

# The Montague Reporter

YEAR 19 – NO. 45

also serving Irving, Gill, Everett and Wendell

\$1

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

OCTOBER 21, 2021

## WONDER PERSISTS



BECKY MINOR PHOTO

Gill Greenery owner Becky Minor stepped out of her greenhouse on Sunday to take a break, and saw this on the other side of Center Road. There was no rain!

## Mountaintop Cabin Site Conserved by Land Trust

By CHIP AINSWORTH

**NORTHFIELD** – Last month Sam Richardson stood with his wife Barbara atop Stratton Mountain, one of Northfield’s highest peaks, and addressed conservationists from the Appalachian Mountain Club and the Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust. “Twenty-one years ago this was all forest land. There were no trails, no cabin, no view.

“And that,” he said, “is where we are today.”

Richardson pointed to the Richardson-Zlogar Cabin, which has sheltered overnight hikers for almost a decade. Trailheads are located on Bass Road in Warwick and Collier Cemetery off of Orange Road in Northfield. The quickest way is to drive to the end of Alexander Hill Road and walk under the power lines to a white-blazed dirt road that leads to a clearing.

On a sunny, warm day in mid-October, a hiker sat reading a book near the overlook in soul-cleansing silence until I shouted a friendly hello. She returned the greeting and told me her name was Jeannette Jones, and that she lived west of Boston.

“I’m hiking the New England Trail,” she said. “I do segments. This is Section 17.” Jones was referring to the 10.9-mile stretch of trail that traverses past Great Swamp up to where we were and back down to Route 78 in Warwick.

The cabin is set back from the clearing, close to pine and oak trees that have carpeted the ground with cones and acorns. Roughly hewn logs surrounded a large fire pit, and a weathered cotton flag that said “Camp Eagle Fan” was blowing in the breeze.

Chuckaberries were in season, and I popped a few in my mouth.

see **CABIN** page A4



AINSWORTH PHOTO

The Richardson-Zlogar Cabin atop Stratton Mountain can be booked, in non-pandemic times, by hikers and those looking for a quiet break.

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

## Board Mulls Endorsement Of Healthcare Legislation

By JEFF SINGLETON

At its October 18 meeting, the Montague selectboard took a pass on a request to endorse a bill to create a single-payer health care system at an upcoming legislative hearing, but was amenable to more public discussion of the issue in the coming months.

At the same meeting the board awarded a contract for constructing the proposed pedestrian bridge across the Turners Falls power canal, authorized a downtown street parking program for the winter, and heard an update on the future of a garage owned by the Greenfield-Montague Transit Authority and currently leased to the Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA).

During public comment time at the beginning of the meeting, see **MONTAGUE** page A7

## Town Meeting Approves of Sewer Robot, Bridge Bucks

By JEFF SINGLETON

**TURNERS FALLS** – The rain held off until late in the afternoon and the early fall weather was warm. The October 16 Montague special town meeting, moved from an initial location in the Turners Falls High School auditorium to grounds of the Franklin County Technical School due to concerns about the recent spike in COVID cases, went off without a hitch.

A majority of participants wore masks, a substantial minority did not, but there was no evidence of a great cultural divide on the issue. Meeting members were more concerned about the spike in the cost of a footbridge over the power canal (the price tag may exceed \$2.5 million), the allocation of town cannabis revenues to an “evidence-based” substance abuse program, and the timing of a \$114,382 request for a robotic sewer camera.

The meeting began at 10 a.m. and lasted just over two hours. The first five articles – which included paying a prior year bill, an increase in the police dispatch budget, an appropriation to fund clerical support for the finance committee, partial repayment to the town from the airport budget for borrowed funds, and a transfer of bond premiums – passed with relatively little debate.

The same could be said for Article 6, a transfer of cable revenues to the local access station for capital expenditures, and Article 7, which allocated \$135,000 to supplement a grant to mitigate flooding on Montague City Road.

Article 8, a \$200,000 appropriation for a pedestrian bridge over the see **STM** page A6

ERVING SELECTBOARD

## Eversource May Repair Road In Exchange for Access

By KATIE NOLAN

On Monday, the Erving selectboard gave town administrator Bryan Smith and highway superintendent Glenn McCrory authority to approve temporary repairs to flood-damaged portions of Poplar Mountain Road by a town contractor, unless Eversource agrees to make the repairs before snow season.

Smith said that Eversource, which has a switching station on Poplar Mountain, acknowledged

that runoff from their property likely caused much of the damage during July rainstorms. He said that he, Eversource representatives, and McCrory had met for a site walk early in October, where they discussed planned maintenance at the station. The company wants to use its access from Poplar Mountain for heavy vehicles and equipment. According to Smith, using other access points will cost the company time and money.

At the site walk, Smith reported, see **ERVING** page A4

## Turners Fire Chief Zellman To Retire; Deputy Promoted

By REPORTER STAFF

**TURNERS FALLS** – The Turners Falls Fire Department announced this week that Chief John Zellmann, who has served on the department since 1984 and as chief since 2016, will retire on November 15. Deputy Chief Brian McCarthy will be promoted to take his place.

McCarthy joined the Turners Falls call force in 2005 and became a full-timer in 2009, according to see **FIRE** page A6



Deputy Chief Brian McCarthy, shown here in a 2017 file photo, will become chief November 15.

## Bill Would Bring Redemption To Water, Wine, Nip Bottles

By SARAH ROBERTSON

**BOSTON** – State legislators are again considering a bill that would broaden the types of containers accepted for recycling at redemption centers in an effort to incentivize consumers to return more bottles and cans.

The Act to Expand the Bottle Bill (H.3289 and S.2149) would

increase the deposit on redeemable containers from five to ten cents, and broaden the list of containers covered under existing law. Advocates say the bill would address the growing problem of plastic pollution by providing much-needed updates to the original 1982 mandate.

“Massachusetts already has a bottle bill, but it is desperately in see **BOTTLES** page A8

## High School Sports Update: Fall Seasons Winding Down

BY MATT ROBINSON

**TURNERS FALLS** – This week, the Turners Falls field hockey team scored a tie against Mohawk, honored their seniors at the last home game of the year, and on Wednesday night, finished the regular season with a win against Mahar.

Meanwhile in football, the Franklin Tech Eagles lost an Intercounty North division fight against Greenfield, who had a little help from across the river. And now Tech is

faced with two possibilities: turn their season around, or compete against the poorer teams in the post-season. Also this week: a former Turners Coach was honored – and an Olympian came to town!

**Football**

Greenfield 34 – FCTS 8

Last Friday, October 15, the visiting Franklin Tech Football Eagles lost to the Green Wave of Greenfield 34-8. It was Tech’s second see **SPORTS** page A6



DAVID HOITT PHOTO

Franklin Tech running back Ryan Demers goes into the end zone, closely pursued by the Green Wave’s Joey White, at Veterans Memorial Field in Greenfield last Friday. Demers scored the Eagles’ sole touchdown in the 34-8 Franklin Tech loss.

### We Support The Demands Of The Headline Writers Guild

Letter to the Editors?	A2
Illustration: A New Market	A2
Local Briefs	A3
Wendell Selectboard Notes	A5
10 Years Ago This Week	A7
Valley View: Writer’s Workshop	B1
Promotional Paddling	B1
The Authors’ Corner	B1

Montague Police Log	B3
Surviving Cancer: It’s Out!	B3
Artist Profile: Justin Beatty	B4
Two Videogames With No Murders	B5
Our Monthly Spanish Page	B6
Entertainment Listing	B7
Five Comics and a Puzzle	B7
Great Falls Apple Column	B8





# The Montague Reporter

*"The Voice of the Villages"*

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August 2002

## Prime Time

The most dangerous sort of public policy is policy which will have extensive impacts on people’s lives, but is too complicated and obscure to involve them. Western Mass. is facing just that in the wave of commercial solar development we’re likely to receive under the state’s SMART incentives program.

If you’re most people, your eyes are already glazing over, and the glaze will soon extend all the way into your skull and wrap around your brain, and you’ll pause and move on to more interesting parts of this paper. Shake it off! Blink!

This spring we covered an emerging category of solar that earns highest state subsidy: “dual-use” solar arrays placed over land that is still being farmed. It’s certainly better than clear-cutting forests or seeing farmers give up for good and sell their land to developers. But the devil is in the details.

The guidelines under which the state Department of Energy Resources is supposed to approve this subsidy, called Agricultural Solar Tariff Generation Units (ASTGUs), have been wrangled and wrangled. Conservationists and some farmers fear ASTGUs will mean an influx of money to convert productive food farms to panels with pasture under them for grazing, altering our regional food system for a generation and making it even more difficult for young working-class farmers to afford to rent or purchase land.

One farm lobby, American Farmland Trust (AFT), shifted from opposition to dual-use to advocating for it, seeing the option as an alternative to farmers selling out forever. Dual-use projects are required to return to full agricultural use after the lifespan of the solar arrays.

As the state slowly hammers out the guidelines, it periodically asks for feedback. Last fall, a number of public comments beseeched DOER to set guidelines that distinguish among different grades of farmland, and steer dual-use projects toward less productive land.

“If solar is to be sited on farmland, it should be sited on the farmland least suitable for farming, not on prime farmland, unique farmland and additional land of statewide importance,” the Northeast Organic Farming Association wrote.

“Solar should be sited on the farmland least suitable for farming, not on prime farmland, unique farmland and additional land of statewide importance,” argued the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition. “No Agricultural Preservation Restriction on farmland should be broken or

interpreted to allow for dual-use.”

“Appropriately scaled solar, on the least productive, least sensitive portion of a property, should be allowed as an ancillary use within farms,” suggested Mass Audubon. “For properties enrolled in Chapter 61, there must be robust safeguards to ensure the *primary* use remains agriculture or forestry. Commercial scale solar arrays should not generally qualify for Chapter 61.”

Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA) was blunt: “Ground-mounted solar on farmland should be limited to the least valuable land for agriculture.”

Even AFT, which participated in a project alongside solar developers and conservationists to recommend “smart solar siting” principles, suggested that policymakers consider making some distinctions:

“States can limit prohibitions on solar development to enrolled land designated as ‘prime farmland,’ or another category of quality agricultural soils,” Emily Cole, a soil scientist who leads AFT New England’s solar work, pointed out in a white paper last August. “This helps to preserve high-quality soils and productive farmland while leaving room for solar development on enrolled land consisting of marginal farmland and poorer-quality soils.”

Earlier this month, DOER floated a new draft of the guidelines:

**Eligible Farmland:** *All eligible farmland shall be measured as all land that is owned or leased by a farmer that is at a minimum currently enrolled in M.G.L. ch. 61A or has been enrolled in Chapter 61A in the past five years OR is classified as Important Agricultural Farmland, e.g., prime farmland, unique farmland, or additional land of statewide importance.*

In other words, the state agreed that distinctions should be made – and is proposing that dual-use solar *only* be sited on prime or protected farmland. If you’re scratching your head, you’re not alone!

*DOER is accepting written comments on these guidelines until Wednesday, October 27, 2021. Written comments should be submitted to DOER.SMART@mass.gov with “SMART Guideline Comments” in the subject line. As an alternative, the public may submit written comments via mail to the Department of Energy Resources, 100 Cambridge Street, Suite 1020, Boston, MA 02114, attention Gina Bellato. Please be advised that there may be delays in receiving written comments via the mail.*

NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION



*The Flis Market in Erving has been doing brisk business since opening last July. Owners Jon Flis and Liz Donald are making grab-n-go sandwiches and offering beer, wine, liquor, and groceries in the same location where Flis' grandparents once operated a similar market. Some Friday nights, their hot to-go meal has proved so popular that traffic control has been necessary on Route 2.*

Letter to



the Editors

## Readers, If You Don't Send Letters, We'll Start Printing the Ones We Get From Faraway Places... and Times

There was a large Christian gathering planned for Washington, DC on April 29, AD 1980 to celebrate the landing of the English at Cape Henry, Virginia that would establish the Jamestown Colony. When they landed they erected a large wooden Cross and pledged this land to Christ. For many days prior to my going to the celebration, I would ask God to place a cross in some way over the meeting. I like to see miracles.

When on the day I arrived in Washington, it was raining so I thought that I was just foolish in asking God to place a cross over the meeting. About noon, I had sat down to rest on the steps of the Lincoln Monument. Then I got up to return to the gathering. I felt pinpricks on my arms. I looked up and sunlight was breaking through the cloud cover in the form of a cross.

I was stunned. It was even more than a sign. God had changed the weather for me just because I asked Him to do it. He changed the weather just because I wanted to see a cross over the nation’s capital. A cross, so simple a thing for me to wish to see. Changing the weather, so simple a thing for God to do.

I do believe if Americans would give up their wicked ways, alcohol, abortion, homosexuality, gender

change, women in combat, marijuana, atheism, other evils and return to honoring our Constitution and defending each life never to be debated whether it should live or die by our most unholy and impious people, then God would lift the curse of Covid off the nation.

If God would change the weather for me just so I could see a cross, He would lift a plague off the nation for everybody.

God created the nation through good men. Why would He want to destroy it through bad men unless we had become bad also and His enemy?

I feel the devil acting as prosecutor is presenting our evils before God Who is sitting on His throne as judge and demanding He kill us, while Christ is arguing why God should not destroy us.

It is a little bit like the Perry Mason show on TV where somebody is being tried for murder and Hamilton Burger is trying to get the defendant convicted while Perry Mason is trying to free him. Christ is our attorney, our Perry Mason, pleading for our lives.

**Billy Joe Parker**  
Waleska, GA

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*Every other week in July and August.  
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Compiled by NINA ROSSI

A free online talk about **Polish art history** with Susan Urban is scheduled for tonight, Thursday, October 21 at 6:30 p.m. The talk is presented by the Polish Genealogical Society of Massachusetts.

Upcoming in the society's event listings is a talk by Michal Marciniak titled "Notary Records from Poland, Their Use in Genealogical Research," to be held online Saturday, November 6 at 1 p.m. You will learn what types of notarial records you may find in the archives, what you can learn from them, how to look for such records, and what to do if you cannot locate them online.

Register at [pgsma.org](https://pgsma.org) to get Zoom links for these free events.

**Valley Voices** from New England Public Media continues for season seven tonight, Thursday, October 21, at 7:30 p.m. at Gateway City Arts in Holyoke. Hear original stories live on stage, all told in under five minutes. The audience chooses the winner. The theme is "Let Me Explain." All winners will go on to compete in the "Best of Valley Voices" at the Academy of Music in January.

Organizers are also soliciting pitches for stories on the theme of **family drama** for the next story slam, which will be held at the Bombyx Center for Arts & Equity in Florence on November 18. Pitch your idea to them by Friday, November 5 by calling (413) 735-6688 and sharing the first line of the story you would tell on the night of the slam – first line only! For more information, visit [nepm.org](https://nepm.org).

The **11th Annual Great Falls Festival** will shut down Avenue A in Turners Falls to traffic starting at 9 a.m. this Saturday, October 23. The event itself begins at noon. The street will be lined with food and craft vendors, and three stages will

be set up at Fourth Street, Avenue A, and Peskeomskut Park to offer live performances from dance groups and bands.

Bands include Foolish Wisely, Adelaide Faye & Peter Kim, No Lens, Tracy and the Valley Revival, Fortified Blues, AfterGlo, Curly Fingers Dupree, and Duh Band. Ja'Duke, the North County Line Dancers, Pizazz Dance Studio, MegaDance Fitness, and Fire Dancers will entertain audiences with movement and dance. Beer from local breweries will be available at Peskeomskut Park.

Lots of decorative pumpkins are desired to create the proper Halloween ambience – carve your own and bring them to the St. Kaz pumpkin station between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., or decorate some at the pumpkin decorating station at Second Street and Avenue A from 12 to 6 p.m. The festival is free.

On Saturday, October 23 between 2 and 4 p.m., join Leverett Elementary School greenhouse program director and master gardener Dawn Ward for a **look inside the greenhouse**, and a guided walk with Ward along hidden woodland trails at 3 p.m. Observe and engage in hands-on, nature-based activities and discover what makes the greenhouse program the hub of outdoor learning in Leverett. Children and adults are welcome – with masks, please.

A **Forest Wellness Walk** takes place this Sunday, October 24 from 10:30 a.m. until noon at FirstLight's Northfield Mountain. Connect with the natural world in a healing, calming and replenishing way on this gentle guided walk. Take the time to notice small things, open your senses to the world around you, and soak up the healing power of nature.

Join Kim Noyes, education coordinator at Northfield Mountain, for this free program, open to participants 18 years and older. Masks

are required, as is pre-registration at [www.bookeo.com/northfield](https://www.bookeo.com/northfield), as group size is strictly limited.

Valley Playwright Mentoring (VPM) is a Piti Theatre program for teenagers, during which participants develop podcasts based on stories from their lives.

This Sunday, October 24 at 6 p.m., the teens will present their second batch of "radio plays" via Zoom, followed by a question-and-answer session. Scenes address topics like COVID-19, family conflict, aging, Taylor Swift, identity, and graduating from high school. The event will take place at [www.ptco.org/vpm](https://www.ptco.org/vpm), and recordings will remain at that site after the event.

VPM is also accepting registrations for Year Three, which starts in November. The program offers stipends to teens who complete the six month mentorship.

Sugar Skull, a **virtual Día de los Muertos adventure**, happens at 7 p.m. this Sunday, online through the UMass Fine Arts Center. The family-friendly adventure stars Sugar Skull, a charismatic candy skeleton. As he follows the music towards the ultimate party, viewers meet the colorful characters who teach him how the Day of the Dead is ultimately a celebration of life.

It is described as "a captivating theatrical experience that celebrates a traditional holiday that transcends borders. The 30-minute theater performance, followed by a live engagement with the artists, is appropriate for ages 3+." A ticket for the household is \$14 at [fac.umass.edu](https://fac.umass.edu).

**Have You Seen the Ghost of John?** Check out a new children's book by local author and illustrator Christine Copeland celebrating the beauty and history of our region while teaching children to sing in the round.

Copeland's rich watercolors capture mid-19th century Historic Deerfield in autumn foliage. Finding the ghost and his little companion dog hidden in each picture is engaging for all readers. Little ones (ages 5 and up) love to sing the "ooo oo ooo" alone or with another reader.

Copeland has gotten the book published and printed locally, and it is for sale at Historic Deerfield's gift shop and the Deerfield Inn. She will be selling books in person at the Great Falls Festival in Turners Falls this Saturday as well.

If you'd like to learn how to **identify the various native pollinator bees** and learn about their behavior,

download a free, beautifully illustrated guide on the USDA Forest Service website: [www.tinyurl.com/USDA\\_BeeBasics](https://www.tinyurl.com/USDA_BeeBasics). The 40-page document has a ton of information about these important insects!

Clearing out old prescriptions can help to prevent substance misuse and overdoses. **National Drug Take-Back Day** is Saturday, October 23, courtesy of the Northwestern District Attorney's office and others. The Montague, Greenfield, Leverett, and Sunderland police departments are among participating drop-off sites; for a full list, visit [takebackday.dea.gov](https://takebackday.dea.gov).

Families with young children are invited to meet at the New Salem Library, 23 South Main Street, New Salem, for **outdoor story walks on fall-themed tales**. The Tuesday morning events happen at 11 a.m. On November 2 you may experience the book *In the Middle of Fall* by Kevin Henkes followed by *Greetings Seasons: Goodbye Autumn Hello Winter* by Kenard Pak on November 9. There is a take-home activity and free book for each participating child.

You must register for this free, Community Network for Children-sponsored event by calling or texting (413) 422-0170 or emailing [budine@erving.com](mailto:budine@erving.com).

There will be **downtown trick or treating** in Turners Falls next Friday, October 29, from 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. With Halloween on a Sunday, a majority of business locations will be closed. This event is sponsored by the Montague Business Association in partnership with the Montague police department. Halloween-type signs will denote participating businesses.

Having the event on Friday allows children (and adults) to perfect their costumes for the Rag Shag Parade, which will be held on Sunday, October 31, according to tradition.

Gill tax collector Tom Hodak asked us to pass along this **message to our Gill readers**, as we were nearing publication:

"Real estate and personal property payments are now active and are accessible on the front page of the Gill website, [gillmass.org](https://gillmass.org), and under the 'tax collector' tab. The online bill pay accepts checks, debit, or payment by credit card. Motor vehicle and sewer payments will be coming in the near future."

Send your local briefs to [editor@montaguereporter.org](mailto:editor@montaguereporter.org).

#### PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Help Stack Wood!

**TURNERS FALLS** – With fuel prices on the rise, the Montague Wood Bank is in need of help stacking wood for the upcoming heating season this Saturday, October 23 from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m., or until we finish stacking.

Come and work alongside a dedicated group of volunteers using nature to make sure no one in our community is without heat when they need it most.

The Community Wood Bank is located at 10 Sandy Lane, to the right of the Franklin County Dog Shelter, at the transfer station – behind the dumpsters, and to the left of the old salt barn. Interested vol-

unteers should contact David Detmold, chair of the Montague tree advisory committee, at (413) 863-9296. Please bring sturdy gloves if you have them.

The Wood Bank recycles town tree waste produced from hazardous tree removal and utility reliability projects. It is managed by the tree advisory committee with the support of the tree warden, DPW, and the state Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Residents interested in receiving dry firewood from the wood bank should contact the Gill-Montague Council on Aging at [coa@montague-ma.gov](mailto:coa@montague-ma.gov) or (413) 863-9357.



### Immediate Openings 2021-2022 School Year

Custodian – Sheffield Elementary School  
1:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Cafeteria Assistants – Turners Falls High School & Hillcrest Elementary School

Reading Teacher – Great Falls Middle School

Substitute Teachers (\$120/day)

Paraprofessionals – Sheffield and Hillcrest Elementary and Great Falls Middle School

Tutors – District Wide  
\$30/hour Certified Teacher  
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Board Certified Behavior Analyst

If interested, please apply to:

Gill-Montague Regional School District  
Brian Beck, Superintendent  
35 Crocker Ave  
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or [www.schoolspring.com](https://www.schoolspring.com)

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RECYCLE

**PAPER**

Week of October 25  
in Montague



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ERVING from page A1

he told the Eversource representatives that the company would not be allowed to bring heavy equipment on Poplar Mountain Road. He said the representatives offered “verbally” to do the temporary repair work in return for town approval of heavy equipment on the road.

Smith said he asked for a proposal in writing, but the town has not received one. “I don’t know what they are going to propose,” he said.

“If they’re doing temporary repairs,” selectboard chair Jacob Smith responded, “it doesn’t sound like they are taking responsibility for permanent repairs.”

Selectboard member Scott Bastarache recommended “leaving it up to Bryan and Glenn,” with the provisos that the repair “has to be timely,” that the company “is not absolved from repairs in the future,” and that they “make the road winter-ready.”

McCrory said he had received a proposal from Johnson Asphalt Paving, LLC, of Northfield, for

\$9,350 for temporary repaving of a portion of the road.

Jacob Smith said he felt the town should “plan to do it and seek reimbursement later,” in order to ensure completion before plowing season.

William Bembury wondered if Eversource wanted to use the Poplar Mountain Road access long term.

Bryan Smith answered that maintenance needs at the switching station would always require large equipment. When use of the road for access was granted by the selectboard in 2014, the town didn’t know that heavy equipment would be on the road.

The board asked Bryan Smith and McCrory to tell Eversource that the temporary repairs needed to be completed before the company may use the road for heavy vehicle traffic.

“If you want to run trucks over it, get it winter ready in time.” Jacob Smith said.

“I don’t think Eversource moves that quickly,” commented Bembury.

The board voted to engage John-

son Asphalt Paving for the temporary repairs.

**Erving Center Traffic**

In August, the state Department of Transportation (MassDOT) rated the Church Street Bridge at Church and North streets at a three-ton capacity, and required the town to install a barrier making the bridge one lane only. By September 30, the town had installed signs and barriers making it one-way southbound, while keeping Church and North streets as two-way streets, but posting signs that they are for local traffic only.

Jacob Smith said residents had remarked about increased speeding on North Street, now that Church Street is one-way. He said that people traveling the wrong way on Church Street “has severely declined,” especially with enhanced police enforcement.

“As a resident, as a selectboard member, I am quite satisfied with the job the police department has done,” said Bembury. “They have

been proactive.”

Police chief Robert Holst encouraged citizens to call his department if they observe problems on either street.

Jacob Smith told the board some citizens asked about installing speed bumps on North Street. Bastarache raised the possibility of installing plowable raised pedestrian crossings, which might slow traffic.

McCrory told the board that both speed bumps and raised crossings presented problems during snow plowing, and that elevated crosswalks would affect road drainage. “It’s one more thing, after plowing 20 or 30 hours,” he said. “I do understand why people want them, but I have concerns on the highway side.”

McCrory added that residents have asked for speed bumps on six other roads, and Erving could end up with them “all over town.”

“I’m not in favor of putting them in anywhere and everywhere,” said Bembury.

see **ERVING** next page

CABIN from page A1

My father was a surveyor and forester from Littleton, New Hampshire, and he showed them to me when I was a kid.

“Ever heard of them?” I asked Jones.

“No,” she said.

“They taste sort of like spearmint.”

If Jones was staying the night she would need to pitch a tent on one of the camp’s two elevated platforms. The cabin has been closed since the pandemic started.

“We kept a record prior to the closing,” said Barbara. “We averaged about ten visitors a week for the three seasons, and in winter we’d still have requests, but it can be very cold there.”

To reserve the 16-by-20-foot cabin, hikers signed up on [newenglandtrail.org](http://newenglandtrail.org) and got the lock combination from the Western Mass. chapter of the AMC. “They own the cabin,” Barbara said, “along with the National Parks Service. There’s no fee for its use, but there is a donation box inside the cabin. There are no lights – bring your own lights, your own water, and your own heat. It’s well insulated with six shuttered windows and benches under a loft, and there’s a stainless steel table for a portable cook stove and food prep.

“We’d have one or two break-ins over the year, but virtually no vandalism. We kept a pretty close eye on it, and that will need to be continued now that the AMC and Mount Grace will own the land.”



*The view from the clearing near the Richardson-Zlogar Cabin, with Mount Monadnock in the distance.*

bara grew up in Frankfurt, Indiana, and he was from Taunton. “I came east in 1963 at age 19 and married Sam,” she said. In July they celebrated their 58th anniversary.

After teaching stops in Poughkeepsie, New York, and Nottingham, New Hampshire, they moved to Northfield in 1971 when Sam was hired to be the chair of the math department at Pioneer Valley Regional School. Barb worked at the Northfield Mount Hermon School library, and in 1981 he joined her there and taught students math and about the great outdoors. They both retired in 2001.

The Richardsons’ three stars for turning their forest land into a viable back-country camping area are Northfield’s Joanne McGee, retired US Congressman John Olver, and carpenter Mike Zlogar, a retired Amherst fireman and member of the Western Mass. chapter of the AMC.

standard is to build mostly level trails that can be used by a beginner skier.”

In 2000, McGee asked him to design and clear a hiking trail from the *cul de sac* at the historic Collier Cemetery down to the Alexander Hill power line. Richardson calls McGee, a former town administrator and current clerk for the Mount Grace Conservation Land Trust, “the leading conservationist in Northfield.”

After he realized the best route would go through private property, they decided to buy all 38 acres. “In the end it was a bargain,” he said. “It was owned by elderly people in Winchester whose son had bought it and they just wanted to get rid of it.”

With help from others they cleared the forest to create vistas for hikers. It seems contradictory to call a logger environmentally conscious, but Barbara said of the late Jere Nelson: “He had a way with a bulldozer that enhanced the natural beauty of the land. He constructed boulder designs and landmarks, and helped us fulfill the dream.”

Once that was done they contacted the AMC’s Pat Fletcher and asked if they’d be interested in paying for a lean-to or cabin for the hikers. “AMC said go ahead, and around Labor Day in 2011 we bought a cabin kit that was on sale for around \$7,500. A volunteer crew helped us build the frame, and in the spring Mike did the interior work. He is a master carpenter and patient teacher.”



*Former US Congressman John Olver cuts the ribbon at the cabin's 2012 dedication ceremony while Mike Zlogar (far left) and Barb and Sam Richardson (right) look on.*

Accommodations include stunning views of Mount Wachusett and Mount Watatic to the east and rock-topped Monadnock to the north. “On a good day you can see Ascutney, and that’s 60 miles north,” said Sam.

A short walk west is another clearing with views of Mount Greylock in Adams, and Mount Snow and Stratton Mountain in Vermont.

The Richardsons know their regional natural history. For instance: “Monadnock was not originally a rocky bare top. Farmers burned the top thinking they were being clever to get grass growing for their animals,” said Sam.

They met at Franklin College of Indiana, a Great Books college south of Indianapolis. Bar-



*Trail directions and maps near the cabin.*

Olver, who is 85 years old, retired from Congress in 2013. He has a Ph.D. from MIT and taught chemistry at UMass for eight years until 1969 when he was elected to represent the Second Hampshire District. After a stint in the state senate he succeeded Silvio Conte in the First Congressional District.

He used his power and influence to have the 216-mile New England Trail, which wends from the New Hampshire border to the Connecticut seacoast, added to the list of National Scenic Trails. “There are eleven National Scenic Trails,” said Sam. “The only two east of the Mississippi are the Appalachian Trail and the New England Trail. This makes Northfield a destination for hikers from all over the world.”

Sam Richardson has been up and over every mountain in Northfield, building trails, blazing trees, and clearing paths. He was taught by his friend and mentor Bob Doris of the White Mountain AMC. “That was in 1962,” he said. “Bob taught me the subtleties of trail design and maintenance.”

Thanks to Richardson there are over 20 miles of red, white, blue, and yellow-blazed loop trails along the ridge that stretches from behind Aquinas College to the Northfield Golf Course. “Sam’s trails are all sustainable and designed so they won’t cause erosion,” said his wife. “His

Earlier this year the Richardsons decided to sell the land. “We had it appraised, and [Mount Grace executive director] Emma Ellsworth arranged for a purchase agreement.”

Headquartered in Athol and named for a nearby isolated hill of bedrock (called a monadnock), the MGLCT was founded in 1986 to conserve forests and farmland in north central and western Mass. According to its website, in 35 years it has conserved over 35,000 acres.

Under the arrangement, MGLCT will own the land, while AMC will manage the cabin.

To expedite the sale, John Olver gave \$50,000 out of his own pocket. “The closing will be early next year,” said Barbara. “We’ve signed the buy/sell. We don’t foresee it falling through. We’re happy that someone will continue our stewardship.”



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**ERVING** from previous page

Bryan Smith advised that elevated crosswalks would need to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and state design standards, and would require more signs.

Bastarache suggested that the board develop a policy on how and where to install speed bumps and elevated crossings, and that temporary rumble strips “in strategic locations” could remind motorists to slow down.

The board asked Bryan Smith to research MassDOT regulations and report back at the next meeting.

**Arch Street Sewer**

Aqua Line Utility of Weymouth, the contractor installing the forced sewer main on Arch Street, requested two change orders after discovering a six-inch clay pipe and a 300-square-foot underground concrete slab in the excavation area.

In a memo, Tighe&Bond engineers wrote that some of the increased costs should have been included in the unit price bid, and were not extra costs.

Bryan Smith said another change order will be requested soon, asking to reduce the depth of the excavation, because ledge is present in another area. He and wastewater superintendent Peter Sanders will meet with Aqua Line to discuss the change orders.

**Board of Health**

Former board of health chair Bruce “Cyd” Scott, with a term ending 2023, resigned as of October 1 and Michael Gralenski, with a term ending 2024, resigned this week.

The board had posted an opening for the first vacant seat, and received letters of interest from Jay Niedbala and Jeffrey McAndrews. They appointed Niedbala to Scott’s seat, and asked that McAndrew re-submit a letter of interest once the second vacancy is posted.

Current board of health chair Leo Parent, Jr. said he would appoint McAndrews as an associate non-voting member until the second vacancy is filled, which is expected to be at the board’s November 1 meeting. Appointments for both vacant seats run until June 30, 2022.

**Public Library**

Bryan Smith advised the board that the library trustees have re-instituted a mask mandate for inside the library.

Library director Natalie Halasz has given notice that she will be leaving the job in three to four weeks. Jacob Smith said, “We wish her well,” and reported that the trustees have begun the search process for a new director.

Bembury said hiring a new director provides an opportunity for discussing opening the library on Sundays. “I hope we can address this before someone is put in that position,” he said.

Bastarache also encouraged that a new hire should be flexible about library hours.

The board asked Bryan Smith to convey the board’s concerns to the library trustees.

**Other Business**

The board voted to buy a Billy Goat Hurricane Z3000 leaf blower from Taplin Yard, Pump & Power Equipment of Agawam for \$10,879.99.



## The Town of Erving

has two **redevelopment opportunities** available:  
an RFP for the former grade school at 18 Pleasant Street,  
and an RFI for the former IP Mill complex.

More information at [www.erving-ma.gov/bids](http://www.erving-ma.gov/bids)

### TOWN OF LEVERETT

## Town Tax Collector

The Town of Leverett is hiring a Part Time Tax Collector. Duties include, but are not limited to, sending bills and collecting taxes, completing municipal lien certificates, completing yearly reporting requirements, and tracking outstanding accounts. Approximately 15 hours per week. Hours flexible with regular public hours required. Salary between \$15,000 and \$20,000 per year. Must demonstrate spreadsheet and communication skills. Job description and application available at [townadministrator@leverett.ma.us](mailto:townadministrator@leverett.ma.us) or at [leverett.ma.us](http://leverett.ma.us). Resumes, cover letter and application should be received by November 12, 2021 to email address above. *Leverett is an AA/EOE.*

NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

# Discomfort with Police Patrols

By JOSH HEINEMANN

The Wendell selectboard heard a policing complaint from citizens Adam Kohl and his partner, Kate Lee, at their October 13 Zoom meeting. Kohl had completed some official work as town conservation agent one recent night and was leaving the building after dark with Lee, around 7:45 p.m. A Leverett police officer driving by on patrol saw them as they looked at a posting. He stopped, shined a bright light at them, and asked, “What are you doing?”

Lee said she did not feel safe. They were in an unequal power situation, facing an armed officer, and blinding lights.

Citizen Sam Birch echoed their concern. “I thought the original idea [with Leverett] was that there would be no patrolling,” he said. Birch said he thought if Leverett officers were in town they should remain at the police station, and noted that the town has low property crime and low violent crime.

People in Wendell, Birch said, want to be left alone, and police are like bears, OK at a distance.

When the Leverett police department first assumed responsibility for Wendell, officers drove around town learning the roads, and some people were alarmed to see police vehicles going by.

Standard Leverett police procedure is routine nighttime checking of town buildings. Selectboard chair Dan Keller said the agreement between the towns called for two to four hours of patrolling a week, and radar use in areas where residents have complained about speeding vehicles.

The department has received an average of 60 calls a month since it assumed responsibility for Wendell’s policing.

Selectboard member Gillian Budine said the Swift River School has had vandalism, and the New Salem police check the site as part of their routine. She said she wanted to consider the complaint, and not jump to a conclusion.

Leverett police chief Scott

Minckler said the officer involved is one of the friendliest in the department, and that he felt the situation was comfortable on both sides. Keller invited him to the next selectboard meeting.

Lee said they did not meet as equals.

In related business, the selectboard unanimously approved the lease for the Leverett department to use the old Wendell police station, assuming only minor tweaks by Leverett’s lawyer. With the lease in place, bids can go out and work can begin on grant-funded improvements to the building, including its plumbing, insulation, heat, and internet service.

Wendell will own and maintain the building and cover insurance, and Leverett will own and maintain the equipment they bring in.

**Water Filter**

Bruce Turner, director of financial operations for the elementary school Union #28, said the Swift River School has an opportunity to install a chlorine filter, which will do automatically what is now done on a schedule by a person.

The cost is \$7,000, of which \$3,500 would be covered by Wendell, and board members approved the purchase. The New Salem selectboard meets Monday, October 18.

Budine suggested that federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) money could pay for it, as it is a water quality issue, and Turner said it would.

**Other Business**

Town coordinator Alisha Brouillet said the request for quotes (RFQ) for a town-mandated cleanup of private property at 131 Lockes Village Road is almost ready, and a number of contractors have expressed interest. Board members agreed to a walk-through November 3.

Charlie Kaniecki, who has worked with the owner, will be there for the walk-through, and he suggested a police presence to help defuse the owner. During the clean-up the owner will have some control over what can stay.

Wendell’s contract with Code RED, of Greenfield, for reverse-911 service needs to be revised because the 2020 US Census showed an increase in the town’s population from 848 to 924 residents. The price will not change for the first three-year contract.

It looks like a state Community Compact grant Wendell requested for a study of IT cooperation with neighboring towns has been approved. Budine said Erving has expressed some interest, and Brouillet said Warwick is interested as well.

The senior center is due for some repairs. Its ramp has some deteriorated boards, and needs painting. The inside walls have paint peeling and water marks showing. The selectboard will get estimates for the work.

# Wendell Holds a Successful ‘Special’

By JOSH HEINEMANN

Rain held off for the whole day, and the Wendell special town meeting last Saturday, October 16, was held outside on the town common.

Wendell has not celebrated Old Home Day for two years, and with that, has not presented an award for citizen of the year. The meeting opened with selectboard chair Dan Keller awarding the honor to finance committee chair Doug Tanner. “Thank you for counting the cents with sense,” he said.

In 45 minutes, 20 town citizens approved the entire warrant, with the exception of some articles that were passed over. Articles 3, 4, and 5 would have moved money from the town’s municipal light plant enterprise fund to more appropriate places, but the amount in that account has not been certified by the state, so Wendell may not do anything until it is certified.

An article that would have paid a bill of prior year for a police radio was also passed over because Leverett police chief Scott Minckler expects to get a grant that will cover that bill.

Voters approved moving \$76,000 from stabilization and \$50,000 from taxes to pay for road repairs made necessary by heavy July rainfall. Highway commission chair Phil Delorey said federal reimbursement for those repairs is off the table because the minimum amount is \$10 million, but Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency money should pay for 75% of those repairs – within 6 months to 4 years, according to Tanner.

Delorey mentioned a culvert deep under a roadway near Diemand Farm that is in disrepair, and whose



Selectboard member Laurie DiDonato (left, with paper) and chair Dan Keller present the citizen of the year award to Doug Tanner (right) during last Saturday’s special town meeting.

two-year-old estimate for replacement was \$400,000. Open space committee chair Dan Leahy said a state Municipal Vulnerability Program grant may be available. He went on to ask residents to return the open space and recreation survey that was mailed to households and is available online.

Articles 6 through 10 authorized paying bills of prior years totaling \$712.49. The amount for Article 12, taking money from the town’s sick leave stabilization account to pay for retired town coordinator Nancy Aldrich’s unused sick time, was reduced from \$3,500 to \$530 – Wendell’s share of the amount actually owed – by a fin com amendment, and passed by unanimous vote.

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STM from page A1

power canal, required extensive justification from both the town administrator and the chairman of the selectboard, and produced numerous questions and comments from town meeting members.

The appropriation was identical to what appeared on the warrant as approved by the finance committee and selectboard nearly a month ago, but recent bids to construct the bridge had left a potential funding deficit of over \$700,000.

Town administrator Steve Ellis told the meeting that the town could make up the deficit with the appropriation on the warrant, funds from the federal COVID recovery plan already in the pipeline, and a range of other potential sources, including receipts from real estate sales.

One town meeting member asked how a winning bid of just under \$2.34 million, funded by nearly \$2.2 million, produced such a large deficit. Selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz said the figure was accounted for by engineering costs and an additional 10% contingency not included in the base bid, which came in significantly higher than expected due to a recent spike in the price of steel.

“I find it a hard stretch to spend over \$491,000 of COVID relief money on a bridge,” said Precinct 1 meeting member Mark Fisk. “I know we’re not spending it on the bridge but on the sewer, water and electrical lines, but I find it a hard stretch.”

Town accountant Carolyn Olson explained that the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds were for “more than specific COVID expenditures, but were intended to help communities rebuild” from the economic impact of the pandemic.

Fisk then asked why federal ARPA funds were not used instead of the previously approved \$135,000 to mitigate Montague City

Road flooding. Ellis said that in that case the town was waiting for “further guidance from the treasurer before crafting a full strategy.” The selectboard had decided to use ARPA funds in the case of the bridge because of “time constraints on this project.” The state Mass-Works grant which funds most of the bridge expires next year, so the town needs to award the project to begin construction now.

After several speakers said they supported the project because the current pedestrian crossing on the nearby state auto bridge is dangerous, the \$200,000 appropriation passed unanimously.

Changing Attitudes

The bridge discussion was the longest at the meeting but the next motion, which involved the allocation of \$50,000 from a cannabis stabilization fund (Article 9), created almost as much debate.

The money, to be used for “mitigation” of problems linked to increased cannabis use, was to be allocated to a local agency which could provide “evidence-based” programs to families through a bidding process. An organization called the Communities That Care Coalition, overseen by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments and Community Action, would provide “technical assistance” in developing the “request for proposals (RFP).”

The motion prompted a lengthy discussion of the use of cannabis impact funds and the potential limitations of the mitigation plan that would result from the potential request for proposals.

Precinct 5 town meeting member Natan Cohen, who works for a peer-support recovery and advocacy organization called the Wildflower Alliance, said they did not see that groups more involved in “substance abuse work” had been involved in the process of creating the proposal. They stated that based

on their own experience, those with substance abuse issues needed “someone to talk to,” “accurate information,” and other support which might not be provided by “quote-unquote evidence based programs.”

“We might be on a theme here,” said Precinct 2 member David Jensen. “I originally thought this was a dumb question, but what does ‘evidence-based’ mean to you?”

Jen Audley – not speaking for the finance committee, which she chairs, but as a steering committee member of the Communities That Care Coalition, said that in this case “evidence-based” means research “that shows there is a connection between doing this curriculum and kids in the target age group saying that their attitudes about cannabis had changed.”

Mary Kay Mattiace of Precinct 6 said she would vote for the article, but believed that “substance abuse is not a problem but a symptom of a problem,” defined as “our toxic culture and many related issues around that...”

Finance committee member John Hanold expressed the concern that the appropriation might become an annual expense. “If this is the camel’s nose, we might soon have the entire camel in the tent,” he said.

Ellis responded to these and other comments by saying that he felt the town needed a long-term strategy for spending cannabis stabilization funds, which currently come from the firm 253 Farmacy on Millers Falls Road. The appropriation was approved by a majority of the meeting.

Other Business

The next article, which proposed spending \$114,382 from free cash for a “robotic sewer camera” to more easily identify leaks and blockage in the sewer system, passed by a solid majority after public works superintendent Tom Bergeron described the labor-intensive and expensive process his department recently

FIRE from page A1

the announcement. He holds dual bachelors’ degrees in business administration and fire science administration, and a masters’ of public administration in fire and emergency services.

Zellmann’s retirement has been anticipated since last winter, and the department, a distinct entity from the town of Montague governed by a prudential committee, posted for the position in late August both internally and externally.

McCarthy is the department’s second deputy chief, and is the second to be promoted to chief. The department includes 12 career firefighters and a call force of six.

See next week’s *Montague Reporter* for more in-depth coverage!



went through to identify a sewer problem. Several members asked if the camera could be used by private homeowners to address potential problems with their sewer connections. Bergeron said that existing town bylaws would prohibit this, whereupon Precinct 5 member Edite Cunha said she would support amending the bylaws.

Several speakers questioned why the camera had been proposed so late in the town meeting process, and why it could not wait for another meeting, but Precinct 1 member Ariel Elan said she was “so excited” to vote for the sewer camera in light of the town’s “crumbling infrastructure.” The sewer robot article passed by majority vote.

The last three motions – which transferred revenues from free cash to several dedicated funds, and rescinded unused borrowing for hazardous materials abatement at the former Strathmore mill – were approved with limited debate.

The meeting adjourned in just over two hours.



SPORTS from page A1

divisional loss in as many games.

“We’re not out of it yet,” coach Joe Gamache told his troops. “We’ll either play in the tournament, or we’ll play against teams with losing records.”

The 2-4 Eagles got way behind very early in Friday’s game, partially because of an ex-Turners Falls student.

Tech got the ball first, but were forced to punt after two incomplete passes. Green then drove down the field and scored. The 2-PAT was stuffed, but the damage had been done. The kickoff return was then mishandled, and Green scored again, courtesy of a circus catch by former TFHS standout Brendan Driscoll. This time the extra 2 was good, and Greenfield expanded their lead to 14-0.

I’ve known the Driscoll family for years. During that time, Brendan’s father and I would always meet on the sidelines and analyze the games. “There just weren’t enough kids from Turners to have a football team,” Mr. Driscoll explained early in Friday’s game.

Then his son made another spectacular play.

While still in the first quarter, Driscoll grabbed an interception and almost took it to the bank. He was finally stopped inside the 5-yard line. This led to another TD, and Green went up 20-0. The Wave piled on another score in the second period, so when the whistle blew to end the half, Tech was on the losing end of a 28-0 score.

Tech regained their composure after the lopsided first half, and played pretty evenly in the second.

“At halftime, I told them to attack,” Gamache explained after the game. “It’s a learning opportunity.”

In the third, the Tech D stopped Green, but the offense sputtered



DAVID ROUIT PHOTO

Turners Falls’ Holly Myers (left) competes with Smith Academy’s Bailey McCoy (right) for control of the ball as the Thunder hosted the Falcons on Field Hockey Senior Night at TFHS.

again. Gamache ran a fake punt on fourth down and the Wave took over in Franklin’s territory, setting up another TD.

Then trailing 34-0, the Tech Boys finally scored when Ryan Demers charged into the end zone. Gabriel Tomasi followed it up with a pass to Max Bastarache for the 2-PAT.

Tech had little chance to build on their success, as the clock went into mercy mode in the fourth quarter, and didn’t stop ticking until the final whistle blew.

On offense, Chad Adams led the pack with 60 yards, followed by Demers (40), Tomasi (14), Basta-

rache (13), and Josiah Little (5).

Defensively, Logan Call led the team in solo tackles (7), and recovered a fumble. Andrew Esposito also recovered a fumble, and Adams made six total tackles.

The Tech Boys return home next Friday against another ICN division rival, the Palmer Panthers.

Field Hockey

TFHS 1 – Mohawk 1

Smith Academy 8 – TFHS 1

TFHS 3 – Mahar 2

On Thursday, October 14, the Turners Falls Field Hockey Thunder rolled up the Mohawk Trail and

tied the Warriors on their home turf.

After two scoreless quarters, Mohawk took a 1-0 lead in the third quarter. In the fourth, Brooke Thayer tied it up with an assist from Hannah Marchefka.

Thursday’s tie was a defensive battle, with the Warriors making six shots on goal while Powertown made four.

Then on Monday, a Cast of Purple Falcons flew into town, and defeated Powertown 8-1. It was Turners’ last home game of the season, and seniors Marchefka and Paige Sulda were honored before the match.

I can’t do justice to all the wonderful things these young ladies have done over the years. But I will say this about Hannah: During the softball state championship game last year, the Amesbury cable announcers had difficulty with the pronunciation of many players’ names. After butchering Marchefka several times, the announcer gave up and made a bold prediction: “Maybe I’ll get her name right next year.”

The Smith Academy Falcons are coached by Judy Strong, a member of the Women’s National Team that won the bronze medal at the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles. And she seems to have imparted her Olympic spirit onto her team.

Strong’s Cast of Falcons took the ball into Powertown’s end and scored two quick goals using tight formations and precision passing. They scored three more in the second to take a 5-0 lead at halftime. Most of the goals ricocheted several time before they were slapped in.

Against Smith, Blue played most of the match in front of their own net, and were forced to commit infractions just to keep the ball out of it. This inside-the-circle defense led to 17 corner attempts for Smith to zero for the home team.

Turners finally scored in the third when Sulda fed the ball to Avery Tela, who shot it into the net.

Then on Wednesday, the Blue Ladies traveled to Orange and defeated the Mahar Senators, 3-2.

Ella Guidaboni scored the first Turners Falls goal in the first quarter, assisted by Marchefka. Tela put one into the net in the third, with a little help from Laken Chessie; Tela returned the favor in the fourth by giving an assist to Chessie as she scored the winning goal.

Goaltender David Stowe made seven saves in the victory.

Although Powertown has a losing record, according to coach Renee Tela they may still be invited to the Western Mass Tournament. More on that as the story progresses...

Hall of Famer

On Friday, Westfield State University inducted Chris Lapointe into their Hall of Fame.

As quarterback for the Westfield Owls, Lapointe set 11 WSU records for passing and offense, and was a first-team All-New England Football Conference pick. In 2001, he led the Owls to an undefeated season and made the only NCAA Playoff appearance in school history.

After graduating, Lapointe became the head football coach for Turners Falls High School. He had many successful seasons during his tenure, and led Powertown to two Western Mass football titles.

“It was such a great feeling to receive the nomination,” Lapointe said after the ceremony.

A well-deserved, hearty congratulations to the man who skipped the ship for Turners Falls Football through many successful seasons.

Next week: a look back at the fall season – and a preview of the playoffs!



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**MONTAGUE** from page A1

library trustee David Harmon raised a question about the large amounts of free cash that were used for projects approved at the recent special town meeting. Free cash, he noted, reflected large budget surpluses from the previous year, when town departments had been directed to struggle with so-called level services budgets.

“We worked very hard to keep things minimal [last year], but then going to town meeting and seeing there was such a surplus,” he said. “Maybe there could be a process to send some of that surplus back to the different departments.”

Town administrator Steve Ellis told Harmon that he would be “happy to have a conversation with you about that offline.”

The single-payer health care proposal was made by Ferd Wulkan of Montague Center, accompanied by David Cohen and Judy Atkins from the group Franklin County Continuing the Political Revolution.

Wulkan introduced the proposed legislation by saying he believed “everyone is familiar” with single-payer health care, which is “very very popular,” and noting that Montague residents had recently endorsed single-payer in a non-binding referendum by a vote of 2,684 to 776.

Single-payer would replace private health insurance with a state or federal fund, financed by taxation. Advocates argue that savings from reducing administrative costs, and other measures such as negotiating lower prescription drug prices, would allow the public sector to provide universal health coverage with no copayments or deductibles at a lower cost than the current “multi-payer” system.

The version that Wulkan presented, which was sent to the selectboard the previous weekend along with supporting materials, is Massachusetts House Bill 1267. State representative Natalie Blais and state senator Joanne Comerford, who represent Montague, are both sponsors of this bill.

Wulkan estimated that under this legislation, the town would spend just under 8% of total wages for its “current employees,” producing a savings of \$248,000. The estimate did not include payments for retirees or those on the payroll who the town does not currently cover, but the new system might require a payroll tax. Cohen cited a study which predicted that single-payer would save the state \$11 billion while covering virtually all who are uninsured today.

“I don’t know whether it’s good or bad,” said selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz. “I just know that I received a 38- page document over the weekend.”

Selectboard member Matt Lord

asked whether any “hospital groups” supported the legislation. Cohen responded that the board of the advocacy organization Mass-Care, on which he sits, includes doctors, but that the Massachusetts Medical Society had not endorsed it yet.

Ariel Elan, an audience member, said she was “very glad” to be reminded of the non-binding referendum vote, so she was “no longer worried about the process” but “would not expect the selectboard to vote this tonight.”

This reporter asked what kind of process and criteria the selectboard would follow in “taking a stand on an issue this complicated, when we spent weeks and weeks discussing a footbridge.”

“Well, I feel exactly the same way,” said Kuklewicz. “And I do not see a motion on the floor.”

Lord said he was personally “very excited” about H.1267, but “this board may not be formally taking up the issue.”

“Well Jeff has offered to help pull some forums together, and I think that would be great,” said Kuklewicz. The single-payer advocates nodded, and the discussion ended without a formal vote.

#### Patch Party

Two residents, Misty Jacques and Anya Jacobson, came before the board to request the use of public property and an entertainment license for trick-or-treating in the Patch neighborhood of Turners Falls on Halloween.

Jacques said that in light of a potential spike in COVID-19, she wanted to create a “one-way walkway” through the neighborhood, close a street, and reserve space for entertainment. She showed a neighborhood map of the proposed event, which would take place on the afternoon and evening of October 31.

There was a lengthy discussion, which involved police chief Chris Williams, of whether the street could realistically be closed, the status of insurance for the event, and whether the property being proposed was town or private property.

At first the board seemed skeptical that the amount of planning needed could be completed within a realistic timeframe, but it eventually approved a more limited use of public property – closing only an alley and part of a street – as well as an entertainment license, with both pending approval from the Turners Falls fire department and obtaining insurance.

#### Global Pandemic

A portion of the meeting was held jointly with the board of health. Al Cummings, chair of that board, presented the latest COVID metrics in the absence of public

health director Danial Wasiuk.

The number of recorded new positive COVID tests has continued to decline overall, with 11 cases in the two-week period from October 3 to October 16, six of which were in the second week of that period.

Of the latter six cases, five patients had not been vaccinated and one was fully vaccinated. One patient was under 18, three of the six were in the 18- to 35-year-old age group, and none were over 65.

Ellis showed metrics for the county as a whole and some of the larger towns. These showed a spike in COVID cases beginning in mid-August but a decline in the final weeks of September. The data for the larger towns, including Greenfield and Montague, showed similar trends.

The board decided not to end a recently approved mask mandate for public indoor spaces, for the time being. It was noted that Greenfield would probably be reviewing its mandate at the beginning of November.

#### Other Business

In its role as the personnel board, the selectboard approved the hiring of Kelly Harris as a part time “per diem” police dispatcher.

It also agreed to transfer \$2,000 from the town’s “Community Development Unallocated Fund” into the “Community Development Downtown Beautification Fund,” which had been depleted due to Spinner Park landscaping.

Following last Saturday’s town meeting vote to approve funds for the Fifth Street pedestrian bridge project (*see article, Page A1*), the board, at the request of town planner Walter Ramsey, approved a contract award of \$2,338,664.50 to David G. Roach and Sons, Inc. for construction of the footbridge. This amount does not include engineering and oversight costs, or a contingency fund.

The board also approved a winter parking program on three downtown streets – L, Prospect, and Ninth – which will run from this December 1 to April 1 during the overnight parking ban. Permits, which will allow overnight parking on these Turners Falls streets, can be obtained at town hall beginning November 1.

Ellis updated the board on a recent meeting of the Greenfield-Montague Transportation Area (GMTA), which owns a building on Deerfield Street in Greenfield that currently serves as the storage and maintenance facility for the Franklin County Regional Transit Authority (FRTA). GMTA, which includes only Greenfield and Montague, is a relic of the trolley car era and only owns this old building.

FRTA, the current regional transit system that includes 41 towns, plans to move out of that crumbling facility to a new car barn on Sandy Lane in Montague, hopefully to be constructed next year.

Ellis reported that the two towns agreed to negotiate plans to extend the lease with the FRTA, protect themselves from the risk of a major structural crisis in the existing building, and begin the process of selling that structure.

The selectboard approved the choice of Brian Kier of Bernardston to be the municipal represen-

tative on the Franklin County Technical School collective bargaining committee. Kuklewicz, who also serves as chair of the tech school committee, noted that the previous municipal rep for bargaining had also been from Bernardston.

The board then retired into an executive session to discuss strategy for collective bargaining with the United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America, which represents certain town employees.

The next selectboard meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 25.



## PUBLIC HEARING

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 138, General Laws, as amended, the Inhabitants of the Town of Montague are hereby notified that Om Shiv Shambhu, Inc. d/b/a **Carroll’s Market**, Govindbhai (Gary) Ramdas Patel as manager, has applied for transfer of the Annual \$15 Package Store, All Alcoholic Beverages Liquor License from Sahirat, LLC d/b/a Carroll’s Market. The premise is located at 33 East Main Street, Millers Falls, MA consisting of a single story building of approximately 2,852 square feet on the first floor, first floor storage space of 528 square feet and 4,852 square feet of basement area with one entrance and one exit.

Date and place of hearing: **Monday, November 1, 2021, at 6:35 p.m.** at the Town Hall, Second Floor Meeting Room, One Avenue A, Turners Falls and via the Zoom link at [www.montague-ma.gov/d/5482/Selectboard-Meeting](http://www.montague-ma.gov/d/5482/Selectboard-Meeting).

Montague License Commissioners

## LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

*Here’s the way it was on October 27, 2011: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.*

### Gill: Complaints Aired on Unlicensed Junk Yard

A long-simmering complaint about the property at 444 Main Road, owned by Lawrence and Helen Krejmas, came to a boil at this week’s Gill selectboard meeting, as board of health agent Glen Ayers asked for and received authority from the selectboard to enforce the town’s bylaw against unregistered vehicles, including imposing fines of \$25 a day – per vehicle.

Ayers said approximately eight to ten vehicles are visible from Main Road, and another dozen or so are impounded behind a wooden and metal stockade fence at the site.

Additionally, in a written notice of code violations and an order to correct same, Ayers wrote, “The appearance of this property is that it is being operated as an auto junk yard.” The selectboard stated that Krejmas does not have a license to operate a junk yard, or any other business, at that address.

Reached by phone after the meeting, Lawrence Krejmas said, “I’ve been on that property since 1965, and I’ve never had trouble with any of the neighbors,” until Kevin Chickering bought the land behind his lot, at 446 Main Road. Now, Krejmas said, “it appears my troublemaker is back on the line.”

Krejmas, who has lived on Country Club Road in Greenfield since his house at 444 Main Road burned down in 1980 in a fire of “undetermined origin,” said he had never sold car parts from his Main Road property. Instead, he

said he had helped people out who came to him for car repairs, farm machinery repairs, painting jobs, and welding for farmers.

### Leverett: Water Line Vote Falls Short

Leverett has been taking care of the water at the east end of Teawaddle Hill for 15 years or more, selectboard member Rich Brazeau told over a hundred residents gathered at a special town meeting on Tuesday. The town has been paying roughly \$35,000 a year for monitoring wells and testing services, charcoal filters, and in some cases bottled water for the residents at that end of the road, just down the hill from Leverett’s capped landfill.

Taking the five homes on Teawaddle Hill, and perhaps others nearby on Cushman Road, by eminent domain and demolishing them at a possible cost of up to \$2 million was one of a number of options voters considered during the lengthy discussion on the problem.

Voters considered a request to spend \$28,900 to pay for an engineering study to run a four-inch water main from Amherst to Teawaddle Hill. But in the end the article failed to gain the needed two-thirds majority, by 59 in favor, 40 opposed.

“The responsible course of action is to find out the various costs of the options,” said George Drake. “If we can run water from Amherst and get out of the business of treating people’s water, and yearly testing, we’ll be better off in the long run.”

A majority of voters agreed with him. Just not a big enough majority.



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**BOTTLES** from page A1

need of an upgrade,” said Lauren Fernandez, a policy analyst for the Conservation Law Foundation. “The higher the deposit is, the higher the redemption rate will be.”

Fernandez spoke Wednesday afternoon on a live-streamed panel on the issue, joining advocates from the Connecticut River Conservancy (CRC) and Vermont legislature. Panelists described the bottlenecks preventing more effective recycling in the state.

“Back when the bottle bills were enacted, single-use water bottles were not even sold, so nobody put them into their bottle bills,” said Andrea Donlon, a river steward for the CRC. “They comprise a significant volume of the waste stream [today].”

The Beverage Container Recovery Law, passed in Massachusetts in 1982, requires drink sellers to collect a minimum five-cent refundable deposit on glass, metal and plastic beverage containers of a standard size. The proposed updates to the law would require stores to charge refundable deposits on a wider array of containers including water bottles, sports drinks, wine bottles, soft drinks up to three liters, and most notably alcoholic nips, in order to incentivize recycling. The new bill would still exclude milk containers, pill bottles, and other non-beverage containers.

“Beverage containers are targeted because they are consumed frequently on the go,” Donlon said.

During last year’s Source to Sea Cleanup, a coordinated event organized by the CRC, volunteers collected over 10,000 recyclable beverage containers.

Beverage industry representatives worry that the new mandate would increase handling costs, while supermarket chains in Massachusetts have expressed concern that the higher deposits could push more business over the bor-

der into New Hampshire.

“We support a bottle bill expansion, with some key issues being addressed,” Bob Mellon, executive director of the Massachusetts Package Stores Association, told legislators at a public hearing last month. “These user fees haven’t been increased since the advent of the bottle bill.”

Advocates from the Sierra Club and League of Women Voters shared testimony about the need for the update at the hearing, which was held by the Joint Committee on Telecommunications Utilities and Energy.

At Wednesday’s presentation, Fernandez said that redeeming more beverage containers could mean lower recycling costs for municipalities. “China is no longer accepting a lot of our waste, and that’s where a lot of it was going for years,” she said. “That has really shot up the cost for cities and towns.”

In 2017, according to statistics Donlon shared during her presentation, 70.4 billion water bottles were sold in the US. Massachusetts is one of ten states with a bottle bill on the books already, and has one of the highest recycling rates in the country at 52%. Maine has the highest recycling rate in the country, while New Hampshire is the only New England state without some form of recycling redemption legislation.

The last time recycling advocates tried passing a bottle bill update was in 2014, with a ballot question that would have mandated that non-carbonated beverage containers be eligible for redemption. It was opposed by a \$9.1 million lobbying campaign, sponsored primarily by the American Beverage Association with the help of regional supermarket chains and the Nestlé corporation. The initiative was voted down.

*Disclosure: Sarah Robertson works part-time as an events coordinator at CRC.*



# FACES & PLACES



JOE R. PARZYCH PHOTO



JOE R. PARZYCH PHOTO

Local photojournalist Joe R. Parzych has been hard at work, and shared these shots with us. **Top:** Gill Elementary School teacher Kristin Carey (at right) brought her fifth grade class on an educational field trip to the Gill fire and police departments on Wednesday, October 6. **Bottom:** A close-up photo of the General Pierce Bridge construction. “According to Joe Burek, the construction crew completed the shot-blasting,” Joe P. told us this week. “The gas main underneath the bridge is also being replaced during the two weeks they will be removing the deck.”

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Amanda Gorman, *The Hill We Climb*



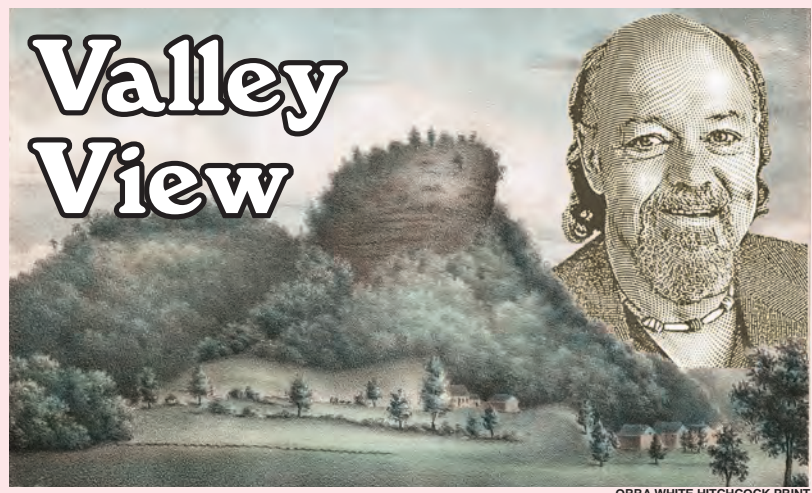
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FEATURES@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER OCTOBER 21, 2021



By GARY SANDERSON

**GREENFIELD** – The road to Jay Peak Resort in Vermont’s Northeast Kingdom leans north and west from Interstate 91’s Exit 6 in Barton – the final, 32-mile leg of a 3½-hour, 200-mile trip from my Greenfield home.

I was there to attend the Outdoor Writers Association of America’s *Vermont 2021 Annual Conference*, a first for me though I have been an active OWAA member since 1984. The resort sits a mere five miles south of the Canadian border. Check-in for the three-day, October 4 to 6 event at the Hotel Jay was on a Sunday afternoon, with a Wednesday noontime check-out.

These professional gatherings meander yearly from state to state, region to region, attracting young and old for a jam-packed assortment of meetings, workshops, sight-seeing trips, meals, cocktail hours, and other social events. Some folks even brought fishing equipment and gun dogs. Not me. Attending my first such conference since the 1980s, when I routinely participated in the New England Outdoor Writers Association’s annual meeting, I was there to get a feel for how outdoor writers, not to mention the outdoor-writing paradigm, has changed since I was a young man. Back then, *Field and Stream* and *Outdoor Life* hook-and-bullet tales were boilerplate fare, while more creative *Gray’s Sporting Journal* served professorial readers.

Times have changed. Hook-and-bullet yarns no longer sell. The average modern reader doesn’t care to read about well-placed shots through vital organs and the resulting blood trails to the carcass. I lived the transition during 40 years as a newspaper columnist, could feel it happening at about the midpoint of my career and tried to tell my clueless last editor that modern readers no longer had the stomach for the hunting tales of his father and grandfather. Readers of outdoor columns and narrative were more interested in nature and natural history, fish migration and wildlife restorations that slipped into local history and prehistory. That fact was blatantly apparent at

this Vermont conference.

About 150 miles into my drive up the northern Connecticut Valley, above St. Johnsbury, I entered the brilliant world of peak fall foliage. The problem was that there I also ran into foggy rain that got heavier as I proceeded north, limiting visibility and eliminating any chance of helpful distant landscapes, such as ski slopes carved into tall mountains. Though no stranger to the Northeast Kingdom, I had never been in the neighborhood of Vermont’s northernmost ski area, but was able to get there with the help of a couple gas-station inquiries.

Wet, gray, foggy skies enveloped the resort upon my arrival. Checking in at the front desk, I learned I would occupy Room 535, penthouse quarters with a king-sized bed and large-screen, hi-def TV. The fall colors would have been incredible from that top-floor perch had the skies been clear, but I never saw a sliver of the sun before placing my final travel bag in the truck for my Wednesday-morning departure.

On the previous day, before noon, finally, I was for the first time able to see the ski slope behind the motel and the brilliant surrounding landscape. It was worth the wait.

I was surprised to see the get-away-morning sun far to my right as I loaded luggage into the car. In a strange place with no sun to guide me the previous three days, the view through my windows felt south. Wrong. All the while I was facing northeast, toward central Lake Memphremagog in Canada. Any woodsman is well aware that such disorientation can easily occur in an unfamiliar, stormy place with no sun or compass to guide you.

Oh well. Such is life. No big deal. A transitory guest, it is doubtful I’ll ever again step foot anywhere near Jay Peak.

Which brings me to a writing assignment I took on during an uninspiring Tuesday workshop titled *Narrative Nonfiction: Nature, Ecology and the Outdoor*. Condescending for a retired outdoor writer, I got through it much like I had during distant school daze a half-century ago.

see **VALLEY VIEW** page B5

## scene report A Fall Paddle with the Land Trust

By NINA ROSSI

**MONTAGUE** – Wednesday was a perfect day to be out on the Connecticut River in a canoe and, thanks to an invitation from Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust to join their Fall Foliage Paddle, that’s just what I did for a few hours.

The paddle event was a way to introduce community members to Mount Grace’s plans for building a small public canoe launch on newly-donated property off of Meadow Road in Montague. In case you don’t know it, Meadow Road is one of the most lovely, scenic little roads in our town, meandering as it does through farmland near the river, going south from the Book Mill towards Sunderland.

Executive director Emma Ellsworth introduced the project to the paddlers who gathered in the meadow, dragging their various boats along behind them. The day marked a little over one year since her father, Dr. Allen Ross, passed away, an event that occurred twelve days after Emma began her leadership position at Mount Grace.

The planned river access will be created on a 2.5-acre parcel Dr. Ross owned, land he had originally bought to put in active farm conservation. Red Fire North is currently farming on it. Emma and her brother donated it in his memory to Mount Grace to be conserved in perpetuity as active farmland.

We were standing on private land and using a private launch, however, as the community canoe launch is still in the fundraising stage. Emma would take us out on the river and show us where the put-in would be built on the embankment, just slightly north of our starting



Mount Grace board member Magda Ponce-Castro takes up the bow during Wednesday’s event, which the organization planned to publicly launch plans for a public launch.

point. Then, we’d go up to where the Sawmill River wound its way down from Lake Wyola to empty into the Connecticut, circle Third Island to look for an eagle nest, and coast back downstream.

see **PADDLE** page B4

## THE AUTHORS’ CORNER: JENNA EVANS

By IZZY VACHULA-CURTIS

**TURNERS FALLS** – Happy October! Recently, I have been reading *Love & Olives*, by Jenna Evans Welch. In the December 24, 2020, edition of the *Montague Reporter*, I reviewed *Love & Gelato*, the first novel in this series of stories. I also interviewed Jenna Evans Welch in that column, so if you are interested in an interview with her, you can look to that article!

I fell in love with *Love & Olives* immediately, and I am so happy to review it.

*Love & Olives* is about a seventeen-year-old girl named Liv (short for Olive!) who lives in Seattle, Washington. Liv’s dad left her and her mom when she was eight, to search for the lost city of Atlantis, which he believes to be in Santorini, Greece.

Out of the blue, Liv receives a postcard from her dad, Nico, explaining that *National Geographic* is doing a documentary on his ideas about Atlantis, and that he wishes Liv would come to Greece to help out with the production!



Our correspondent already interviewed the author, but likes the second book even more.

Not so surprisingly, Liv isn’t very happy, considering that she hasn’t heard from her dad in eight years except for a couple of postcards saying plain things like, “Wish you were here!” or “Miss you!”

Against Liv’s best wishes, she flies to Santorini, planning to stay for a total of ten days. She is an aspiring artist, so when she arrives she falls in love with the island and its architecture, like the little white homes with the blue bubble-like roofs, the marble walkways, and the turquoise sea.

Liv is also introduced to Nico’s protege, Theo, who is very charming, and basically perfect. Her first encounter with her father after eight years is, unsurprisingly, not as rosy; Liv is equally *so so so* happy to finally see her dad, and also mad at him for leaving her and her mom for a mythological place.

I am so in love with *Love & Olives*! It is so pretty and idyllic, and literally the most perfect book for me! I love the writing, too. One of

see **AUTHORS’** page B2





## “TIGER”

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**AUTHORS’** from page B1

my favorite descriptions is when Liv sees her dad’s bookshop in Oia, Santorini for the first time:

“I’d never consciously realized that old books have a smell, but of course they did. It was old leather with hints of vanilla and must, and a dash of something else. Magic? Pixie dust?... The late-evening light filtered in through two high windows, dust motes swirling like ballerinas, and I suddenly had an overpowering desire to spend my life savings on books and then fall down on a soft surface somewhere and read the kinds of things my literature teacher was always trying to talk us into.”

I especially love the magic and pixie dust part of the description, and the simile comparing swirling dust to ballerinas!

I also am in love with the description of Liv’s birthday cake from the beginning of the story: “Sunshine Cake had always been delicious,

but Bapou had managed to elevate it to the next level. It was bright and buttery, with a hint of cinnamon in each melting bit.”

And I love the writing for Liv’s first morning in Santorini: “While I’d been reenacting a scene out of *Sleeping Beauty*, [Liv’s mom had] been pummeling me with texts for almost an hour now.”

I love all the comparisons Ms. Welch used to describe Liv, especially the ones that involve fairy-tale-esque things!

*Love & Olives* is also the most perfect story for me because it is romantic and magical! I love fantasy stories mostly because I love magical creatures like vampires, fairies, dragons, mermaids, etc. but most fantasy stories don’t have a romantic element, which I miss. *Love & Olives* is amazing because it has both. Because Nico believes so much in Atlantis, a bunch of the story is about Greek mythology, which I love!

I also love every single one of the characters in this story – especially Liv. She reminds me so much of me, which I think is so fun! I also love Theo’s mom, Ana, who is so fashionable and chic, and helps own the bookshop. Ana said in the beginning of the story that she has dreamed of owning a bookshop in Greece, selling specifically romance books, since she was little, which I think is such a fun and unique dream. Theo’s Grandfather, Bapou, is also a very cute character. He is Greek, and his English isn’t very good, so he always just says, “Beautiful! Welcome to Santorini!” even in the most inappropriate situations.

If you couldn’t tell, I am positively *in love* with *Love & Olives*! The writing is so pretty, Greece is magical, and I love the elements of romance and mythology in this story. If you decide to read *Love & Olives*, I hope you enjoy it as much as I do!



## An Immersive “Happening”

By KAREN GUILLETTE

**TURNERS FALLS** – As we approach the bewitching season, a variety of unusual experiences are at hand. This Friday, October 22 the Shea Theater will be host to “A Happening,” an event vaguely akin to a haunted house, according to producer, director, and musician Sam Perry. The environment created in this event, says Perry, will transport participants to other realms.

Perry has spent the past decade creating what he calls “ambient, cinematic, and atmospheric sounds.” During some of that time he was a member of Old Flame, a western Mass indie garage-rock-blues group. According to the band’s online bio, the group formed in 2016 in the beginning of the Trump era with one unshakable intention: to “make their art as an active form of resistance and never cease.”

When COVID forced the band to cancel a lot of their gigs, Perry wanted to figure out how to continue sharing his music with an audience. During this time he collaborated with Katherine Adler, a dancer and performance artist, hosting live-streamed improvisational jams.

According to Adler, this “developed and deepened a language that eventually evolved into several full length albums that Perry released under the moniker SVIP in May of 2020.” Because this music originally came from improvisational sessions, says Adler, they felt that the energy needed to be harnessed and the process witnessed as performance.

Perry’s interest in returning his music to a live setting was coupled with a desire to do something unique, to present work where people wouldn’t be clustered together in front of a bandstand. He was inspired to try immersion theater, realizing that the experience could transport participants to other realms with a combination of music, theater, and the arts.

Perry began to collaborate with Eggtooth Productions, an established Greenfield-based theater company with over 30 years of experience in community theater and immersive, building-based and site-specific theatrical adventures. It was decided that the Shea Theater, with its variety of unique spaces, was the perfect location.

With the support of Eggtooth, Perry was able to gather a variety of artists from different modalities around the area who, together, have helped create what Perry describes as “an intersection of music, visual art, installation art, festival energy, immersive theater, and multimedia experimentation.”

According to Katherine Adler, “The evening is an invitation to engage with generative art in an altered,



dreamlike space... a space set up to be interactive with opportunities for the audience to participate in the creative process of transforming the building from before to after, focusing on what ‘happens’ in between.”

In addition to Adler, area artists participating in this event include Michelangelo Wescott, Lori Holmes-Clark, Hannah Rosenbaum, Rosa Beryl, Breanna King, Chad Browne-Springer, Josh Ruder, Marina Goldman, Jack Golden, and Lindel Hart. Perry’s directorial debut is supported by the consultation and collaboration of all of the artists involved.

The doors of the Shea will open at 6:30 p.m. on Friday to reveal a lobby filled with local artisan vendors: Blu Angel Flame Co., Arcana Leather, Esther Clark Ceramics, Sage Green Botanicals, Katie Shaw, Crvftswomxn clothing, and Kaleidoscope District.

At 7 p.m. the audience will be invited to explore the inner spaces of the Shea where they will encounter artists creating different worlds complete with soundscapes, live theater, and visual arts, including three painters making large-scale, live paintings. The event will culminate with a solo performance by Perry, who describes his music as “atmospheric, setting a mood, a little dark, with an occult and mystical influence, a little different, a little unnerving!”

Perry hopes the Happening at the Shea will become an annual event and continue to grow and evolve in the coming years.

*Tickets are on sale at [sheatheater.org](http://sheatheater.org). To ensure performer and guest safety, audience members must be vaccinated and show their vaccination cards upon entry, and performers and guests will be required to wear masks.*

## Senior Center Activities OCTOBER 25 THROUGH 29

### WENDELL

Wendell Senior Center is open for a foot care clinic the first Wednesday of each month. Call Katie Nolan at (978) 544-2306 for information or appointments. Senior Health Rides are now available. Contact Susan von Ranson at (978) 544-3758 to set up a ride.

### GILL and MONTAGUE

The Gill Montague Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Mondays through Fridays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Council on Aging Director is Roberta Potter. For more information call 863-9357. Messages can be left on our machine when the center is not open.

### Monday 10/25

10:15 a.m. Aerobics  
11 a.m. Chair Exercise  
1 p.m. Knitting & Crafts Circle

### Tuesday 10/26

3 p.m. Tai Chi

### Wednesday 10/27

10:15 a.m. Aerobics  
11 a.m. Chair Exercise  
1 p.m. Bingo  
4 p.m. Mat Yoga

### Thursday 10/28

10 a.m. Chair Yoga  
1 p.m. Cards & Games

### Friday 10/29

10:15 a.m. Aerobics  
11 a.m. Chair Exercise

### ERVING

Erving Senior Center is open 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., Mondays through Fridays. Open for cards, coffee, and billiards. Fitness room also open. Exercise classes will be limited to 15 people per class.

No lunch will be served. We will continue with Brown Bag the first Thursday of each month. For any questions or concerns, please call Paula at (413) 423-3649. Masks are optional. Proper handwashing and social distancing are still required.

### Mondays

9 a.m. Stretch & Balance  
10:30 a.m. Zumba Gold Floor

### Tuesdays

9 a.m. Stretch & Sculpt  
10:30 a.m. Line Dancing

### Wednesdays

9 a.m. Chair Class  
10:30 a.m. Zumba Gold Chair  
11:30 a.m. Bingo

### Thursdays

9 a.m. Restore & Re-Emerge  
10:30 a.m. GOOD for You

### Fridays

9 a.m. Quilting Workshop

### LEVERETT

Chair Yoga classes are held on Zoom on Wednesdays. For more information, contact the Leverett COA at (413) 548-1022 x 5, or [coa@leverett.ma.us](mailto:coa@leverett.ma.us).

## Senior Grocery Hours

**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  
**Green Fields Market:** Senior hours from 8 to 9 a.m. Monday-Saturday. Curbside pickup & delivery is available on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. (413) 773-9567  
**McCusker’s Market:** Curbside pickup available from 10 to 11 a.m. Order by 1 p.m. for pickup the following day. Delivery available Monday to Friday. Email [pickup@franklincommunity.coop](mailto:pickup@franklincommunity.coop) (413) 625-2548  
**Stop and Shop:** Senior hours from 6 to 7:30 a.m. (413) 774-6096

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# Part 11: It’s Out!

By JULIE CUNNINGHAM

**AMHERST** – The word “out” has never sounded so good. A simple, three-letter word is the difference between having cancer inside of me and being in remission. It’s the difference between living *with* cancer and living *preventing* cancer.

I’d rather live to prevent cancer. I finally feel like a normal cancer patient and I understand why some cancer patients have lower anxiety levels. Living with cancer inside me was an all day, everyday, life-threatening illness.

It’s an odd feeling going to sleep in the OR and waking up in an entirely different room as an entirely different woman. And just like I predicted, I woke up extremely happy and healthier, but I had a few challenges post-surgery. I was nauseated, and I hated the surgical drains they put in. They put two holes in my body and inserted a tube which drained into what looked like a plastic grenade. Thankfully, for me the drains came out in about four days. That was a relief.

Another challenge has been just getting into the mentality of having it out. I spent so many months knowing I had a cancerous lump inside me, living every moment purposefully to not put myself at further risk. I can’t believe I lost *all* my hair, and I can’t believe I survived that level of exhaustion.

Now, my hair is growing back, and my energy level has improved. The normal activities that I couldn’t do, like exercise, are now simple. It scares me to think I needed to go through that to save my life.

Going into surgery, I was just focusing on doing what I needed to do to make it to the OR and get through it. There was a list of tasks. They asked me to stay off all vitamins and certain medications, and to remember not to eat a certain amount of time beforehand. I had to be cleared by my primary, and I had to get tested for COVID-19. The week prior I felt like I would never make it because I was running around so much.

The week after, I felt scared about the final pathology report, because a few things changed. The grade of the tumor changed, and

a few more different kinds of receptors were located. Thankfully, I have a great team at Cooley and they called me right away to explain what it meant and what I was looking at. They took a lot of the fear away.

There will be a few additions to my treatment moving forward. I guess since I did chemo first, anything from now on will seem easy. I think I will feel good knowing I am doing something to prevent it from returning.

The scariest part about cancer is the unknown. What you can’t see. Where is it, what is it doing, and where will it appear next? Those are questions that are difficult to answer when you can’t see the microscopic cancer cells that might be floating around in other places. You know when it gets bigger, and by then it’s too late.

I deal with the unknown by doing everything I can to take care of myself. I minimize sugar and alcohol, and I eat plenty of fruits and vegetables. I use natural products as much as possible, and I exercise as much as I can at this point.

Trying not to worry is difficult. I have testing fatigue and I don’t want anymore biopsies because they are so draining to me. They take up so much time. Testing makes me worried and anxious, and it’s hard not to think about the results and what they might be and what that might mean. It’s a slippery slope to full-blown panic attacks sometimes. I’m developing coping skills that I never had before, but I’m learning to live in this new space of being watched extremely closely, whereas before, I was presumed to be healthy.

Thankfully, the surgery makes it more likely that I will stay healthy.

It’s definitely a journey that I wasn’t expecting. I feel like I was a shell of myself, and now I’m getting myself back. I’m able to make different choices now and be more productive. I can be more of my authentic self and have the fun I was missing out on. I can go to the casino, drink a glass of wine, and hang out with my friends longer than just lunch. I’m surviving a life-threatening illness that I didn’t see coming.

## Montague Community Television News

# Watch It For Yourself!

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

**TURNERS FALLS** – If you missed the Montague special town meeting, and want to catch up on the status of the sewer robot, pedestrian bridge, or police dispatchers, MCTV’s coverage of the meeting is available on the Vimeo page and will air on Channel 17 in Montague. The most recent selectboard and finance committee meetings from Montague are also available, as well as the Gill-Montague Regional School District school committee meeting, and the Gill selectboard meeting to stay up to date on local government!

All MCTV videos are available on the MCTV

Vimeo page, which can be found linked to our website, [montaguetelevision.org](http://montaguetelevision.org), under the tab “Videos.”

All community members are welcome to submit their videos to be aired on Channel 17, as well as featured on the MCTV Vimeo page.

MCTV is always available to assist in local video production as well. Cameras, tripods, and lighting equipment are available for checkout, and filming and editing assistance can be provided.

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](mailto:infomontaguetelevision@gmail.com).

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

# Bikes Stolen At Food City; Bear Sightings; Crashes; Unlocked Car Thefts; Nature Takes Its Course

**Monday, 10/11**

1:45 p.m. Report of kids making a lot of noise riding scooters in the hall of a building on Avenue A.

3:29 p.m. Loose dog on Montague Street, described as medium build, tan and white, looks like it might be missing an eye. Last seen heading towards the golf course. Unable to locate.

4:39 p.m. Control received a call regarding illegal dumping on the banks of the Connecticut River by the narrows. Stated there were eight to ten bags of trash and a cooler; he did not go near the trash to inspect. Dispatcher advised Firstlight/Northfield Mountain. Officer went as far as the path went and did not see anything.

**Tuesday, 10/12**

3:07 a.m. Party states he was hearing yelling and loud voices for about an hour, and when he went to see what was going on, a male party stopped and stated that a female was harassing him but he was unable to call the police. Caller states the female went down the street near Apex Dental wearing pink and white leggings, a red hoodie, and blonde hair in a ponytail. Male party went down Avenue A in the direction of the bridge, no description of male given. All quiet, officers checked the area and nobody matching that description was located. Officers located a female on the street who stated she and her boyfriend had been asked if they needed help, but she denied any need for services at this time. Gave name of her boyfriend. Officers will BOLO for male who is out walking around. Received another call that the female has been in the area for the past few hours, circling the block and screaming about burning her car.

10:12 a.m. Caller requesting extra patrols on Walnut Street due to an excessive number of speeding cars.

12:02 p.m. Report of an unknown party leaving four bags of trash on Turners Falls Road next

to caller’s trash that is to be picked up today. Caller advises the trash company picked up the trash with no issue.

12:47 p.m. Animal control officer responding to West Chestnut Hill Road to check on the well-being of a horse.

3:28 p.m. Caller wanted to let MPD know that coyotes have been seen in the Wrightson Avenue area. No aggressive behavior observed. Officer advised; call left for ACO.

4:34 p.m. Call transferred from Shelburne Control reporting a truck rollover at Highland and South Prospect streets. No injuries or fluids. Officer requesting dispatch to send FD to the scene and to contact Rose Ledge Towing. Trailer is on its side, and there is a large forklift on it. Truck is upright. Officer requesting state police truck team and DPW to assess road damage.

5:10 p.m. Caller following up re: son’s car being damaged due to someone speeding and not yielding going over the bridge to Church Street from South Prospect. Caller would like to speak to an officer regarding the excessive speeding that is happening in the area.

5:48 p.m. Caller from Fourth Street reporting three men driving mopeds up and down the street. They are not going very fast, but she is not sure why they keep going up and down the street.

7:48 p.m. Baltazar employee informed detail officer that sidewalks on Montague Street were vandalized. Investigated.

8:23 p.m. Caller reporting a group of approximately 20 kids walking near Fourth Street and Avenue A, being loud and yelling profanity. Officer advises kids gone on arrival.

**Wednesday, 10/13**

8:46 a.m. Food City manager requesting officer attempt to locate two parties who just left the store on foot after shoplifting. Units spoke with involved male party and advised him that he and an unknown female party have been trespassed from the store.

7:02 p.m. 911 caller reporting that there was just a fistfight in front of a neighboring property on Randall Road. Officer spoke to involved parties, who stated that there was a small scuffle between family members but no one wanted to report anything.

8:43 p.m. Caller from N Street states that three or four cars are speeding around the neighborhood like they are racing each other. Unable to locate.

**Thursday, 10/14**

8:04 a.m. 911 caller reporting sick raccoon on

Central Street. Animal is suffering. Units on scene to dispatch it per ACO. Animal dispatched.

1:55 p.m. Male reported to officer that he’s had two bikes stolen from in front of Food City in the last week. Report taken.

**Friday, 10/15**

2:16 a.m. Caller states that a group of kids are knocking on doors on Montague City Road; believes they might be out of gas. Caller states it looks like they are pushing the truck down the road now. Someone was just finishing giving them gas upon officer’s arrival. Vehicle is on its way.

10:44 a.m. Officer contacted directly about a male in a purple hoodie going into different backyards on Dunton Street. Officer located male at corner of Davis and Dell streets; he was taking shortcuts through yards on his way home. Advised not to do that.

2:27 p.m. Caller from Carlisle Avenue states that a black bear was just on their porch and is walking toward Millers Falls Road. Environmental police and ACO notified. Received two additional calls regarding bear sightings on Crocker Street/Avenue C and Oakman/Griswold. Units advise bear ran into the woods off of High Street and they no longer see him. EP will check the area.

3:59 p.m. Multiple calls for motorcycle vs. truck accident at Park and Unity streets. Caller states parties are out of vehicles and arguing. Shelburne Control contacted for EMS. Rau’s towing motorcycle; one party transported to Baystate.

8:08 p.m. Caller reporting suspicious male by parking circle for bike path on Unity Street. Caller states male is yelling at people and has a small dog who keeps yelping. Officer spoke with a witness who stated that the male party was the one making the noises and that he is seen in the area frequently. Officer advises no abuse or neglect towards dog.

**Saturday, 10/16**

3:39 a.m. Caller from Davis Street states that a male dressed in dark clothing is staggering up the middle of the road toward the police station carrying something shiny and silver in his hand. Officer located male; he is fine, just going home.

4:26 a.m. Caller reporting male in a black t-shirt and boxer shorts crying and walking around the buildings on Canal Street saying “How could you do this to me?” Caller also states male had glass in his hand and threw it in the dumpster. Area search negative.

8:40 a.m. Caller reporting that someone smashed through the fence of the airport on Millers Falls Road. Officer recovered vehicle plate that was left at scene; requesting Greenfield PD check address of registered owner.

8:54 a.m. Caller from Montague City Road reporting that her unlocked vehicle was entered overnight and miscellaneous items were taken; just wanted on record. Caller advised to lock her vehicle in the future. Report taken.

9:32 a.m. Caller from Montague City Road reporting that her husband’s truck and her daughter’s car were entered overnight. It does not appear that anything was taken. Caller advises both vehicles were unlocked. Report taken.

11:46 a.m. Caller reporting that his wife was walking their dog near Oakman Street and another dog came running across a yard and attacked their dog. Caller states their dog has several bite injuries and will be seeing the vet later today. Investigated.

4:40 p.m. Officer conducting motor vehicle stop on Third Street. Operator was picked up by his mother and left car in neutral. Car rolled into the car in front of it. no damage. Vehicle towed. Citation issued for operating a vehicle with a revoked registration; operating a vehicle with a suspended license; and uninsured motor vehicle.

6:22 p.m. Caller from Randall Road reporting an opossum who is acting strangely and appears to have half of its face missing. Animal is hiding in the wood pile. Officer advises it appears that the opossum was hit by a vehicle. They removed the animal with a shovel to the woods and will let nature take its course.

**Sunday, 10/17**

2:34 p.m. Multiple 911 calls reporting vehicle into utility pole on Montague City Road; injuries reported. Road closed; Eversource advised and responding. Vehicle towed. Road reopened.

2:58 p.m. Caller reporting that a male threatened him about a half hour ago. Caller was giving away a hot tub; the people showed up with only a truck. Caller advised it was too big and would need to be picked up by a trailer. Caller advises the male half was upset and threatened him. Referred to an officer.

7:05 p.m. Caller requesting to speak with an officer regarding an incident yesterday during a wedding at Millers Falls Rod & Gun Club. Caller states that a guy there was assaulting women. Report taken.

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PADDLE from page B1

As I picked up one end of the extremely lightweight We-no-nah canoe that Emma and I would paddle, Mount Grace board member Magda Ponce-Castro began chatting with us, and exclaimed that she had never been in a canoe. Inviting her to take the trip with us solved my dilemma about taking notes while paddling – I could sit in the middle and scribble notes while the two of them supplied the power.

It's clear that scrambling down a mud bank to the river gets less and less ideal the older you get. Emma says that the new put-in, the first usable public access point for paddlers in Montague, will approach the river at a gradual slope and include no more than two or three stairs at the bottom, making it more accessible for everybody. They are investigating the options of a handrail or rope as well. There will be a small pull-off for two or three cars on the side of the road, an information kiosk, and perhaps a bike rack. A nearby bluff overlooking the river will make the perfect site for a few picnic tables, she added.

The "Friends of Ross" fundraising group hopes to raise \$17,000 over the course of the winter so that the project can be

finished next year.

As we left the shore behind, we looked around and counted about 17 paddlers who came out for the event. As we moved upstream, Emma related stories about growing up on the river. It was clear her ties to the land and water here ran very deep, and that this deep appreciation of the emotional landscape underlies her devotion to the conservation trust she now directs.

Dr. Ross, an avid outdoorsman, moved to Montague when Emma was four years old. She spent her summers in the nearby fields and river, picking for farmers, camping, canoeing, and exploring. When her father went out running in the early morning, Emma was instructed to watch the slopes of Mount Toby, visible from their windows, and when the fog had lifted from the mountain, he would be back home.

Managing editor Mike Jackson covered a lot of ground with Emma in an interview published in April, so I don't want to be too redundant here. I asked Emma what new initiatives might have started at Mount Grace over the last six months.

For starters, she said, they've raised \$2.9 million of the \$3.5 million goal for their "Land Forever" campaign. The three largest areas the campaign is raising

money for include stewardship, "working responsibly," and building a conservation opportunity fund.

The stewardship funds would go to monitoring and protecting conserved land, which requires more attention due to increased usage in the time of COVID and more extreme weather in the time of climate change.

The "working responsibly" area goes to upgrading the 1790s farmhouse that serves as Mount Grace's headquarters with insulation, new windows, and other energy improvements. A new building with room for events and meetings, which will serve as a model of affordable efficiency, is planned as well.

The conservation opportunity fund provides a bank of money that can be accessed quickly when it is needed to save a critical piece of land that needs protection. Because people in this area tend to be land-rich and cash-poor, Emma noted that most people aren't in a position to just donate their land, but sell it to the Trust instead.

As we headed around Third Island, a bald eagle flew overhead. I asked Magda what led her to join the board of Mount Grace, and she related how several years ago the proposed Kinder-Morgan gas pipeline project would have parked a large compressor station in her backyard in Northfield. She became involved in the opposition to the pipeline and met Leigh Youngblood, former executive director at Mount Grace; she didn't have the time to become involved then, but was able to join the group this year.

"I am amazed at how much they do, with only twelve or so people," she told me. "It is unbelievable!"

A nearby paddler added a hearty "What you do is amazing!" To learn more about the Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust, or to sign up to receive their newsletter and invitations to events, visit [www.mountgrace.org](http://www.mountgrace.org) or call (978) 248-2053.

ARTIST PROFILE

J. Beatty Digital Visuals



Justin Beatty's digital work, *Aztechnologia Dos*.

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

**GREENFIELD** – I have been to several festivals in Turners Falls. This past summer, for the first time, I decided to check out the Pocumtuck Homelands festival that happens there. It's a Native American cultural festival that goes on there each summer. While there, I found the very cool digital art of Justin Beatty. One of his pieces resembles a painting of a cityscape, with an out-of-place Native American figure in the middle of it.

Justin Beatty is a non-enrolled Ojibwe artist who lives in Hadley. He said he thinks that festival is a good one, and plans on doing it again. "I really enjoy doing it," he told me. This year was the second time he sold art at the festival, but he has also been an MC of it for three or four years.

He is also a traditional powwow singer, and a group of his, called Urban Thunder, has performed there four times. I learned from the group's Facebook page that they appeared in powwow scenes in a movie I have seen called *Crooked Arrows*.

Beatty's success with his art has allowed him to receive a few grants. It also includes having "sales from all over the world," England, Canada, Germany, Mexico being examples. It has appeared at art galler-

ies. "I was the featured artist at the grand opening of Urbana Art studio in Holyoke, MA," he said.

Like I mentioned, his art is very unique. I asked why he does what he does with his art. "What I try to capture in my art is how we see ourselves," he said. "I want people to see us in a modern context." This digital art is mostly printed using a mixture of paint and ink. I will add that he has done a lovely job when it comes to creating that art I saw of his this summer.

Beatty showed me through his website he has made art you can wear, which include a backpack, a t-shirt with his art on it, or leggings like that. Some of this art resembles what I saw at the festival, but a couple of pieces resemble, in my mind, a landscape of some kind or a tie-dye, which is still very cool to look at.

It turns out the piece I saw at the festival is called *Aztechnologia Dos*, and he made it in 2016. You can find out more and buy some of these pieces at his website, [www.jbdvart.com](http://www.jbdvart.com).

An opening for an exhibit of works from various Native artists, curated by Beatty, will be held Friday, November 5 from 5 to 8 p.m. at Urbana Art Studio, 358 Dwight Street in Holyoke.



Mount Grace executive director Emma Ellsworth, in the stern. Behind Ellsworth is the specific spot on the Connecticut River bank off Meadow Road where the organization plans to build a relatively accessible canoe and kayak launch next year.

BOOK REVIEW

Rebecca Daniels, *Finding Sisters* (Sunbury Press, 2021)

By RICHARD ANDERSEN

**MONTAGUE CENTER** – Have you ever wondered what happened to a relative you lost contact with? How about a relative you never knew or never knew existed? Maybe someone who could help you with your family's medical history? Perhaps you're missing some leaves on the family tree?

In her new book *Finding Sisters: How One Adoptee Used DNA Testing and Determination to Uncover Family Secrets and Find Her Birth Family*, Rebecca Daniels takes her readers on a journey of discovery that may serve as a preview of what might be in store for anyone willing to go for a genealogical ride of their own.

A retired educator and director of stage dramas, Daniels was adopted by a loving couple before she left the hospital she was born in. Mary and Alec Daniels, to whom the book is dedicated, raised Rebecca and her adopted brother Toby "with love and care" while encouraging them

both "to be as smart, creative, and fulfilled as possible."

Finishing up a decades-long career at St. Lawrence University in Canton, New York, and taking stock with an eye toward the future, Daniels began thinking about the family she never had a chance to know. More curious than anything else, she contacted Family Tree DNA. One month later, she received a list of 386 DNA matches already in the Family of Tree database, but only 24 of them came within the possibility of being anywhere from second to fourth cousins.

Then, almost exactly one month later, a fellow from Sweden contacted Daniels believing he was related to her favorite aunt, Kristen.

This is when Daniels' journey took a big leap forward. You see, this man, Thomas, was more than just a match. He was a twenty-something, genealogical computer wonk. It was he who taught Rebecca to "squeeze her thumbs" – the Swedish equivalent of "cross your fingers" – and hope for the best.

Under Thomas's expert guidance, Daniels was able to locate and visit with her biological mom Glenna before she died. Daniels was also able to discover through a half-sister, April, that she had been born before Glenna's marriage to Arthur. Was Arthur Rebecca's father? No.

Other relatives continue to pop up. Dead and alive, they include: Barbara, George, Christine, Vern, Lillian, Patty, Kay, Karl, Bob, John, Babe (!), Melody, Dana, Maxine, Bill, Jenny, May, Pam, Twyla, June, Chuck, Bud, Joyce, and even "Mr. X" – the name Daniels gives to her biological father.

His real name, it turns out, was Derald and, Daniels tells us, he "got around." And these people didn't just live within a day's drive. They're all over the country and in other countries, too. Some of them are as far away as Sweden.

Which brings us back to Thomas, who suddenly stops communicating with Daniels just when she's at the top of her genealogical game. It turns out he suffers from depression and

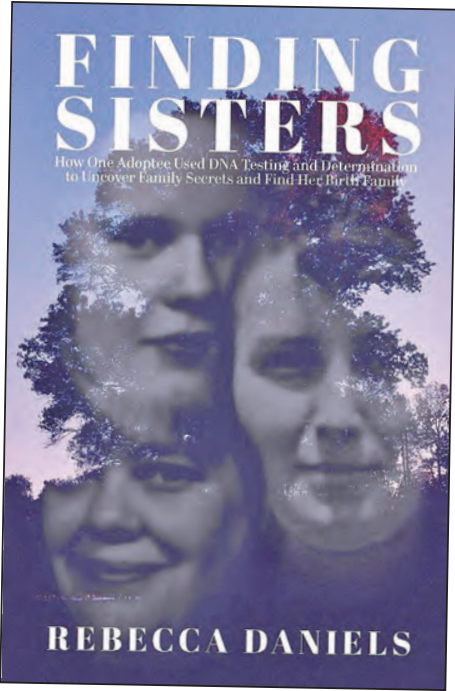
occasionally needs to be alone with himself for months at a time. The suspense created by Thomas's unexpected appearances and disappearances, and Daniels' increasing concerns about his health, become the emotional core of the book.

Daniels admits as much when she tells us that the whole search for her lost family members was like an "intellectual puzzle." And it shows. We get to meet a lot of people, but we don't get to know much about any of them. Not even Daniels. In her own words, there's "no big emotional moment," and "no sigh of relief." There's not even a personal epiphany. The whole journey, according to the author, is a "quest to find answers, to fill a hole."

Except, perhaps, for Thomas, whom Daniels refers to as her "Search Angel." They share a two-and-a-half-year "friendship" before he disappears again, just as she's preparing to go to Sweden to

visit him.

As far as we know, Daniels hasn't heard from him since. Nevertheless, she hopes he is enjoying the Swedish mountains, finds a "love of his life," and continues to help others "with their DNA journeys." *Finding Sisters* ends with his name: "That's the happy ending I envision for Thomas."



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# Artful Escapes: Two New Videogames of Exploration

By W. KAIZEN

AMHERST — To be young again. This is the promise of *Sable* and *The Artful Escape*, two new video games whose protagonists come of age in fantastically realized sci-fi settings. In both, gameplay is secondary to exploration and character development. Neither has death mechanics or violence. Although they have the flavor of YA novels, unlike the more gruesome books for teens now popular, everything works out fine in the end.

In *The Artful Escape* you play Francis Vendetti, an aspiring teenage folk singer living in the shadow of his uncle, a deceased and decidedly more famous musician. Filled with anxiety about performing in an upcoming concert in honor of his uncle’s legacy, Francis mopes around the picturesque but dead-end town of Calypso, secretly dreaming of leaving his acoustic behind and becoming an electric guitar shredder. Whisked away to an alien dimension, he finds himself cast as the opening act for a Parliament Funkadelic-esque fusion band led by Lightman, a grizzled music world vet.

An all-star cast, including Carl Weathers (who plays Lightman) and Lena Headey, serve as voice actors. Jason Schwartzman steals the show as Zomm, camping it up as Lightman’s floating brain-in-a-jar henchman.

The alien universe where Francis finds himself is a marvel of neo-psychedelia. Purple cosmoses swirl behind him as he rides waves of pink solar rays while riffing on his new holographic guitar. Multihued, tentacular beasts wriggle along to his riffage as he jets by. Insectoid enemies wave hairy appendages in misty, hazily lit dawns, bleating back notes during boss battles that feature light shows more wildly epic than any seen in the Sixties.

In opposition to its eye-catching razzle-dazzle, *Artful Escape*’s

gameplay is strictly limited. Movement consists of walking left or right. When dialog choices pop up on screen, Francis simply repeats the lines that the player has selected. Videogame designers solved this problem a long time ago by using abbreviated dialog prompts that differ from the words spoken.

Things get somewhat more exciting when Francis traverses long distances while practicing guitar. Like a simplified skateboarding game, you button mash to play Zappa-style guitar licks while zooming across alien landscapes. Although the button mashing quickly grew tiresome, Francis performed one awesome move that never got old: a knee slide combined with a final leap into the air that ends with him slamming the base of his guitar on the ground like Thor’s hammer.

The game’s boss fights are played like a simplified rhythm game. Prompts are cleverly depicted as a combination of five alien facial orifices, as if you were playing a game of Simon with a giant musical Muppet. The rhythms are simple enough, although because the on-screen prompts are symmetrical and the controller is not, my fingers regularly got confused.

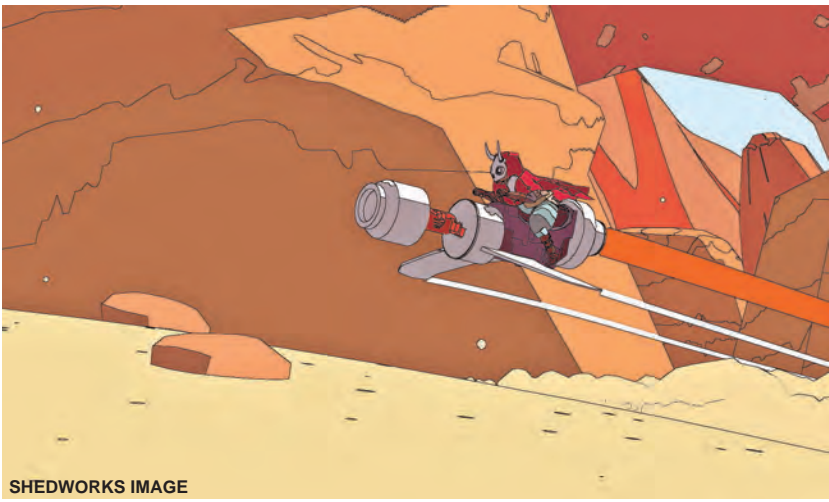
The most engaging part of Francis’s story is his role as epigone

to Lightman. Although a familiar trope, Weathers plays Lightman with sympathetic *panache*, and his and Schwartzman’s appearances are worth the journey, as are the unendingly inventive creature and environmental designs.

Although *Sable* was designed long before COVID, its titular protagonist, like all the characters in the game, is always masked. Set on a desert planet where the air remains unbreathable even after decades of terraforming, Sable is like a young Rey Skywalker if no evil Empire was calling her away to fight.

Instead, Sable leaves her home village to go “gliding,” a ritual journey of self-discovery spent flying along the ground on a hoverbike, helping people from other villages complete a variety of tasks. Her goal is to earn new masks, won by completing tasks, each of which is associated with a different career path. Gliding is kind of like college: when it ends, Sable must choose her direction in life. Whether she’ll become a mechanic, scrapper, cartographer, or even a vigilante is in your hands.

The appearance of *Sable*’s world is just as arresting as *Artful Escape*’s. Although rendered in 3D, its cell-shaded animation mimics the black outlined look of a comic by Jean Girard, a.k.a. Moebius,



*Sable glides through desert wastelands.*

one of the founders of *Heavy Metal* magazine. The dusty desert landscapes, which range from salt flats and sandy wastelands to towering mesas, are clothed in an unusual palette of dusky pastels.

*Sable* is an open-world game. You can glide anywhere on the map at any time with no overarching questline beyond exploration and discovery. Like Link in Nintendo’s *Breath of the Wild*, Sable is a capable climber limited only by a stamina bar. Also like Link, she can float from promontory to promontory using a magic red bubble that spares her from fall damage.

Running, climbing, and floating often feel better than piloting her glider, although it takes much longer to travel this way. It’s unfortunate that gliding isn’t more fun in a game where this mechanic is primary.

There are some real adventures to be had in Sable’s world. Not all the people you help are human. One of the most charming quests I became entangled with involved collecting the eggs of a thirty-foot telepathic worm whose tears of gratitude added to Sable’s stamina pool.

Early on, I stumbled upon a wrecked spaceship called “The Whale,” whose vast hold was filled with these eggs and other secrets. The questline I discovered there, working on behalf of a long aban-

doned A.I., carried me through the rest of my play time and filled in the game’s backstory.

As I was getting ready to conclude Sable’s journey and was poking around the map, I discovered, much to my delight, an entirely new area that I had missed. Filled with several more hours of content, its wasteland environment was a startling change from the rest of the map.

It’s no spoiler to reveal that *The Artful Escape*’s conclusion — where Francis realizes his rock ‘n’ fantasy, surpassing Lightman and crawling out from under his uncle’s shadow — felt too easily won. Although Sable’s fate is no less foregone, it was more gratifyingly realized. The journey I took with her was one of actual discovery.

*Sable* was filled with enough surprises to allow me to escape my adult concerns for a while. It’s too much to ask any videogame to give the gift of being young again. That I could tune out my cranky middle-aged self while running errands for aliens in Sable’s world was enough of a reward.

The *Artful Escape*, which was designed by *Beethoven Dinosaur*, is currently available on Xbox and Steam. *Sable*, which was designed by *Shedworks*, is currently available on PlayStation, Xbox, and Steam.

## VALLEY VIEW from page B1

The one-hour assignment was to find a quiet place in which to melt and, for the first 10 minutes, absorb the sensuous stimuli. That done, we were to describe the sights, sounds, and smells we encountered and articulate what we were feeling in a narrative describing a sequence of events and perceptions. It brought me back to deadline writing at work, Creative Writing 101 in college, and literally hundreds of columns I had written over the years after being touched deeply by something encountered on a walk, hike, hunt, or drive — or just plain creative ramblings from an introspective place. It’s what writers do.

I walked back to the motel, took the elevator to the fifth floor, opened floor-to-ceiling curtains for the panoramic view over a small porch with two chairs, sat down and studied the colorful mountain landscape. Here’s what I read to the small class an hour later, without a hint of insecurity or fear:

*Overcast. Gray and cool. Visibility fair. Air damp. No day for outdoor assignments without warm clothing. I know the value of comfort in such conditions, and it is hanging in my closet 200 miles south.*

*I’m seated on a flexible metal chair with a cushioned seat, looking south through large, floor-to-ceiling windows. The curtains are pulled wide open to the right, opening a colorful, sunless fall scene over a small, fifth-floor porch. I see a mountain landscape dominated by red and orange, defiled by a slim, vertical powerline of the same colors, muted.*

*The nearest ridge wears a gentle slope*

*that slowly ascends to the left before meeting an abrupt, conifer-capped, gundrop ridge that must offer hard, rough ledge underfoot. That I cannot say for sure, situated here in a place I do not and will never know. It is someone else’s place. I am a brief visitor. A passer-through.*

*In the place I call home and was born, I could name the faraway peaks and identify the unseen rivers running through distant ravines deeply eroded over many millennia. I could likely point out those crevices still holding remnants of ancient Native weirs and fish-traps, and streams where sophisticated surface collectors can still pick up precious artifacts dating back to Clovis hunters some 13,000 years ago. It’s hard to say where these artifacts come from. Freshets just keep tumbling them downstream like golden nuggets of prospectors’ dreams, deep-history clues for trained modern eyes to interpret.*

*From my perspective, the beauty of this place created by the recreation industry as a money-maker stops at the gravel parking lot, the surrounding development and the monstrous motel where I’m staying. Hypocrisy from someone enjoying the amenities? Perhaps. But I know my thoughts and moods would be far purer and more meaningful if absorbed into the forest, fishing a brook for speckled trout or sitting still and silent in a deer stand as a hidden, temporary habitat resident.*

*Looking through the large, modern windows at the lush mountain forest below, I do not know the trails and roads I have not traveled and am having difficulty connecting*

*to the scene as the metal register behind me exhales a warm, sensual whisper.*

*To appreciate this place like I love my own, I’d have to learn the alder and spruce swamps, the beech and oak groves, the sugarbush, the shagbark hickories, if they’re here. I’d have to trek the ancient footpaths and game trails worn deeply into ridgetop spines. Those who, for eternity, created these ancient indentations on the forest floor were wise and just. They created paths of least resistance to important destinations, be they hunting-and-gathering sites or ceremonial landscapes on which they celebrated solstices and bountiful harvests with song, dance and theatrical oral tales that taught important cultural and spiritual lessons and could last for days.*

*Many of those ancient paths are still today traveled as paved and altered roads created to accommodate wheeled vehicles in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Such cart and bridle paths could not stay with the ancient footpaths through muddy, lowland depressions, which proved at times impassable for wheeled vehicles. Thus, the road-builders cut new paths on higher ground more difficult afoot but easier for horse and carriage and, later, automobiles like those parked below me in a place where moose, cougars and black bears once ruled.*

*Tell me: is this now a better place because of its ski slopes, water parks, golf course and giant motel? Well, that’s not for me to answer. To each his own.*

Given more time to gather and shape my thoughts, I could have improved the narrative

through many rewrites and tweaks. I could have introduced an historic Rogers’ Rangers angle. That is, which of his fleeing bands from the infamous 1759 massacre of Native Americans at St. Francis would have ventured closest to Jay Peak? That could have added a little flavor, I suppose.

I could have also explained that, having seen not so much as a ray of sun since arriving, I had no clue which direction I was pointed when looking through those motel windows. That may have established my disorientation while trying to describe a new place. Plus, I could have spared myself the indignity of a mistake in bold black print. Then again, did it really matter what direction I was looking?

Overall, I’m satisfied with my tight-deadline response about an unfamiliar place. It reminded me in many ways of the many Friday-night football stories I cranked out with the clock ticking and no turning back. Focus is always the key. I know that from experience.

I don’t know or care what others in the workshop thought of my conservationist/preservationist perspective. Maybe they thought me a dinosaur in the world of modern outdoor writing, which seems determined to promote resorts and development that produces outdoor activities like skiing, biking, hiking, kayaking, orienteering, geocaching, tennis, and golf to name some.

I see no need to mire myself in such trivial matters. Asked to bare my soul, I did so, and am more than comfortable in skin wrinkling with age.



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# Aquí se habla español

Esta es la página mensual en español del **Montague Reporter**. Aquí podrá encontrar cuestiones acerca de la comunidad hispana en el área, eventos de interés, curiosidades, y noticias mundiales en español. Si quiere participar o compartir alguna sugerencia, envíenos un correo electrónico a [spanish@montaguereporter.org](mailto:spanish@montaguereporter.org).



## Cocina Lupita: Autentica cocina salvadoreña en el centro de Greenfield.

Por VICTORIA MÁILLO DE AGUILERA

**GREENFIELD** – La cocinera salvadoreña es una fusión entre la cocina indígena, concierta influencia de la cocina estadounidense e italiana. Los alimentos básicos son los fríjoles, el maíz, cerdo y pollo, además de frutas variadas. Antes de la llegada de los españoles el maíz era el sustento básico y predominante en todas las comidas de los habitantes de Mesoamérica. Los españoles llevaron el cerdo y el pollo y algunas especias provenientes de Asia.

Uno de los platos más famosos y autentico de la cocina salvadoreña es la pupusa. La base es siempre la harina de maíz con agua y puede estar rellena de queso, chicharrones, pollo, verduras e incluso pescado. Se cocinan en la plancha que en El Salvador se llama *comal*. Otro de los platillos más típicos de la cocina salvadoreña son los pastelitos, una especie de empanadas que pueden llevar dentro carne o verduras.

Recientemente me he mudado a Greenfield y he visto cada día al pasar el “*food truck*” de Cocina Lupita en el centro, primero detrás del antiguo edificio de Wilson’s y ahora delante del ayuntamiento en la nueva zona peatonalizada de Greenfield, delante del conocido lugar de música Hawks and Reed.

Me acerqué para hacerles una entrevista a los dueños del negocio y conocer un poco más acerca de ellos y de lo que ofrece su camión de comida salvadoreña.

Charlé con una de los dueños del camión, la simpática salvadoreña, Aleyda Romero. Ella salió de El Salvador buscando una vida mejor hace unos veinte años. Es de Sensuntepeque, que es el municipio cabecera

ro del departamento de Cabañas en el país centroamericano. Está a 84 kilómetros de la capital, San Salvador. Consta de unos 22 cantones y 280 caseríos distribuidos en la zona rural. La traducción al castellano de Sensuntepeque es “cerro grande.”

Aleyda y decidió salir de su país con la ayuda de una familia para la que ella trabajaba limpiando su casa. Lo hizo acompañada del que en aquel momento era su pareja, y aquí nacieron sus dos hijos. En El Salvador tuvo la oportunidad de ir a la escuela solamente hasta noveno grado porque tuvo que empezar a trabajar limpiando casas para ayudar a su familia. Hizo el camino hacia Estados Unidos en carro y andando, y atravesó la frontera a través del estado de Texas. Tuvo suerte y los oficiales de inmigración le dieron el pase para cruzar la frontera.

Tenía dieciocho cuando salió del El Salvador y llegó al estado de Massachussets porque aquí tenía una prima que era su único contacto en este país. Tiene dos hijos, uno de 18 y otro de 17 años, y se ha vuelto a casar con Efraín, que también es salvadoreño y es uno de los chefs de Cocina Lupita.

La pobreza en su país era muy grande y por ello decidió emigrar, con la idea de dar una vida mejor a sus padres que vivían en El Salvador. Desde que salió de su patria, hace ya veinte años, no ha vuelto a El Salvador. Allí murieron sus padres a los que no volvió a ver vivos.

Aleyda me cuenta que, como para la mayoría de los inmigrantes, es difícil estar aquí y dejar la vida en tu propio país, sin ver a los tuyos, y adaptarte a un nuevo país tan diferente en cultura, clima, comida, y relaciones, así como aprender una lengua nueva sin tener tiempo



Los dueños y empleados de Cocina Lupita delante de su camión.

para ello y encima de todo, la situación emocional que supone estar lejos de tu patria y saber que no vas a poder volver.

Más tarde, cuando murieron sus padres, Aleyda ayudó a su hermana a establecerse aquí también, pero cree que si estás bien en tu país no debes venir, porque la vida es muy difícil en los Estados Unidos y no compensa si tienes lo suficiente para vivir en tu propio país, aunque sea poco, ya que estás con tu familia y aquí la vida va muy rápido, demasiado rápido. Se arrepiente de no haber podido volver para ver a sus padres.

En Massachusetts empezó a trabajar en diversos restaurantes como en La Veracruzana en Northampton y después durante trece años en The People’s Pint en Greenfield.

Josh Breitner es el otro dueño de Cocina Lupita. Era el jefe del People’s Pint y todos los que ahora trabajan en Cocina Lupita trabajaban antes allí. Debido a la pandemia los dueños de ese restaurante decidieron cerrar y los trabajadores recibieron la noticia solamente unos tres días antes. Cuando los trabajadores se reunieron para comentar la situación, Aleyda, mitad en broma, mitad en serio, sugirió a Josh que podrían iniciar un nuevo negocio juntos. Y dicho y hecho, Josh se puso manos a la obra y estuvo un año investigando cómo hacerlo, cuáles eran las posibilidades, y hasta viajó

a Virginia para comprar el precioso camión rojo de comida que ahora es su negocio y lo condujo de vuelta a Massachusetts. Comenzaron a pedir préstamos conjuntos en bancos locales y consiguieron el dinero para empezar su negocio.

Su especialidad son las pupusas que se hacen con *maseca*, harina de maíz que no tiene gluten, y que pueden llevar un relleno de vegetales como espinacas, kale, chile verde, calabacín y cebolla, o si le gusta la carne, chicharrón que es la pierna del cerdo (y es la pupusa preferida de Aleyda), frijoles y queso. La masa se amasa y dentro se pone el relleno, se palmea y se lleva al *comal*, que es la plancha donde se cocina.

La situación de la pandemia les fue favorable ya que los clientes ya estaban acostumbrados a pedir comida para llevar o comer fuera en terrazas o en el parque. Hay ocho personas trabajando en el negocio, todos ellos latinos, excepto Josh. Ahora están utilizando la cocina del Hawks and Reed que les sirve para la preparación de los alimentos y después se cocina todo al *comal*, la plancha caliente que está en el camión.

La situación céntrica y al lado de un local ya conocido por sus conciertos y eventos es un atractivo más para visitar Cocina Lupita. Este último fin de semana ha habido una fiesta de música latina, y clases de salsa en colaboración con Hawks and Reed,

un ejemplo de lo que la pandemia ha supuesto para lograr colaboración entre miembros de la comunidad.

Josh es un nativo de Greenfield y me dice que lleva toda su vida trabajando en restaurantes. Me apunta que los platos que ofrecen en Cocina Lupita son totalmente auténticos y que los ingredientes vienen directamente de El Salvador. Por ejemplo, el queso que usan para sus pupusas es un queso especial salvadoreño que no sale barato, pero sin este ingrediente, la pupusa no sería autentica.

El sueño de Aleyda era tener su casa en Estados Unidos, y dar una vida mejor a sus hijos, dos cosas que ha conseguido. Josh y ella tienen la aspiración de algún día abrir su propio restaurante.

Todos los integrantes de Cocina Lupita, y especialmente sus dueños, están muy agradecidos a la población de Franklin County por la aceptación de su restaurante, por el interés en la cocina salvadoreña y su cultura, y la buena acogida y el apoyo que han tenido en las dos localizaciones. Los dos me dicen que sin la ayuda de sus clientes este sueño no hubiera sido posible.

Desde esta página les invitó a que se den un paseo por Greenfield, prueben todo lo que ofrecen en Cocina Lupita, y si quieren practiquen también su castellano, ellos estarán encantados de atenderles en cualquiera de los dos idiomas.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21

Calvin Theater, Northampton: *Robyn Hitchcock*. \$. 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Eggtooth Productions Presents: A Happening*. \$. 7 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Robbie Fulks*. \$. 7 p.m.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *Annie Hart*, analog synthesizers. Closing reception for *Luminous Bloom* exhibit. \$. 7 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Will Wood, Matt Pless*. \$. 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23

Downtown Turners Falls: Great Falls Festival feat. *No Lens, Duh Band, Curly Fingers Dupree, AfterGlo, Fortified Blues Band, Tra-*

*cy and the Valley Revival*, and more. Free. 12 p.m.

Between the Uprights, Turners Falls: *Rock 201*. Free and outdoors. 4 p.m.

Palladium, Worcester: *The Front Bottoms, Oso Oso, Sydney Sprague*. \$. 7 p.m.

The Perch at Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Cloudbelly*. \$. 7 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Brown Eyed Women*. All-female Grateful Dead tribute. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Soule Monde*. \$. 8 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Kal-bells, Ruth Garbus*. \$. 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 24

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield:

*Unholy Roller*, skatepark benefit feat. *Strange Fate, Eat Fire Spring, Rocking Puppies, Boy-friend Machine*. \$. Skate jam, 12 p.m.; contests; music at 5 p.m.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 26

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Palmer Squares, Ice Plant, Joshy Philly, Fatty Thicc, and Delgado*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Majestic Saloon, Northampton: Screening, *Little Shop of Horrors* (1986) and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975). 8 p.m.

Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: *WAVVES, Harmless*. \$. 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 28

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Skeleton Crew Theater Family Friendly Halloween Show*. \$. 4, 6, and 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Jake Manzi, Chris Marlon Jennings*. \$. 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Skeleton Crew Theater*. \$. 4, 6, and 8 p.m.

Palladium, Worcester: *Gwar, Napalm Death, Eyehategod*. \$. 7 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Mary Gauthier, Jaimee Harris*. \$. 7 p.m.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: Screening of *Phantom of the Opera* (1925), with live pipe organ accompaniment. \$. 7 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *The Leafies You Gave Me, EIEIEIO, Power Trousers*. \$. 8 p.m.

Gateway City Arts, Holyoke:

*Donna the Buffalo*. \$. 8 p.m.

Bombyx Center, Northampton: *Dee Dee Bridgewater, Bill Charlap*. \$. 8 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Start Making Sense*, Talking Heads tribute, with *Rice: An American Band*. \$. 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 30

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Skeleton Crew Theater*. \$. 4, 6, and 8 p.m.

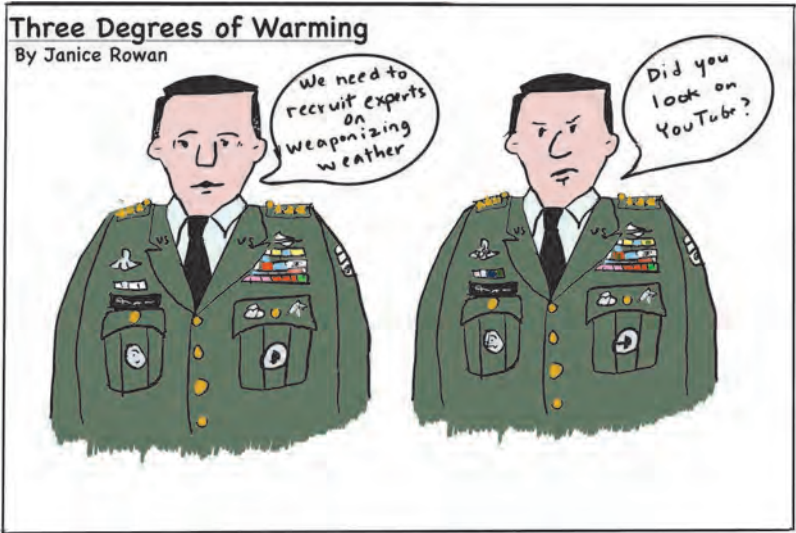
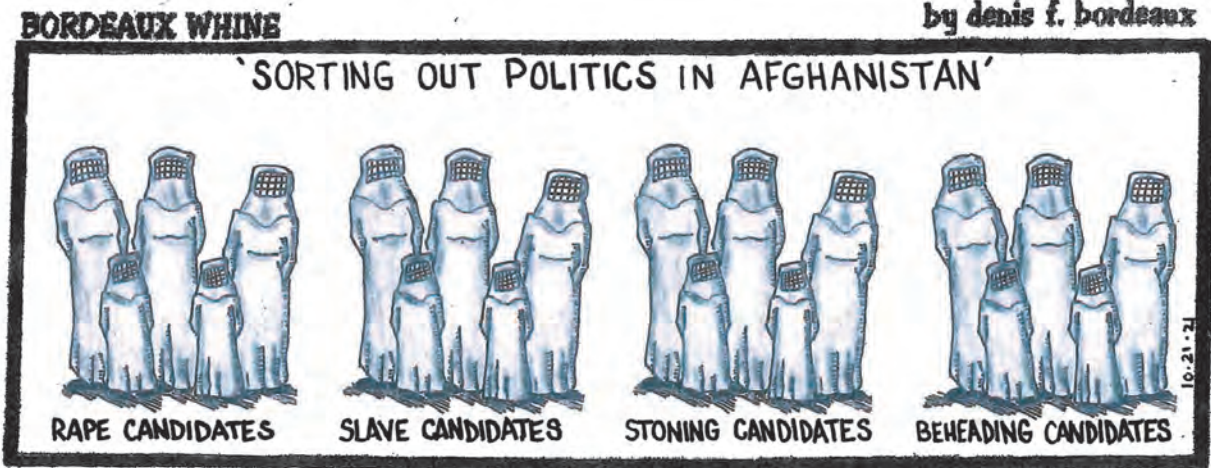
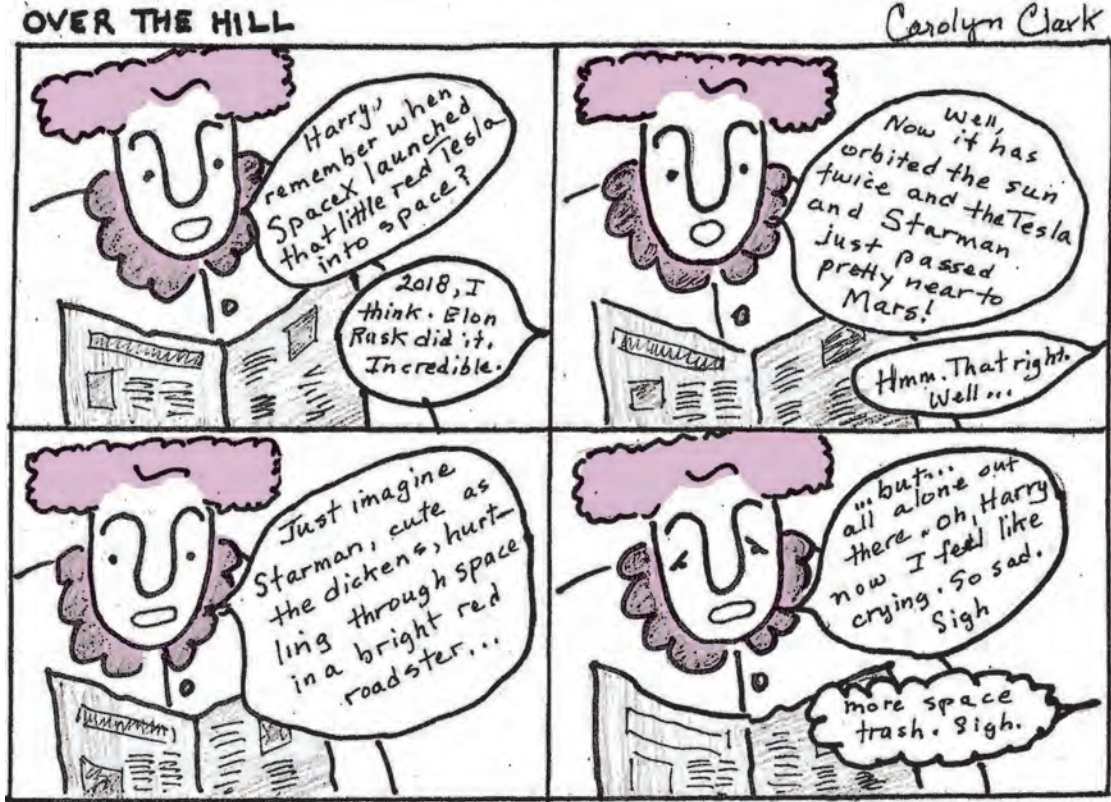
Brewbaker's, Keene: *HomeBody, Anthony Mascia*. \$. 7:45 p.m.

Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: *Boy Harsher, Lucy, DJ Heart-balloon*. \$. 8 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Bearly Dead, Grateful Dead* tribute. \$. 8 p.m.



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# GREAT FALLS APPLE COLUMN

By ANNABEL LEVINE

**TURNERS FALLS** – Did you know the Great Falls Apple Corps turns four years old this Saturday? We’ve had a very busy year, and after the frenzied last harvest push we are very much looking forward to the upcoming season of coziness, rest, and planning. As a birthday gift to ourselves, we are taking the month of November off from the free table and other programming. We’ve been outside almost every weekend since last October, and we’re due for a break!

Before we say goodbye to the season, we will be hosting one last soirée in the 2021 garden, and this one should be extra special because it falls right on the spookiest day of the year!

That’s right – our annual fall clean-up party at the Unity Park Community Garden falls on Halloween. We’ll be out in the garden on Sunday, October 31 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

This year’s fall clean-up will have music, dancing, cider, and a last free table of the season, where everything must go. Dress up as a farmer, your favorite vegetable, or however you want to. We look forward to getting our hands dirty together one last time before the cold sets in. This event is put on thanks to grant funds from the Montague Cultural Council.

Before putting the free table on the back burner for the month, I think it’s time to share some overdue shout-outs to all the community partners who helped us distribute resources this past year. This adventure would not have been possible without you.

A huge thank you to Great Falls Harvest, the Shea Theater, and to Jon and Jennifer at Montague Parks and Recreation for letting us call their establishments home. Without you, there’d be no table.

An extra thank you needs to go to the Great Falls Harvest crew for not only letting us crash

there for the first few months, but also providing hundreds of containers of prepared food and who-knows-how-many gallons of applesauce last fall. Chris and Bridgette continue to provide all kinds of support, and we’re very grateful.

This season’s applesauce was brought to you by GFAC volunteer Sherry, and our friends at the Upper Bend. Our first round of containers were provided by RiverCulture, while this year’s jars were donated by Peg and Alyssa. Thank you all!

We’d like to thank all of our produce partners (in no particular order): Joanna from Meadowhawk Farm; Ritchie and the Atlas Farm crew; Meryl and Andy from Just Roots; Red Fire North; David Harmon with the early apple hook-up; Rabbi Andrea and the gleaners group; Ang from They Keep Bees, for the invitation to pick from their orchard; Leonore with the downtown connection; and all of the local gardeners who made

small contributions of their excess produce.

Thank you to Susan, Sally, and the crew from Drawdown Montague who included our table as part of their 2021 produce donation drive. We very much appreciate the inter-village resource sharing and connection that is starting to form. We are also grateful to the Pioneer Valley Workers Center Thursday food distribution for not only being first-rate food distributors themselves, but also for donating their extra food to us!

We wouldn’t have been able to continue hosting the table without folks coming through and showing up to help. I want to thank the table volunteers who came out in all weather to help over the past year (in no particular order): Edite, Jean, Sherry, Jan, Jackie, Rachel, and Cathy. A special shout-out to all the random folks who happened to be walking by or dropping off a donation who helped us set up when no other volunteer was available. There’s a lot of folks downtown who are willing to lend a helping hand!

Lastly, I want to thank everyone who donated to the table. Folks donated really high-quality food, clothing, and other items to give away, and we collected a nice amount of cash donations that went right into more items for the table. As of writing, we have spent \$1,328.85 in donated cash to purchase food, containers, toilet paper, soap, diapers, and hangers. A special shout-out to Edite, who made the free table a benefactor of her annual tag sale, and to all the community members who donated special items for her to sell to raise money.

On a personal note, I want to express gratitude for the amazing community of people that I have spent the last year interacting with because of this free table adventure. While I believe the work we’ve been doing at the free table is important for a more equitable and kind community, it would



A donated doll sits atop a pyramid of toilet paper rolls during an August free table. The toilet paper was purchased with cash from the donation jar.



A GEAC table isn’t complete without a bushel or two of donated apples, seen here with Montague-grown hot peppers from Meadowhawk Farm.

never have lasted this long if we weren’t also having a blast doing it. I treasure the amount of growth and strengthening of my personal sense of community that has come this past year, and hope that others feel the same way.

If you want to catch the free table in action before we take our break, you have three more chances: this Saturday October 23, Saturday October 30, and Sunday October 31. The Saturday dates are at our regular time and place, 12 to 3 p.m. at the Unity Park fieldhouse, while the Sunday date will be from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Unity Park Community Garden.

Maybe we’ll see you there?

*The Great Falls Apple Corps is a community group that advocates for edible landscaping and all sorts of community gardening. We maintain the Unity Park Community Garden, a sidewalk food forest at the old St. Andrews’ Church, and a weekly free table on Saturdays at Unity Park. If you are interested in volunteering, or want to stay up-to-date with all our goings on, check out our Facebook, Instagram @greatfallsapplecorps, or email us at greatfallsapplecorps@gmail.com.*

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