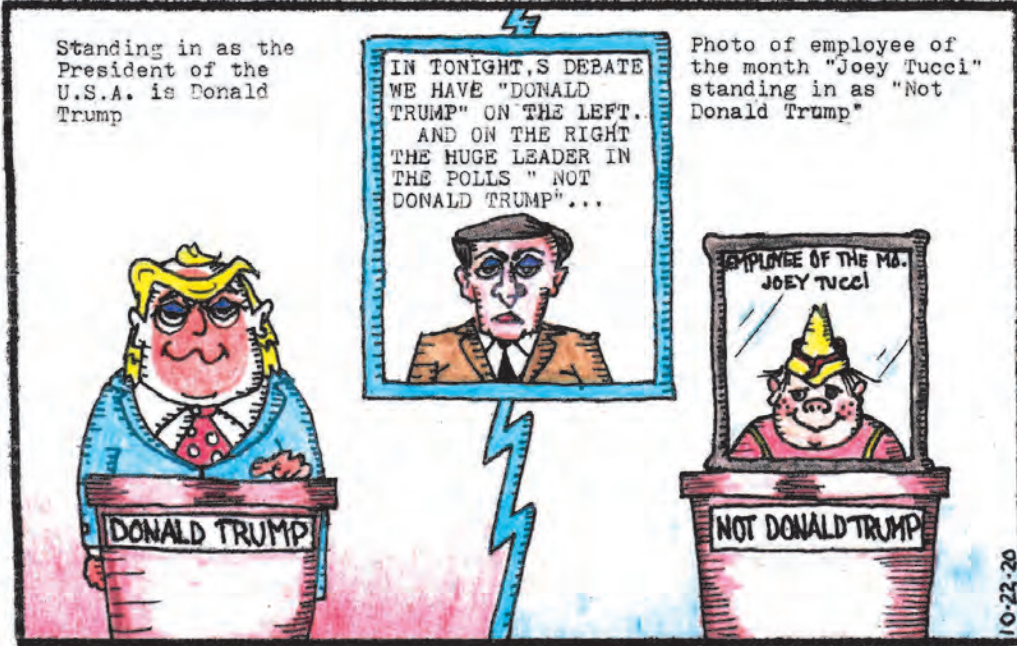
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Suzette

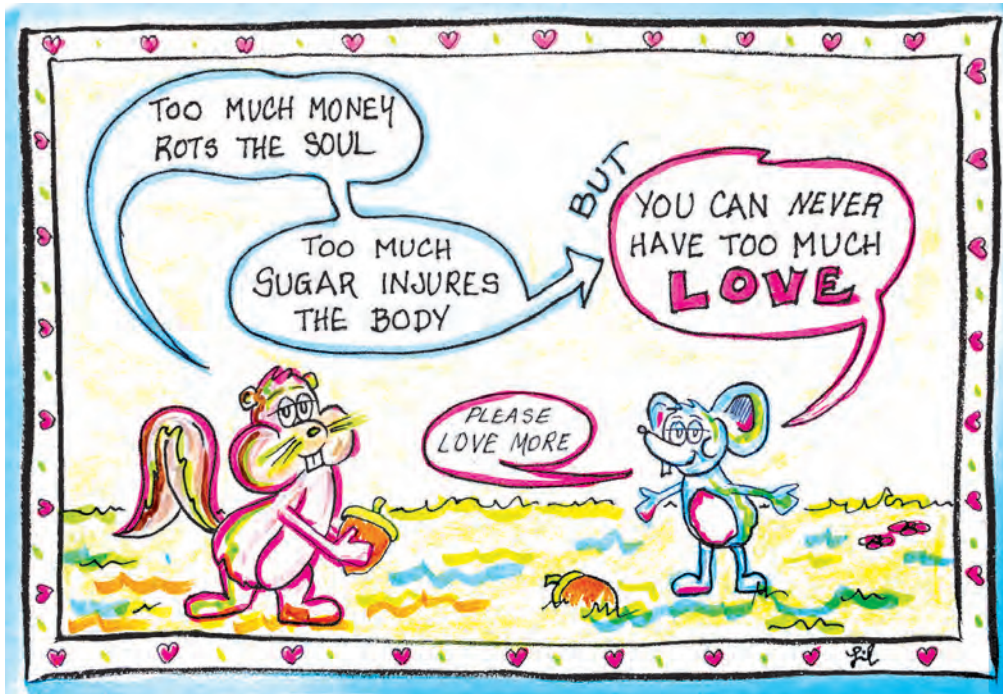


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GREAT FALLS APPLE COLUMN

By ANNABEL LEVINE

TURNERS FALLS – While harvesting in the Great Falls Apple Corps’ church lot garden, crouching down to cut a bunch of parsley, I looked up and saw in front of me a nearby elderberry bush. This elderberry, which we were gifted as an inches-tall cutting two autumns ago, now stood taller than my crouched form. I noticed it again as I drove away, harvest in tow. What a different feeling the plant’s height and maturity gave to the garden bed around it – almost architectural.

The Great Falls Apple Corps turns three years old this week, and I can’t help but feel lucky that our mission advocates for growing perennial food, so I get to be in awe as plants I helped to tend grow in size and in their gifting abundance.

And as our plants have been growing over the years, so have we. I have spoken before in this column about a phrase that has taken up residence in my head, about starting a garden: the first year it sleeps, the second it creeps, and the third year it leaps.

This year, we dove right in. No use speculating what we would have done this year had COVID not been a factor. COVID threw a wrench in our plans and

forced us to reevaluate. We decided to focus on growing food and food distribution.

Personally, I felt like it took me a while to get my sea legs when everything changed, but a season’s worth of connecting and planning has resulted in the past two months being full of food, new friends, and new partnerships that we’re really excited about.

While we had dabbled in food distribution in the past, giving away “CSA” bags from our U-Pick community garden plots to unsuspecting Unity Park patrons, last Saturday we set up our first official free food table in front of the Great Falls Harvest/Market storefront at 109 Avenue A.

We gave away applesauce, soup, and produce. The produce came from GFAC gardens, donations from Drawdown Montague, and Mark Wisniewski, and the fresh and sauced apples were picked by GFAC from the Conte Fish Lab on the Patch.

If you missed us last weekend, we’ll be back again this Saturday, October 24, from noon to 3 p.m. or while supplies last. If you have extra produce you’d like to donate, please email us or drop it off on Saturday at 11:30 a.m. Please tell anyone you think needs or would appreciate some free, local food. Great Falls Harvest will also have a take-out



A finished jar of horseradish sauce, along with a horseradish top, which was promptly replanted in anticipation of future years’ sauces.

menu running with food and drink at the same time. Stop by and say hello!

Another first happened Monday night, when the Apple Corps descended upon the kitchen at Great Falls Harvest/Market with several giant chunks of freshly-dug horseradish from my fellow volunteer’s backyard. Armed with some organic apple cider vinegar and salt, we somehow managed to make a horseradish sauce without completely burning our eyes out. All the stinging was worth it, as it’s delicious, and will soon be for sale in the market with proceeds going to help fund our burgeoning food distribution operation. This first batch is very limited (fourteen jars!), so stay tuned to our social media if you’re interested in purchasing some.

If this year’s any indication, Year Four will be full of bustling food production, and we’re grateful for that. Thanks for sticking with us, and we look forward to providing our community with more and more food. Have some cake for us!

Have any questions, or want to get involved? Reach out to us at greatfallsapplecorps@gmail.com or via our Facebook or Instagram.



A neighbor looks through the selection at GFAC’s first free food table last Saturday.

MR Wrapping Paper Edition Artist Profiles: #7

By REPORTER STAFF

Back in August, we invited people to submit design proposals for a special Wrapping Paper Issue to be printed in November. This fundraiser for the *Montague Reporter* will feature full-color designs printed on double pages of newsprint, meant to wrap presents in. Seven of these pages will feature the work of local artists chosen from the proposals we received, with an in-house, MR-themed cover design as the outer page.

Our seven winners are: Lahri Bond (Lake Pleasant); Hannah Brookman (Turners Falls); Emma Kohlmann (Northampton); Cecely Ogren (Turners Falls); Peter O. Zierlein (Northampton); Steve Schmidt (Amherst); and Jeanne Weintraub (Montague Center). The themes they proposed range from Christmas Chard to Holiday Botanicals to Grandma Moses does Turners Falls.

This special issue will go to press on Thanksgiving week.

We have asked each artist the same three questions, and now we are running our final round with the seventh contest winner, Jeanne Weintraub. Jeanne proposed “Quinnehtukqut” for her design, which features elements related to Barton’s Cove.

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

JW: As I examine my gift, I am thinking there must be something fun inside – a toy? A game? An entertaining book to read? Something yummy to eat? I am



wondering if the gift-giver chose this wrapping paper because they know I like to explore, am interested in local history and nature, or take pride in living in the Connecticut River Valley.

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

JW: I am hoping I will be unwrapping a build-your-own dinosaur kit, some locally made chocolate or maple syrup, a set of Legos, a graphic novel, a board game, or binoculars.

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

JW: Ideas for dates with my husband, heartwarming stories about my neighbors, an opportunity to share my serial novella about sustainable living with many readers (Go Green Family), and kindling for our wood stove.

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