

# The Montague Reporter

YEAR 19 – NO. 46

also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

\$1

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

OCTOBER 28, 2021

## MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

### Trash, Sludge, Phone Poles Highlights of Board Meeting

By JEFF SINGLETON

The Montague selectboard decided at its meeting Monday to continue the town’s contract with the trucking company Republic Services for trash hauling and recycling, despite widespread criticism of its service during the recent pandemic. The board also voted to move forward with a study to expand the composting of “solids” at the water pollution control facility, approved a state plan to redraw the town’s precinct lines in response to the 2020 Census, and engaged officials from Eversource about redun-

dant and unsightly telephone poles. And that was only the tip of the iceberg.

The discussion of the future of the town’s trash came near the end of the long agenda and mirrored previous discussions, both by the board and with Republic, about frequent missed or delayed trash pickups. Town administrator Steve Ellis told the board that the contract expires on June 30, but “there is a notice provision, after which you are committing to a two-year extension.” State law does not require bidding for trash collection, but any

see MONTAGUE page A9

### Alvah Stone Leaves Bookmill; New Eatery Planned for Space



Watershed Restaurant will open in the space occupied by the Alvah Stone since 2014.

By LEE WICKS

**MONTAGUE CENTER** – It’s a watershed moment when someone realizes a long-held dream, and everything aligns. That is why Melissa Stetson and James Fitzgerald of South Deerfield are naming their restaurant Watershed. Located at the Montague Bookmill in the downstairs space occupied since 2014 by the Alvah Stone restaurant, Watershed will offer a gathering place for people to enjoy local-

ly-sourced food, wines, draft beers, and creative mixed drinks.

“We’d like to be known for the best grilled cheese sandwich, or the most savory mac and cheese,” said Fitzgerald. “We want to offer quality food at reasonable prices and a community experience that will appeal to local diners and visitors from out of town.”

Howard Wein, owner of the Alvah Stone, had something of a watershed moment himself when Stetson

see RESTAURANT page A3

### Zellman to McCarthy: A Generational Change

By JEFF SINGLETON

**MONTAGUE** – As many of our readers no doubt know, there is a major transition taking place at the Turners Falls Fire Department. Fire chief John Zellman is retiring and will be replaced by his deputy, Brian McCarthy, this November 15. Readers may not be aware that this

is something of a generational shift, that perhaps symbolizes some of the changes that have been taking place in Montague in recent years.

Zellman was born at the tail end of the so-called baby boom generation, grew up in Montague, and originally joined the Lake Pleasant Fire Department where his father

see CHANGE page A8



Turners Falls Fire Department deputy chief Brian McCarthy, a member of the Generation X demographic group, will be promoted to chief next month.

### Buckland Selectboard Draws Fire Over Chief

By MIKE JACKSON

**BUCKLAND** – Angry residents sounded off Tuesday night at the Buckland selectboard over revelations that recently retired police chief James Hicks had worked for his final two years with a pending sexual assault charge.

“What is happening in this town?” Teri Rutherford asked the board. “As a community member, it seems as if there is a conscious choice to sweep these crimes under the rug at the expense of our community safety.”

Rutherford and eight others spoke during the public comment period of Tuesday’s Zoom meeting, after selectboard chair Zachary Turner said that the board would listen, but could not discuss the topic, due to state open meeting law.

Turner, who did not respond to requests for comment before a Montague Reporter article on October 14, also read a prepared apology for his comment in the October 19 Greenfield Recorder that his board

see BUCKLAND page A8

### Newspaper Union Pushes For Freeze on Outsourcing

By SARAH ROBERTSON

**NORTHAMPTON** – The union representing workers at the Daily Hampshire Gazette announced on Monday that its members are taking action to leverage power in their ongoing contract negotiations with parent company Newspapers of New England (NNE).

“As those who make the Daily Hampshire Gazette, we already work on the thinnest of staffing because of Newspapers of New England’s repeated outsourcing of local jobs out of the Valley,” the Pioneer Valley NewsGuild wrote. “Now, our out-of-state owners and their white-shoe lawyer are telling us at the bargaining table that they want the power to outsource editing and arts-department jobs at will. Enough is enough.”

In an email to supporters on Monday morning, the NewsGuild announced that its members would be taking a “work to rule” action, essentially ceasing any work not explicitly outlined in their job descriptions. The reason for the slowdown, according to union members, is because NNE is negotiating for a clause in their contract that would allow for outsourcing of copyediting and other positions.

“We really do think there has been a lot of really good progress with the company,” said Gazette reporter and NewsGuild unit council

see UNION page A6

### Skeleton Crew Gears Up For Weekend Shea Run



JACKSON PHOTO

Skeleton Crew actor Jayden Hosmer, marketing director Jayne Finn, troll Burt, and founder Jonathan Chappell staff a booth at last week’s Great Falls Festival.

By MIKE JACKSON

**TURNERS FALLS** – “It started when I was in high school. I was making these monsters for fun, because I loved Halloween.” Jonathan Chappell gets a faraway look in his eye, remembering the very beginning. “I would invite friends to come over to see them. And that evolved – I’d start telling a little story about each monster...”

Storytelling led to lights and sound, and then to making the monsters move. Soon there were entire outdoor live shows, and from there it became something bigger, a hands-on workshop for a new generation of high schoolers to explore new skills and creative expression.

“I never thought it would take 20 years to get us into the Shea,”

Chappell grins. “As opposed to just being, like, the weird thing that was outside.”

Chappell has become something of a Pied Piper of Halloween, the creative director of Skeleton Crew Theater, a do-it-yourself fantasy universe where wizards, witches, and giant trolls run the show. In 2008 he joined the faculty at Turners Falls High School, where he keeps an eye out for the kind of students – and sometimes staff – who might be in need of an extracurricular outlet beyond the mainline offerings of sports and musical theater.

“I look for the creative soul,” Chappell says, “the artistic kids, theatrical kids. I really wanted to give them a place to belong, and that’s worked out quite well.”

see SKELETON page A7

### School Greenhouse Provides A Classroom in Nature

By DONNA PETERSEN

**LEVERETT**—Driving past the Leverett Elementary School on a school day, you can see kids on the playground field running around and having fun. But you’ll also see a cluster of kids in and around a greenhouse in the field and using tables next to the greenhouse. Welcome to a special program called Greenhouse and Nature that uses the 18-by-36-foot greenhouse as the

base for students to enhance their classroom learning with hands-on growing of food, flowers, and more.

I spoke with Montague resident Dawn Marvin Ward, who is the director of the program and conveniently lives across the street from me. For ten years Dawn has been the force behind this unique effort. She has a background in plant and soil science and greenhouse management and is a

see GREENHOUSE page A5



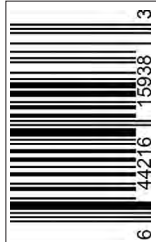
SUBMITTED PHOTO

One half of the Leverett Elementary School greenhouse interior, with leaf print flags created by students and salad greens growing for the cafeteria.

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# The Montague Reporter

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Off The Table

US Senators Joe Manchin (D-West Virginia) and Kyrsten Sinema (D-Arizona) are holding strong against social investment, and have made some remarkable wins for the interests they represent. While their strategy of coyly refusing to explain their position or objectives is starting to give way to just a little bit of horse-trading, this week they rolled out a new trick, with Sinema announcing she would support a limited “billionaire’s tax” and Manchin promptly signaling he would not.

So far, things we have heard the pair have managed to take off the table in the forthcoming budget bills: free community college; a moratorium on deportations; a moratorium on evictions; student debt relief; paid family leave; a federal minimum wage increase; a public healthcare option; and the expansion of Medicare to cover dental, vision, and hearing expenses.

It is entirely possible that the duo is volunteering to serve as sin-eaters for a deeper bench of conservative Democrats who didn’t want to be seen as publicly opposing what would have been a once-in-a-gener-

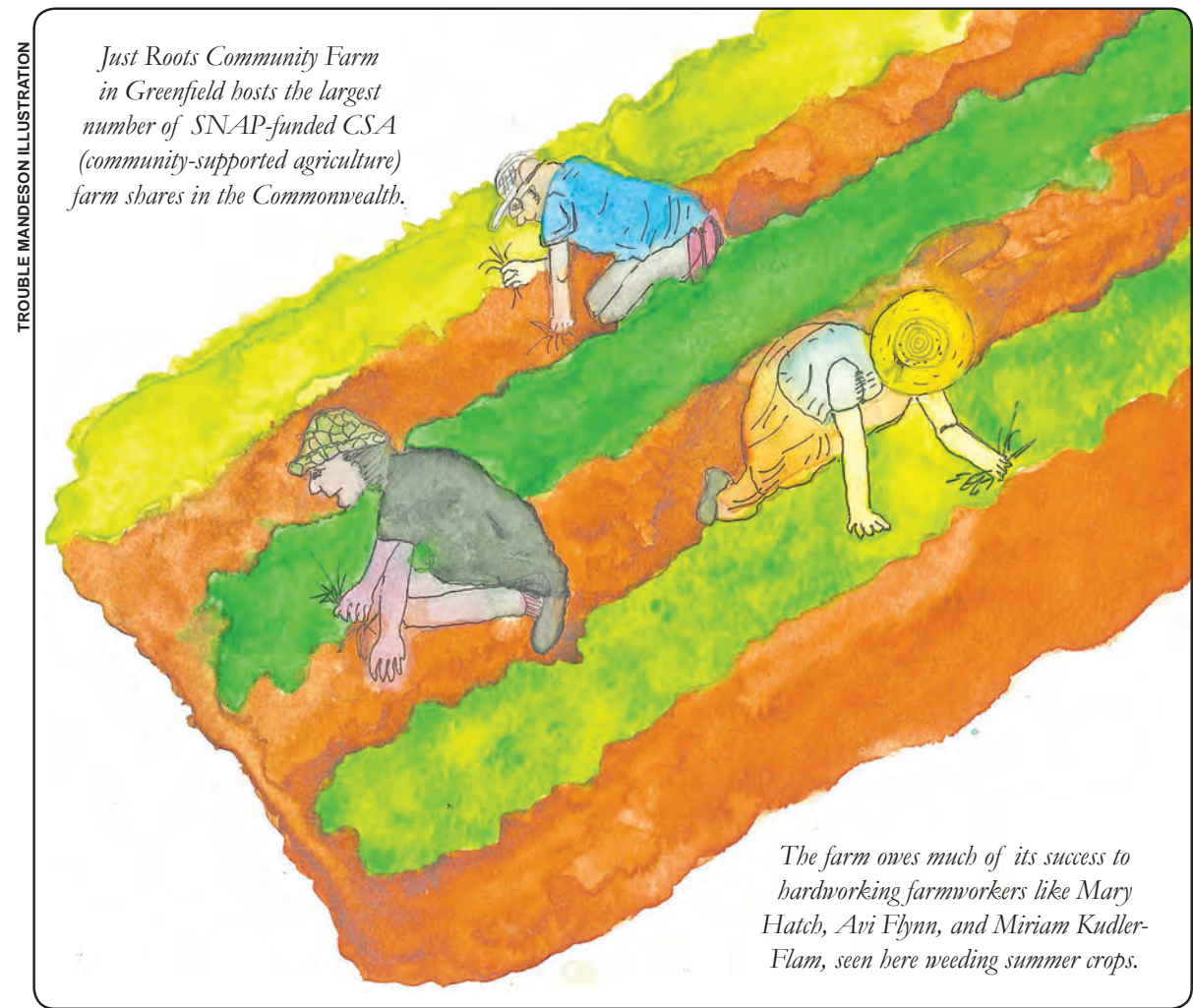
ation infusion of material support to the vast majority of Americans.

As of press time it seems highly unlikely that the legislation will be passed by the October 31 deadline Democrats were aiming for.

In the aftermath of global pandemic shutdowns, and amid partisan opposition to vaccination, the American economy has been slow to get on its feet. Vast numbers of workers received an object lesson during the past 18 months of whose labor is essential, and what sorts of investments the wealthy can make in the general social fabric if they are motivated to do so.

A small wave of official strikes by unions is the tip of a much larger iceberg; many workers have been dragging their feet, holding out for a better deal in the workplace if they can, and likely waiting to see also if Democrats were going to follow through on promises to “build back better” post-pandemic.

It does not look like the social wage will be delivered by the government. This fight is going to play out toe to toe between staff and employers, tenants and landlords, and in the streets of America’s cities.



Letters to

the Editors

Greenfield Savings Bank Responds With Donation, And Additional Challenge!

We applaud Kathy Lynch of the Village Store for her \$500 kick-off donation to support the *Montague Reporter* (September 16, 2021). Her challenge to the business community to join her reminds us that the paper is an important community asset. Every week the paper delivers local news, arts and entertainment, events, editorials, and humor.

We recognize the challenges that community newspapers face, especially now during the pandemic and subsequent rising costs. Enclosed is a check for \$500 in support of Kathy’s fundraising initiative.

In addition, we will contribute an additional \$500 after the *Montague Reporter* receives five more contributions of \$500. So, please join us in supporting this awesome community paper!

**John Howland,**  
President & CEO  
**Linda Ackerman,**  
Turners Falls Office Manager  
**Greenfield Savings Bank**

Nope

OK editor. How about you use this space for something else if you don’t get letters that actually apply to this region or the paper? A nice photo would do.

If I want to read a hate-filled letter from someone in Georgia, I’d move to Georgia. This homosexual is not wicked or evil, and it is hurtful to see myself described this way in these pages.

**Marny Ashburne**  
New Salem

*The eds reply: Genuine apologies to you and everyone else he accused of ushering in the coronavirus. We just thought the Perry Mason part was funny enough to share. (We do want more letters from readers, though.)*

OP ED

FERC Should Limit, and Deny, Hydro Licenses

By BILL STUBBLEFIELD

**WENDELL** – What follows is a slightly modified version of comments I submitted to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and copied to multiple state and federal agencies that share responsibility for protecting living diversity in the Connecticut River. At issue is the re-licensing of two FirstLight facilities: Cabot Generating Station (CGS) in Montague, and the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Station (NMPSS) in Northfield. This ongoing process is now proceeding behind closed doors.

With all due respect, I must demand that FERC and all other relevant parties act now to ensure that the requirements laid out in the Clean Water Act, the Rivers and Harbors Act, and all state and federal endangered-species and wetlands-protection laws and regulations be fully complied with in their entirety, including safe passage for migratory fish as legally mandated by the Supreme Court decision in *Holyoke Company v. Lyman* in 1872.

The appalling history of ignor-

ing these requirements over the last 50 years cannot be allowed to continue and must be remedied as soon as possible.

In the case of the state-and-federally-endangered Shortnose Sturgeon, this requires mandating guaranteed minimal flows as needed to facilitate spawning and early development at the Rock Dam in Montague, which is the only known natural spawning site in the Connecticut River drainage. This large and charismatic relic of the ancient past is, of course, only one victim of a much wider assault on living diversity by the intertwined projects CGS and NMPSS. Other noteworthy victims include migratory fishes: the anadromous Sea Lamprey, Blueback Herring, and American Shad, and the catadromous American Eel.

Here threats include the impediment of dams with inadequate fish ladders and the risk of being ground to bits in the turbines of the pumped-storage project in Northfield, which is so powerful that it actually reverses the flow of the mighty Connecticut.

We must also include the non-

migratory fishes, some of which are critical for the reproduction of threatened or endangered mussels. And the list of victims is barely begun. There are thousands of other species that make the river or its tributaries their home or otherwise depend on its water for their survival. All these species and the network of interactions among them deserve our protection. They must not be ignored as we seek to set limits on how our river can be exploited for private profit.

The two projects require different solutions if we are to recover from a half century of neglect. Cabot Station and the associated power canal and Turners Falls Dam need strong and binding restrictions that guarantee that the living diversity of the river can survive and thrive.

A sensible approach would be a temporary license, of perhaps 10 years, that could be extended only if specific conditions are met. In particular, FirstLight must demonstrate significant, well-documented, and independently-verified growth of sturgeon and migratory fish populations, as well as meet any other indices of biological health as may be deemed appropriate in order to ensure a healthy river ecosystem.

When it comes to the Northfield Mountain facility, however, only a shutdown will suffice. Energy storage always incurs a cost, but the wanton destruction of a living river cannot be tolerated. Ecocide is a moral outrage that must not be glossed over as just another unfortunate side effect of economic activity. It is simply unconscionable that the great fish grinder on the mountain would be granted another 50 years of operation, sucking the life out of our river to make a few bucks by arbitraging the difference between peak and off-peak electricity rates.

If this project is to have any future at all, it can only be as a last-resort-backup system, to be deployed only in the event of an extreme emergency involving massive outages and widespread human suffering.

Although FERC holds the power of licensing, multiple other agencies must share responsibility for the decades of neglect, and I am copying these remarks to some of them in order to emphasize how critically important it is that they stand up and do their duty at this moment of extreme peril for the great Connecticut and its essential role as the ecological lifeblood of our entire region. All the more so because we now face a global biodiversity crisis with extinction rates comparable to those of the great extinction events of the geological past.

We deserve a living river, fully alive, with all the vibrant complexity of a fully functioning ecosystem.

*Bill Stubblefield is a Ph.D. biologist living in Wendell.*

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Compiled by NINA ROSSI

All local chain pharmacies are offering **flu vaccines** now. The Cooperative Public Health Service is holding a flu clinic this Saturday, October 30, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Pioneer Valley Regional School. Both injectable and mist types are available for 6 months old and up, for free. Register at [frcog.org/flu-clinic/](http://frcog.org/flu-clinic/). Keeping flu cases out of hospitals is important this year to try to save limited resources for COVID patients.

GCC professor Lillian Ruiz will present a talk, “**Ticket to Terror: Horror Film in the Age of Anxiety**” at the LAVA Center in Greenfield this Saturday at 1 p.m. The free presentation will address the horror film genre from a decade perspective, and describe how such films serve as a lens into the fears and anxieties of their age. Live at the center or on Zoom; find out more and pre-register at [localaccess.org](http://localaccess.org).

Also this Saturday, from 1 to 4 p.m., join FirstLight’s Northfield Mountain staff on a **Hike to Rose Ledges**. Enjoy the brilliant colors of late fall and the dramatic cliffs, explore historic 19th-century stone quarries, and search for signs of wildlife on this guided, three-mile loop hike.

Hikers must be 18 years or older and comfortable walking over somewhat hilly terrain with an elevation gain of 800 feet. Pre-registration at [www.bookeo.com/northfield](http://www.bookeo.com/northfield) is required for this free program, as group size is strictly limited. Masks are required for the group gathering.

There will be music and movies at the **last block party of the season** at Unity Skatepark this Saturday, October 30, with food and drink from Santo Taco, Pioneer Valley Brewing, and Nice. Ice Parlor. Eat, drink, and play to tunes spun by Peace & Rhythm DJs Rec and Studebaker Hawk. The action is from 4 to 8 p.m. at 148 Second Street in Turners Falls.

At 6 p.m. the Mexican horror clas-

sic *El Santo y Blue Demon Contra Los Monstros* (1969) will be projected, along with a horror/psychodelic cumbia soundtrack! If you come in costume, you will get a treat.

Would you like to learn more about **COVID booster shots and the vaccine for younger children?** An online information session is being held Tuesday, November 2 at noon with Dr. Chrystal Wittcopp, medical director at Baystate Pediatrics. Dr. Wittcopp will present the latest information on booster shots and the vaccine rollout for children 5 to 11 years old. Learn more, register, and submit questions for the doctor at [www.publichealthwm.org](http://www.publichealthwm.org).

Another valuable resource for vaccines and boosters, including where to get them in Franklin County, is online at [frcog.org](http://frcog.org).

If you’d like to know **why your cat does those crazy things**, ask cat whisperer Dr. Rachel Geller on November 4 at 6:30 p.m., courtesy of the Leverett Library. She is a certified cat behaviorist and will take questions during her Zoom presentation. Registration is required; contact [leverett@cwmars.org](mailto:leverett@cwmars.org).

A holiday fundraiser light show at the Franklin County Fairgrounds is looking for entries. Propose your design before November 5 to be part of the second annual **Light Up the Fairgrounds** drive-through holiday spectacular!

Thoughtful, well-crafted holiday light displays are needed for this event. There is no cost to enter, but entrants will be responsible for all costs incurred to create the display. Every display entry accepted will be eligible to win cash prizes awarded by votes cast by attendees.

The event will be held at the fairgrounds on three weekends from November 26 to December 12, from 5 to 9 p.m. for a \$5 per car donation. Proceeds support programs at Big Brothers Big Sisters of Franklin County, the Franklin County Sheriff’s Office Regional Dog Shelter, and the Franklin County Fairgrounds itself. Information and

entry forms are at [bbbs-fc.org](http://bbbs-fc.org).

Knitting and democracy come together through a free workshop called “**Knit Democracy Together**” with artist and former election lawyer Eve Jacobs-Carnahan on Saturday, November 6. The event takes place at the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center at 4 p.m. and on Zoom at 4:30 p.m.

No knitting skills are required – Jacobs-Carnahan will lead a maker circle in which folks will knit, crochet, or make finger cord to contribute to a three-foot-tall knitted sculpture of the Vermont state house and grounds.

The artist will also talk about innovative ways to finance election campaigns, and how to reconnect officials with their constituents and make the government more accountable. Find out more at [brattleboromuseum.org](http://brattleboromuseum.org).

Leverett Crafts and Arts announces a new exhibit in the Barnes Gallery during the month of November. “Leverett Pond and Beyond” features **oil paintings by Susan B. Mulholland**. Meet the artist at a reception on Sunday, November 7 from 1 to 5 p.m. The gallery is at 13 Montague Road, Leverett and is open every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from 1 to 5 p.m.

Exploded View is curating an **art show in the Great Hall at the Discovery Center** this November featuring work by artists on the theme of *Maintenance and Repair*. Artwork for this show reflects on processes of mending, reconstruction, redemption, fixing, rebuilding, healing, and transformation.

Join Exploded View members Edite Cunha, Sam Wood, Trish Crapo, and myself for a series of artist receptions in the Great Hall on November 13, 21, and 28 from 1 to 3 p.m., with a large-screen showing of *The Bitter Sweet Feast*, a short film by Exploded View, at 2 p.m. Receptions include performative readings by Exploded View, the short movie, and light refreshments in the courtyard with artists from the show. All ages welcome.

Adolescents have been at greater risk during the COVID pandemic for mental health problems, and a supportive adult presence can make a difference. Mass Mentoring is holding a virtual mentoring youth training event on November 10 called **Supporting Youth Mental Health During COVID (19**

**months in...)**, for those looking to learn how to promote resiliency among young people and how to foster a shared connection that can contribute to positive growth and adaptation. The training session starts at 10 a.m.; contact Janeen Smith at [jsmith@massmentors.org](mailto:jsmith@massmentors.org) for more information.

The *Montague Reporter* is still **looking for an arts columnist** to cover cultural and art exhibits and to write profiles of artists of all types – including poets, puppeteers, pointillists, etc. – on a semi-regular or regular basis. We can be flexible with assignments, but we miss having a dedicated ArtBeat columnist to bring regional art and culture alive on the pages of our features section! Please send letters of interest to [features@montaguereporter.org](mailto:features@montaguereporter.org).

Ashley Yang Liu will host several one-time **Chinese painting and calligraphy classes** at Artspace in Greenfield this November. You will learn a specific character or experiment with a different subject in each class, working with special brushes, ink, pigment, and rice paper. On Sunday, November 7, 10:30 a.m. to noon, Liu teaches “A Taste of Chinese Painting: Flowers,” followed by “Fruit” on November 13. Open to all ages. Visit [artspacegreenfield.com](http://artspacegreenfield.com) to learn more.

Silverthorne Theater resumes Theater Thursdays with *Someone is Sure to Come*, a **play by Ellen Kaplan and incarcerated people** across the US. The live reading by Kaplan will take place at the LAVA Center in Greenfield, and on YouTube, on November 11 at 7:30 p.m.

The play uses monologues and poetry written by people on death row or serving life without parole, many of whom have been in solitary confinement for decades, and weaves their words into “a lyrical play that looks at life inside and out, according to the event description. “Fantasy, humor, and poetry combine to create a kaleidoscopic vision of serving hard time, to question the responsibility we have when society imprisons people and throws away the key.”

The playwright will answer questions and comments after the reading. Find out more at [localaccess.org/events/](http://localaccess.org/events/).

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

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**RESTAURANT** from page A1

and Fitzgerald approached him. “I really wasn’t thinking of selling at all, but I’ve been traveling all over the world for Wein Hospitality Group, running the restaurant, and trying to spend enough time with my family,” he said. “I thought about it, and letting go of the restaurant made sense.”

This was good news for Stetson, who grew up in Deerfield and has dreamed about owning a restaurant for a long time. Her former business is Creative Concept, a marketing company she owned for eight years. She is also an interior designer, and recently started MJS Interiors, an interior design firm. With her children out on their own and COVID-19 loosening its grip, Stetson said, she decided this is the time to stop dreaming and act.

Fitzgerald, Stetson’s partner in the business and in life, is originally from Buffalo, New York, and has been a Valley resident for twenty years. He has worked in local restaurants and learned the trade from the ground up, from washing dishes to bartending to cooking. He has been a fitness trainer, a cycling coach, and a sales manager, and a safety and security officer at Deerfield Acade-

my. He also works as a part-time police officer in Deerfield, where he’s been a member of the department for six months.

The pair hope to open the new restaurant in January. In the beginning, Watershed will probably be open for part of the week, but once they are fully staffed and people want to eat outside, they plan to be open seven days a week.

Stetson and Fitzgerald say their physical changes to the restaurant will not be dramatic. Hues of sapphire blue – Stetson’s birthstone – will be added, and they may also rearrange some of the furnishings. Those plans are not specific at the moment.

Inspired by the monthly Soup and Games night at Hope & Olive in Greenfield, Fitzgerald said that he and Stetson will look for community-building opportunities. “All staff members will be vaccinated and masked if necessary,” he added. “Coming out of the pandemic, we want people to feel safe.”

On Monday night the selectboard had no trouble approving the transfer of the liquor license from the Alvah Stone to Watershed, sending it on to the state, and offering to expedite the process

if there’s any delay. Attempts to reach Bookmill complex co-owner Wendy Beaubien for comment were unsuccessful as of press time.

“There are so many memorable moments it’s really hard to single them out,” Wein told the *Reporter*, looking back on the past eight years, “but I think recognizing the staff and the team for their hard work is certainly one of them.”

Wein said he was delighted that Hampshire College – he’s an alum, as is his wife, and he is a former trustee – chose the Alvah Stone to cater a kickoff event for its recent 50th anniversary celebration. The restaurant was named the best small town restaurant in Massachusetts in the online publication *Thrillist*. He recalled collaborations with the Western Massachusetts Food Bank and CISA, and events at the restaurant featuring figures ranging from US representative Jim McGovern to Dinosaur Jr. guitarist J. Mascis.

Wein said he is not leaving the area, and that selling the restaurant will free him up for other ventures – stay tuned for new developments. When asked if he had any advice for the new owners, Wein said, “They don’t need my advice. They are sharp and savvy people.”



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OP ED

Rep. Susannah Whipps: Move H.3456 Forward!

By BRIAN ZAYATZ

**WENDELL** – For roughly two years, I worked with volunteers and staff at the Pioneer Valley Workers Center to build a team of trained drivers and court observers to accompany undocumented community members to court dates and ICE check-ins.

This was a service requested by undocumented members of the PVWC for a number of reasons. First and most pressingly, because appearances in court often leave undocumented people extremely vulnerable to pickup by ICE, which can land otherwise law-abiding community members in deportation proceedings, in some cases splitting up families and sending people back to countries they hardly know.

More often than not, the people requesting our service had ended up in the court system in the first place after being caught driving without a license. It is currently

not possible, under Massachusetts law, for undocumented people to become licensed drivers.

Essentially, the law as it stands forces otherwise law-abiding community members to commit this low-level offense in order to survive: to go to work; to take kids to school or doctor’s appointments; and to access food and other necessities. To get caught is to enter a gauntlet of legal and bureaucratic hurdles that it takes a team of volunteers to navigate without messing up.

While getting detained by ICE in court was a constant threat, it occurred far less frequently than other injustices: the court not providing a translator, continuance to another date (resulting in more missed work and transportation hassles), or the charging of onerous fees for vehicle impoundment and court proceedings. A misstep at any point in the process could result in the issuance of an arrest warrant.

For those already on ICE’s ra-

dar, the challenges are even more daunting: check-ins as frequently as biweekly, which one is somehow supposed to get to without a car, during work hours – resulting in a loss of pay, and a loss of good standing at work.

Having personally attended dozens of these check-ins and court dates, and arranged accompaniment to hundreds more, it’s hard for me to conclude that current law is anything other than a cruel policy, of a kind with national-level “prevention by deterrence” strategies that drive border crossers to lethal desert crossings. Neither policy has anything to do with safety: just as deterrence does little to prevent crossings, but only makes them more dangerous, Massachusetts’ current license law does not prevent undocumented people from driving. Instead, it bars access to the two regulatory systems we have put in place to make driving safer: trained licensure, and au-

tomobile insurance.

It’s time Massachusetts gets its act together and moves past this archaic policy. The state legislature has failed to act for 15 years.

In that time, how many collisions have taken place because a driver was untrained? How many people have seen a driver flee a collision because they were unlicensed and uninsured? And most importantly, how many families have been separated over a victimless crime of survival?

I am calling on State Representative Susannah Whipps to recommend the Work and Family Mobility Act (H.3456) out of committee so it may be brought to a vote, and I urge my neighbors in Wendell, Gill, and Erving to do the same. It’s time Massachusetts joins the twelve other states that have passed similar legislation to put in place this common-sense policy with broad support.

*Brian Zayatz lives in Wendell.*

NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Single-Payer Healthcare; Two-Town Animal Control; Candle Baron Settlement; Conservation Agent Raise

By GEORGE BRACE

At their Tuesday meeting, the Leverett selectboard reacted positively to a presentation seeking their support for two single-payer healthcare bills being considered by the Massachusetts legislature. The board also discussed a variety of personnel matters, approved a bid to begin work on the renovation of the Wendell police station, and signed an agreement resolving a property tax appeal by the Kittredge estate.

Resident Anne Ferguson, representing the group Franklin County Continuing the Political Revolution, cited fairness, cost-cutting, efficiency, and the quality of healthcare as reasons for the board to support two single-payer bills in the state legislature. Ferguson projected the savings to the town in health care premiums to be \$287,000, or 60% of the town’s \$482,000 health insurance budget, if they were passed. She asked for a resolution of support, and the scheduling of a town forum on the subject.

Ferguson began by saying that while she felt Massachusetts was one of the fairer states regarding health insurance, many residents are uninsured or delay treatment for financial reasons, and the state should adopt universal coverage to take care of these people. The bills would also cover eye care, dental care, and other services not currently covered by many plans, and she argued that single-payer would promote timely treatment, which provides both health and cost benefits.

Ferguson said further savings would come from decreasing insurer profits, and reducing administrative expenses from 18% to 20% percent of health insurance costs down to 2%. She cited the example of the country of Norway, whose population is similar to that of Massachusetts, whose single-payer system is running at a 2% rate for administrative costs. She pointed to the requirement for pre-authorization of many services as an aspect of the current system that both adds administrative costs and leads to inferior care.

Board member Melissa Colbert, a medical doctor, said she had attended a meeting on the subject the previous day and saw the potential administrative savings as “quite compelling,” but noted “concerns on all sides of the table.” Colbert said she was in favor of a town forum to learn more.

Ferguson suggested the possibility of a joint forum with Montague or other area towns, to which chair Julie Shively replied that a joint forum with a smaller town might be a better fit.

Tom Hankinson, the board’s third member,

said he was “certainly in favor” of the effort, and asked about the timing requested of the board’s support.

Ferguson said she was unsure when the bills might come to the floor, but added that they had 72 co-sponsors in the legislature, and the board and town’s support would help move them forward.

Police Department

The board approved a request from police chief Scott Minkler to reinstate the position of police sergeant, which was eliminated when he was promoted from sergeant to chief several years ago. Minckler was not present at the meeting, but the board reported that there was a need to have someone who was able to step into the chief’s role if he was unable to perform the duties due to vacation or unforeseen circumstances. Shively said the department did not have an experienced officer to fill the position when Minckler was promoted, but that Minckler felt there was a candidate now, and would be making a recommendation.

The cost to the town was reported to be approximately \$3,600 next fiscal year. Minckler offered to make the position probationary with no cost for the remainder of this fiscal year, giving the town the opportunity to vote on the matter at town meeting in April.

Shively and Hankinson voted in favor of the measure, while first-term board member Colbert abstained, saying she did not have enough familiarity with the matter to make a decision.

Officer Megan Gallo suggested looking into including the position of animal control officer in the joint-policing agreement currently being pursued by Leverett and Wendell.

Gallo is the dog officer in Wendell, and shares the position in Leverett with Roberta Bryant. She said that many towns incorporate dog officer responsibilities within the police department, and that the move would lead to improved record-keeping, cost savings, and greater efficiency.

Gallo said she liked the job currently, and the suggestion was not a personal money issue, but based on wanting to see the job get “squared away.” She said the idea occurred to her when reviewing the available historical data on calls.

Shively said she would like to get through the signing of the intermunicipal policing agreement with Wendell before taking the matter up, but that the board would “figure out a way to move.”

The board awarded a contract for excavation at the Wendell police station, hoping that renovations could get underway “before the snow flies.”

Bids on all but one component of the project came in within projections, but a single bid for carpentry work came in much higher than budgeted for, at \$53,000 versus the \$13,000 that had been estimated. The board postponed awarding that contract, and others in the project, noting that Wendell is considering breaking the carpentry component into smaller contracts and putting it back out to bid.

Fire Department

Fire chief Brian Cook requested the board roll the position of emergency management director into the job description of fire chief and make the position full-time, increasing the pay from approximately \$57,000 to \$73,000, plus benefits. As part of the change, the deputy chief’s pay would be reduced, resulting in a net increase of approximately \$13,000 to the department budget, plus an additional \$5,000 to \$20,000 in full-time benefits.

Hankinson noted that the emergency management position was probably underpaid currently, which would ameliorate the increase in pay for a combined position, but said he felt it was still a big jump.

The selectboard asked Cook to provide more information as to the reasoning behind his requests, and will have the finance committee look at the move before making a decision.

Other Business

The board signed an agreement accepting the settlement of the appeals of four years of property tax evaluations by the Kittredge estate. The agreement would return a total of \$40,000 to the estate.

Shively expressed disappointment in the agreement, saying that everyone else pays, and that the reduction would mean less money for town services.

After checking that it did not interfere with school vacation, the board set April 29 as the date of annual town meeting, and announced they would meet jointly with the finance committee at the next selectboard meeting to hear draft budget guidance.

The board appointed Judi Fonsh to fill a vacancy on the Council on Aging.

The board also approved a recommendation from the personnel committee that the hours and pay for the conservation agent be changed from five hours per week at \$17 per hour to eight hours at \$20 per hour, saying that the costs were covered, agreeing that the increase was necessary to get a qualified person to fill the currently vacant position.

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**GREENHOUSE** from page A1  
Master Gardener, and has been teaching kids about nature and plants for a number of years. Dawn worked with the late former principal of the Montague Center School, Anna Garbiel, on a nature and learning program as well as other kid-centered learning projects, and has been active with the Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls.

One day ten years ago at work, she was approached by a few folks wanting to talk to her about a project they had in mind for the Leverett Elementary School. Would she be interested in starting a greenhouse learning effort to enhance kids’ understanding of growing food and interactions with nature? Well, she responded yes, so she started the program ten years ago and never left. “I was in the right place at the right time,” she remarks.

Now, ten years later, there are 13 growing beds and a couple of tables in the greenhouse. Here, the students have four beds for greens where Dawn says they “plant, harvest, and carry the greens to the cafeteria” for a salad bar that has been modified to COVID specifications. The kids grow vegetables, edible flowers, and even cotton, flax, and milkweed to learn about plants that become fiber and cordage. And there is also an outside garden for more planting and growing, a fairy garden, and plants for pollinators.

**Hands-On Curriculum**

Learning about interactions with nature inside and outside the greenhouse is part of the curriculum. Dawn said she works with teachers and tries to follow the Massachusetts state standards, and that the program activities “greatly enhance the school curriculum.”

Students learn about the water cycle and about the insects and other critters that live in or visit the

gardens or the compost pile. The compost pile has become a favorite place for the kids to explore. “They love to dig through the pile and see what turns up,” says Dawn.

Even the “pests” can be a learning experience. A rabbit built a nest in the greenhouse, and rather than chase it out, the group built walls around the beds until mom and babies departed. The beds are kept organically; Dawn has encouraged the kids to devise methods of keeping damage to a minimum, and “we are willing to sacrifice some plants to see what methods work, or to understand the pests’ life cycles,” explains Dawn. “The kids even got a big blow-up owl and plastic snakes to scare off pests. So they are learning some Integrated Pest Management methods hands-on.”

Next to the greenhouse is a seasonal vernal pool that offers other opportunities to learn about nature. Dawn talked about the little miracles they find. “We go frogging, looking at the frog eggs as they develop and look for salamanders as well.” The kids came upon a larval stage dragonfly which Dawn says “are kind of creepy-looking, and one young boy was a bit afraid when the larva split open and the new dragonfly emerged.”

Dawn put the dragonfly, its wings still too wet to fly, in the boy’s shaking hands, and within a few minutes the dragonfly was on his arm and then his shoulder. By that night, she says, “the boy was proudly bragging to his parents that he helped a dragonfly get born.”

“Exploring and calling it playing, and teaching respect through knowledge and understanding of the life cycles” of plant and animal life, are Dawn’s stated goals. “Science and nature with children is wonderful,” Dawn says.

Many nature-related arts and crafts are offered, including making seed mosaics and using

photosensitive paper which makes paper prints when left out in the sun. I told Dawn about photosensitive fabric, which is fun to use and more permanent than paper. The kids have also made nature-related flags and painted stepping stones.

The program has been popular, and about five years ago it was decided that the greenhouse and its activities could be part of recess. Despite some initial doubts about whether that should be considered recess, it has become very popular with “25 or 30 kids who come running when they are let out for recess,” Dawn happily says.

The greenhouse was used last winter during a difficult time for all schools. Its sides were rolled up and kids were separated by the garden beds so they could use that as a classroom. There were winter botany walks identifying the bare branches and seed heads of plants. The greenhouse, stream, meadow, and woods became a wonderful – although often cold – outdoor classroom.

**Sustaining Efforts**

The program is not funded through the Leverett School and has survived on grants and donations. “The Greenfield Garden Club was my best friend,” states Dawn, until COVID-19 shut down their grant program. She is not a town employee, and has provided a large part of the many arts and crafts supplies on her own.

She now gets a volunteer stipend, and a new development has changed the outlook for the program from now into the future. Responding to the added costs of the school’s adaptation to COVID, a group of four Leverett folks, headed by Steve Weiss, started the Leverett Education Foundation in order to raise funds for various projects. The Greenhouse and Nature program’s biggest expense has been the arts

and crafts supplies, but soon there will be other expenses.

Dawn explains that these include “replacing the ten-year-old plastic and other repairs to the greenhouse.” She has a wish list of needed items, including “a storage shed, picnic tables, and always, more art supplies.” An open house was held last Saturday, where folks dropped in to see and feel how the whole program works.

The greenhouse complex is considered a community garden, and the public is encouraged to enjoy it respectfully. The Foundation will be responsible for the ongoing program in the future, and hopefully it will grow and flourish.

It would be wonderful if other

schools could develop similar programs, but it takes at least one very dedicated person to get it going, and the support of a community. Resources, financial and other, are hard to come by these days, but hopefully perhaps some seeds can be planted by the example at the Leverett School. Dawn exclaims “I love what I do!,” and many of us would love to be able to say that!

*The Leverett Education Foundation has a website where donations can be made, at leveretteducationfoundation.org. The organization’s current campaign is the LES Greenhouse Fund.*



*Dawn Marvin Ward leads a nature walk along trails near the school greenhouse.*

**NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD**

# Kennel Extension; Dispensary Hearing; A Mind-Boggling Liability

By **JERRI HIGGINS**

The Gill selectboard met Monday evening to hear updates on a nuisance dog issue, a community meeting for a proposed recreational cannabis shop, and a report on the town’s retirement liabilities, among other business.

Town administrator Ray Purington told the selectboard that animal control officer Kyle Dragon recommended a November 1 deadline for the construction of a kennel at a 91 Main Road residence. An earlier compliance date was not met due to extenuating circumstances for the resident.

The nuisance dog in question had been fostered by relatives of the Main Road resident since July, while two other dogs at the property, one licensed and one unlicensed, were taken to the regional dog shelter. The dogs remained several weeks beyond the shelter’s seven-day limit, were determined by the shelter to not be suitable for adoption, and were euthanized.

Selectboard chair Greg Snedeker asked Purington to contact the fostering family to see if they could permanently adopt the surviving dog if the resident does not comply with the kennel order.

“It seemed like the extended family was doing a great job with the dog, but I do not know if that is an option,” said Snedeker, “as opposed to us taking over and sending the dog to a shelter. The family may want that better than a shelter option.”

**Leaf Joy Meeting**

A community outreach meeting for Leaf Joy, a company proposing to open a recre-

ational marijuana shop in Gill, will be held at 5 p.m on November 8 over the Zoom video platform. The meeting link can be accessed through the town website.

The company has proposed purchasing and renovating the former Green River Powersports building at the intersection of Main Road and Route 2 to house a dispensary business.

Purington told the board members that pushing the November 8 selectboard meeting from its regular 5:30 p.m. start to 6 p.m. instead should give enough time for attendance at both meetings. “I would think that a lot of the general questions have already been asked and answered,” said Snedeker about the Leaf Joy community meeting. “It is not like these are brand new anymore.”

**OPEB Valuation**

Town treasurer Peter Turban updated the selectboard on a valuation report the town received last week, conducted by Odyssey Advisors of Colchester, Connecticut, about its “other post-employment benefits” (OPEB) liabilities.

“The report came back at 10.8% funded,” Turban told the selectboard. “We have about \$89,000 in our OPEB [account], and Odyssey said our liabilities are \$862,000.”

Purington said that the report showed that Gill is “consistent with other towns our size for percent funded.”

Turban said Gill could continue budgeting \$13,738 toward the fund annually as it has for “the last couple of years,” or the selectboard and finance committee could decide to

increase that contribution during “budget season” in December or January.

Selectboard member Charles Garbiel expressed amazement at Odyssey’s projection of the town’s OPEB liability by 2051 – over \$3,000,000 – while Snedeker remarked that passage of a “Medicare-for-All” federal bill “would take care of a lot of this.”

Purington also noted that the town’s reported investment gain of \$12,906 on the account was nearly as much money as the town contributed for one year.

“That was as of June 30,” said Turban. “It dropped a little when the stock market went down, but the person I talked to last week said most of that has been recovered. I have not gotten the October statements yet, so we will see, but this says we made a 23.9% return on OPEB investments.”

“That is a good performance,” said Garbiel.

**Risk Management**

Purington told the selectboard that the town’s application for a \$10,000 grant from the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association for risk-management expenses was not complete, but that he wanted to present “ideas that we have, so we can apply for as close to that \$10,000 maximum that we can get” by the November 5 deadline.

Proposed items include a replacement police body camera; step ladders for various town departments; anti-fatigue mats for use at the highway building; a 30- to 40-foot slip-resistant mat to go down the length of town hall from the front to the back door; temperature alarms to warn if a building is getting toward

freezing conditions; and moisture detection notification equipment – “primarily for town hall, where there are two sump pumps in the basement and we want to be alerted if the sump pumps stop working,” said Purington.

He said that the highway department had requested back-up cameras for their 2009 International dump truck, front-end loader, and backhoe, as well as load-rated hoisting chains.

Snedeker said that he would defer to the department heads for their highest priorities to go on the grant request.

**Other Business**

An LED lighting conversion project for the town hall and the safety complex was unanimously approved, with a spending limit of \$2,500 for the safety complex.

The town hall project is “100% utility-incentivized,” Purington said, but a June report on the safety complex project would have cost the town \$4,000 out of a projected \$4,900 cost. Purington said he was working with fin com chair Claire Chang and a consultant to resubmit the safety complex report to Eversource.

“That was an underwhelming number of incentives [offered by Eversource],” said Purington. “We are hoping to get back something more like the town hall. If it is not fully funded, we hope it will be at least significantly funded.”

A free paper-shredding event will be held at the Erving Senior Center from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, October 30, and a children’s Halloween celebration will start at 4 p.m. on the same day at the Slate Memorial Library.

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# High School Sports Update

By MATT ROBINSON

**TURNERS FALLS** – This week the Pioneer Valley Interscholastic Athletic Conference kicked off its Western Mass Tourney with five teams from Franklin Tech and Turners Falls competing. The tournament is slated to conclude this week right before the MIAA state tournament begins. According to the Conference website, they created the tournament “to keep traditions alive.”

The five local teams that made the tournament this year were the Turners Falls volleyball and field hockey teams and the Franklin Tech volleyball, field hockey, and boys’ soccer teams.

Also this week, the first major storm of the season blew across the region, affecting millions of people and disrupting countless outdoor activities. Closer to home, the Franklin Tech Blue Eagles fell to the Palmer Panthers by almost 50 points, which wasn’t the biggest rout of the week.

**Volleyball**

*TFHS 3 – Mohawk 0  
Easthampton 3 – FCTS 0*

On Tuesday, the third-ranked Turners Falls Volleyball Thunder, ranked third in Class D, rolled to a 3-0 win over the sixth-seeded Mohawk Warriors in the first round of the PVIAC Western Mass Tourney. The game wasn’t a cakewalk,

by any means: the Warriors came out to play. There were long volleys throughout the night, with players on both sides of the net making point-saving digs and rejecting spikes.

The first set was even through mid-game, and then Powertown pulled away and turned a 12-9 nail biter into a 19-10 route. Although the Warriors managed to stuff a kill attempt late in the match, Turners held on to win 25-12.

Coach Kelly Liimatainen started some of her subs in the second set, but Turners still jumped out to a 6-1 early lead and then expanded the margin to 13-4. Mohawk didn’t throw in the towel. Using heroic dives and desperation hits, they kept the deficit at 9 points, until the End-game when Turners scored 4 straight points to take the second set 25-12.

With Turners up 2 sets to 0, fans of both schools got louder. And in the row behind me, two little toddlers tried to start a “Let’s go Turners, *clap, clap*” chant.

Mohawk went into desperation mode in the third set, but faulty serves and miscommunication dogged them as Turners slowly built up their lead. With the score 22-10, Mohawk rejected two Turners kill attempts, but by then it was too late, and Turners held on to win 25-14.

The Powertown ladies head up Route 2 this Thursday to take on the second-seeded Mount Grey-

lock Mounties.

In Class C, seventh-ranked Franklin Tech traveled to second-seed Easthampton, and lost 3-0. I wasn’t able to go to the match because of a scheduling conflict, but I can give you the scores.

After dropping the first two sets 25-9, 25-18, Tech came back in the third. Eastie was not able to put the Eagles away in regulation, so they played on. Finally, with the score 26-26, Easthampton scored two consecutive points to take the third set 28-26.

**Field Hockey**  
*FCTS 3 – TFHS 1*

A nor’easter hit the eastern seaboard on Tuesday, causing New York and New Jersey to declare states of emergency. In Massachusetts, 500,000 people lost power, boats were thrown ashore, a plane was picked up and dropped onto a street, and at Cohasset High School, their football press box was knocked over and deposited onto the parking lot.

Out here in western Mass, we got drenched, but we didn’t get any hurricane-force winds. While the volleyball games went on as scheduled, field hockey games were postponed. So, Tuesday’s dustup between top-seeded Franklin Tech and number-4 Turners Falls was delayed until Wednesday.

Wednesday’s game was a wind-blown, hard fought 3-1 win by Tech. The Eagles travel to neutral Holyoke this Thursday to take on Pioneer in the Class C finals.

**Boys’ Soccer**  
*Mount Greylock 9 – FCTS 0*

On Monday, Mount Greylock’s fifth-seeded boys’ soccer team came to Franklin Tech, and shut them out 9-0. Not much to say about this one. Except, it’s just a game.

**Football**  
*Palmer 56 – FCTS 8*

Last Friday, October 22, the visiting Palmer Panthers trounced the Franklin Tech Football Eagles 56-8. This 50-ish point spread is a bit uncommon in football, but not unheard of. In fact, UMass lost 59-3 the very next day, and on Sunday, the New England Patriots routed the Jets 54-13.

Friday’s lopsided score reminded some of the fans in attendance of similar results. On the sidelines, some of the old-timers spoke about



*Turners’ Emily Young finesses the ball over the net as Mohawk’s Octavia Cramford defends. Young notched 11 aces and four kills in the three-set victory over the Mohawk Warriors in the Western Mass Class D semifinal at Turners Falls High School. Also on the court: Turners’ Tatiana Carr-Williams, with three kills in the contest.*

Turners Falls’ 48-0 win in 1976 and their 58-8 victory in ‘71. One of those spectators, Doug McCloud, spoke about accidentally beating a team by more than 60 points because his JV kept scoring.

Coach McCloud, who coached the Mohawk Trail/Turners Falls hybrid football team in 2019, still attends Franklin Tech and Greenfield games. McCloud now coaches the younger kids at Mohawk, and comes to the games to watch his former players compete for other high schools.

“I’ll never coach another varsity team,” he lamented during a lull. “We just don’t have enough boys in the high school.”

In last Friday’s game, Palmer went up 21-0 after just two offensive plays. Tech fumbled on their first down, and Palmer ran a screen to go up 7-0; they then blocked a Tech punt, and one play later were up 14-zip.

And the Panthers didn’t need an offensive play to score their next TD – they returned Tech’s next punt all the way, and took a 21-0 lead with more than seven minutes left in the first quarter.

The Eagles made a game of it on their next drive. Logan Call re-

turned the kickoff 70 yards to set up Tech’s only score. On third and 3, Max Bastarache hit pay dirt and Ryan Demers added the 2-PAT. With 5:46 left in the first, the score was 21-8.

But that’s all she wrote, for Tech at least. Before the whistle mercifully blew to end the quarter the Cats had scored two more touchdowns to take a 35-8 lead.

“It’s only the first quarter?” one of the dads remarked. “It feels like the third quarter!”

As the game progressed, Palmer kept piling on the points. In the second quarter, leading 48-8, they decided to go for the 2-PAT, running the score up to 50-8. And the Panthers scored one more touchdown in the mercy-shortened second half. They went for 2 again, but were stopped by Tech’s goal line defense, and had to settle for 56 points.

But even as Palmer ran up the score, the Tech faithful never lost their voices, and very few left before the final whistle. I think they stayed because the players on Tech’s 50-something roster all needed rides home after the game.

Franklin’s next game is on the road against the Athol Red Bears.



*Turners Falls’ Kailey Steiner maneuvers around Mahar defenders as the Thunder earned a 3-2 win at the Woodward Complex in Orange last Wednesday, October 20.*

**UNION** from page A1

chair Bera Dunau. “We can always reach a compromise, but fundamentally we want to see better wages for our workers, and we want to see job security.”

For over two years, the “wall-to-wall” union representing non-managerial workers at the *Gazette* has been negotiating its first contract with NNE. The NewsGuild was formalized by a 40-29 vote in December 2018. According to members, the company has so far resisted clauses protecting against outsourcing and ensuring scheduled cost-of-living increases.

“I know the NewsGuild’s statements in recent days have caused unnecessary concern among some of our readers,” Shawn Palmer, publisher of NNE’s Massachusetts newspapers, told the *Reporter*. “We have no plans to eliminate any positions. We have, in fact, hired several employees in the last few months.”

Since at least 2018, NNE has been outsourcing various aspects of the *Gazette*’s production to the nation’s largest publisher of daily newspapers, Gannett Co., Inc. Four jobs were lost in June of 2018 from the graphics and layout departments.

In July 2020 the paper closed its on-site printing press, laying off 29 workers and outsourcing the work to Gannett. (The *Montague Reporter*, formerly printed by the *Gazette* at Northampton, has been printed in Springfield since that time. The *Reporter* is owned by an independent nonprofit.) Multiple rounds of layoffs and the shuttering of the Athol headquarters of the *Athol Daily News* have also taken place in recent years.

The company has also seen major changes in leadership. The editor-in-chief position at the *Gazette* was eliminated last year and absorbed into a regional editor position held

by Joan Livingston, who was already editor-in-chief at the *Greenfield Recorder* and *Athol Daily News*. Last month Livingston announced she will be retiring in January, and a successor has yet to be publicly named.

NNE also announced in the *Concord Monitor* in May that president and CEO Aaron Julien was moving into the role of chairman, and that Chuck Goodrich would assume his responsibilities. Palmer, who himself began in his role as publisher of the company’s Massachusetts newspapers earlier this year, did not respond to questions about Goodrich’s new role.

About 20 NewsGuild members remain employed at the *Gazette* right now, according to Dunau. While NNE is currently hiring for more reporters, two reporter positions are still vacant, according to union members. Five staff writers and one photographer are

currently listed in the newspaper’s directory.

“[A]ll of the extra work NNE has foisted on us over these months, and all of the invisible work we do to paper over the holes NNE has created. That work is about to become much more visible to NNE,” the union wrote in Monday’s email.

“The company is not threatening to outsource these jobs – they merely want the ability to outsource [copy-editing and layout] under the new contract,” Dunau clarified to the *Reporter*. “The fact of the matter is, though, that we have seen over the course of the pandemic that work has been outsourced.... We’ve been cut to the bone, and we do not want a framework that would allow for further cuts of that nature.”

*Mike Jackson contributed additional reporting to this article.*

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NOTES FROM THE GILL-MONTAGUE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

# Goals Approved; Salad Restored

By MIKE JACKSON

**GILL-MONTAGUE** – A quorum of the regional school committee met Tuesday night via Zoom to discuss regular annual business, approving an annual improvement plan at the high school and middle school, district superintendent Brian Beck’s annual goals, and the “indicators” they will use to evaluate Beck’s annual performance.

Beck reported that the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education recently extended its school mask mandate until January 15, but provides an “off-ramp” for well-vaccinated districts, given that children ages 5 to 11 will soon become eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine.

Under the new rules, districts that can show 80% or more of their student and staff population is fully vaccinated can apply for permission to allow the vaccinated to go maskless, which poses a conundrum for Gill-Montague. “We’re not requiring staff to get vaccinated,” Beck told the committee, “and can’t require staff to report vaccine status.”

Beck said the district’s Pandemic Response Advisory Committee would discuss the matter, and the bridge to the mask off-ramp may be crossed at a later date.

He also reported that the food services department is making strides in the face of supply chain disruption. At Turners Falls High School, where administrators are still meeting with concerned students over the issue, Beck said lunch portion sizes have increased and salad has

been reintroduced. Beck asked that families be patient with menu alterations: “While we have backup plans, the menus may not be able to be consistent,” he said. “We’re behind by two orders currently.”

Student representative Syna Katsoulis reported on a very successful outdoor Homecoming dance, featuring a photo booth and a heater, and her praise for the event was echoed by Beck and high school principal Christopher Barnes.

“I really should have included the Homecoming on this one,” Barnes joked as a slide on Goal 2, on improving family and student engagement, came up in his presentation on the school improvement plan. The first of two planned surveys to families and students will go out next month. Other approved goals include scaffolding students up to grade-level instruction, supporting social and emotional learning and an inclusive and equitable school environment, and monitoring the impact of instruction on learning.

Beck’s goals, also approved, were very similar, but included increasing opportunities for student learning beyond the classroom. He told the committee that the teachers’ union contract covers stipends for after-school activities that are not currently offered, and suggested he might meet with union leaders to redirect that staff time toward new clubs, teams, or internship opportunities.

Director of teaching and learning Jeanne Powers shared data from iReady, software the district is using internally to assess learning. 16%

of Gill-Montague students assessed this semester are at or above grade level in math, and 29% at or above grade level in reading, though they tested extremely well in phonological awareness.

Powers said the district is using the data to focus on “specific student groups,” correlating it with other data to make targeted interventions. iReady has been in use at the elementary level, but the district has recently introduced it at the middle and high schools.

The six-town regional planning committee, convened to study the possible pros and cons of a larger district comprising Gill, Montague, Bernardston, Leyden, Northfield, and Warwick, continues to meet; two bids have come in to provide facilitation, which involves communicating what it has found so far to the public, and seeking public input.

Beck said he had recently attended a meeting, and his “impatience” with the group was tempered when he realized “the need for the board to communicate the information thoughtfully,” lest the public feel the proposal was “something being forced down people’s throats.”

“Maybe it’s just a tortoise race, I’m not sure,” agreed Bill Tomb, who represents Gill on both the Gill-Montague school committee and six-town planning committee.

The former will hold its next regular meeting Tuesday, November 9, followed by a working meeting on November 16 to continue to discuss its own goals for the year. Both are open to the public, and will continue to take place via Zoom.

# 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.*

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

# Winter Parking Ban Starts December 1

**MONTAGUE** – A winter parking ban will be in effect on all Montague streets December 2021 through April 1, 2022 from 1 a.m. to 5 a.m. Overnight parking is allowed in municipal lots without the need for a permit.

A limited supply of on-street winter parking permits will be available starting November 1 for parking on L Street (between Fifth and Prospect streets), Prospect Street (between L and Chestnut streets),

and Ninth Street (between L and K streets).

The cost of the on-street winter parking permit is \$25 and can be purchased at Montague Town Hall, 1 Avenue A, during regular business hours. The on-street winter parking permit does not cover commercial vehicles. For a municipal parking map, winter on-street parking rules, and permit application visit: [montague-ma.gov/p/403/Public-Parking](http://montague-ma.gov/p/403/Public-Parking).

SKELETON from page B1

Ten Turners students join the crew this weekend, when Skeleton Crew will perform three 80-minute shows each night, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, a grueling crescendo of months of hard work.

“It’s a very family-friendly event,” says Jayden Hosmer, a Turners Falls senior who got involved this year after taking a film-making class with Chappell. “It’s interactive, too. I wasn’t involved in any of the writing portions, but I did help come up with some of the puzzles.”

Hosmer, who has never performed on stage before, will play a wizard. Last Saturday he roamed the crowds on Avenue A during the Great Falls Festival in a robe and wizard’s hat, conjuring up interest in the show. This type of street promotion has been a trademark of Skeleton Crew; its towering trolls, Burt, William, and Trent, have been regular sights over the years at Pumpkinfest, Mutton and Mead, Garlic and Arts, and wherever else they might startle the imagination.

“If you love handmade creatures and acting, then I suggest you come,” Hosmer advises. “We put a lot of work into this, and I hope people and see our talent.”

“It’s not scary at all,” he adds. “The more the audience puts into it, the more they get back out of it,” Jayne Finn explains. Finn was first lured into the Crew in 2008, when she was working as a behavioral interventionist at Turners Falls High School and Chappell was a first-year teacher.

“A whole bunch of us at the

high school fell in love with it,” she remembers. “There wasn’t a lot of theater going on there at the time, so a lot of kiddos started taking Chappell’s class, and all of a sudden it just blossomed. He could figure out the ones who were really interested.”

Thirteen years later, Finn is in the company’s inner circle – officially in marketing, but she also voices several characters. (“I’ve never been inside one of the trolls,” she tells me, “I’m too short.”)

And it has become a family affair. Finn’s daughter, Finn Bau, started out as a teenager, helping Chappell build the creatures; now she is a writer, director, and stage manager, and her own 12-year-old son is in the mix.

“I love the night of the show – I love that energy that comes up from it,” Bau says. “It’s stressful up until that point, and then once it’s on, everything goes away. It’s amazing.”

Bau, a dog trainer and kennel manager by day, touts the show’s interactive nature. “You’re allowed to be loud and obnoxious – that’s a lot of fun,” she says. “And people think people think it’s for kids, but it’s really not. It’s for adults too.”

“We give a lot of our spare time to this,” Bau adds with a rueful smile.

This year’s Halloween show is a milestone for Skeleton Crew, not only because the trolls are coming out of the woods and onto an official stage, but also because the company is coming out of a difficult period. In November 2017, a Gill barn caught fire and many years’ worth of handmade puppets,



*Skeleton Crew cast roamed the Great Falls Festival in costume last weekend to promote the run at the Shea.*

scenery, and other artwork was destroyed. 2018 and 2019 were spent fundraising and rebuilding, but April 2020 brought deeper tragedy with the death of Chappell’s father, Louis Chappell, of COVID-19.

“Lou really encouraged him to keep going, and was his sounding board for years,” Finn says. “It was devastating.”

Last fall’s annual show was held in private, in a backyard, a show

Finn says was “based around saying goodbye.”

“It turned out to be a really great, fun experience,” Chappell says of the invitation-only event.

The Chappell’s Auto Service shop is in full-time use by Skeleton Crew this year as a puppet workshop and rehearsal space. This fall the company performed in a barn at the Massachusetts Renaissance Faire in Cummington, and made

practice appearances at the Peskeomskut Park bandshell and the Franklin County Fair.

As the base of Skeleton Crew supporters and fans has grown over time – not to mention all the alumni for whom the project was “one of the fonder memories” of their high school years, as Chappell puts it – the buzz is on in the community for a triumphant, puzzling, and boisterous big-stage debut on Avenue A this weekend.

The show’s plot is based around a role-playing game, *The Greenwood Adventures*; “the boundary between fantasy and reality crumbles,” we are promised, followed by the boundary between performers and audience.

“Halloween isn’t just about haunted hayrides and movie slashers,” Chappell says. “It’s a time to celebrate creativity, and the changing of the seasons, and our show tries to portray that. Halloween was once magical; it’s gotten a lot more commercialized. We’re benefiting the high school kids, and it helps to keep the arts alive locally – our puppets and our creatures and our storylines are all original – so if you enjoy seasonal events and you want to get a Disney-like experience, come to Skeleton Crew Theater!”

Showtimes are at 4, 6, and 8 p.m. each night, and masks are required. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$7 for ages 12 and up, and \$5 for the young ones The Shea will be seated at limited capacity to allow for social distancing, but audiences are encouraged not to be shy.

JACKSON PHOTO

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CHANGE from page A1

had served. He slowly worked his way up through the ranks of the Turners Falls department, which now serves the villages of Turners Falls, Montague City, and Millers Falls, and became Turners Falls fire chief in August of 2016. Zellman also serves as the town’s emergency management director.

McCarthy’s path to the fire chief job was a bit more circuitous. He was born in the late 1970s, part of what is sometimes known affectionately as “Generation X,” and originally hails from Pearl River, New York, a “hamlet” just north of New Jersey. He attended Bryant College in Smithfield, Rhode Island, earning a degree in business, and worked in information technology for nine years in Connecticut.

We asked McCarthy how he made it to Turners Falls and its fire department. He said that his wife, who he had met in college, had grown up in Turners and wanted to return. While in Connecticut he had worked part-time for an ambulance service and “really enjoyed it.” This, along with the fact that his father had been a New York City police officer, pointed him in the direction of firefighting.

McCarthy initially served in the Gill fire department, but in 2005 joined the Turners Falls call force as a part-timer. He became a full-time firefighter in 2009, was promoted to captain in 2014 and to deputy fire



MIKE JACKSON PHOTO

John Zellman is retiring as the Turners Falls fire chief on November 15

chief two years ago.

We asked McCarthy if becoming a fire chief had long been one of his career goals. He said he had vaguely considered it a possibility, but

“always thought it would be far off. I really didn’t think it would happen so quickly.”

Two days ago, the Massachusetts Fire Service Commission is-

sued a statement saying that McCarthy had received state accreditation for the chief position. The announcement said the criteria for approval include “a minimum level of credits for education, training and experience.”

Both Zellman and McCarthy stressed the changes in the fire chief’s job over the past few decades. Both noted that fires burn hotter and more quickly these days, with homes and businesses often containing furniture and plastics made of highly flammable synthetic material. Similarly, the construction with lightweight building materials is “very vulnerable to heat and fire,” according to McCarthy.

Responding to large fires in the county requires coordination and training with other departments in the region. The chief’s duties also involve labor management and keeping up with the latest state regulations and inspections, although the latter is primarily the job of the deputy chief, according to both men.

Then there is the annual fire district budget process, which the chief oversees. McCarthy will need to navigate the idiosyncrasies of a “prudential” fire district, of which there are actually two in Montague. The other is the Montague Center volunteer district which includes Lake Pleasant.

Both districts are institutionally separate from the town itself, having their own oversight or pru-

dential committees, and their own budgets approved by spring annual meetings, which are open to all of the voters in each district.

To further complicate matters, the Turners Falls Fire District budget is integrated with that of the Turners Falls Water Department, which has its own oversight board and a different revenue source. (Fire services are funded primarily by a property tax, while the water department is financed by user fees.)

Zellman and McCarthy were hesitant to get into the perennial debate over why Montague should have two fire and water districts, none of which are connected to the broader town government. They both seemed satisfied with the level of collaboration and collegiality with their partners in Montague Center.

Zellman was confident about the future of the department under McCarthy. “Brian will do all right,” he said. “He’s younger, and this job is ever changing.”

As for his own future, Zellman says that he will continue to serve as the town’s emergency management director for the time being. “I’m not going anywhere,” he declared.

But he also said he looks forward to spending more time with his family – including his wife, kids, and grandchildren – after over 35 years with the department. “I’m not kidding about that,” he told the Reporter.



BUCKLAND from page A1

did not take any action about Hicks’ assault charge because “in this country, you’re innocent until proven guilty.”

“It was a lapse of judgment that will not happen again,” Turner said on Tuesday. “I am deeply sorry, and I can only promise to do better in the future.”

Hicks was arraigned in Northampton District Court on August 26, 2019 on one charge of indecent assault, stemming from an alleged 2018 incident in which he is accused of groping a woman at the police station. The Worcester County district attorney’s office is handling the prosecution of the charge, recommended by state police investigator. The Buckland selectboard held an executive session on August 27, 2019.

Hicks retired in September, and was hired a week later as an auxiliary officer; the *Greenfield Recorder* reports that he resigned from that position last week. The *Reporter* has interviewed a second woman who alleges Hicks made unwanted contact of a sexual nature with her several times while on the job, and while his first charge was already pending.

Neither Hicks nor his attorney has responded to an initial request for comment.

“Why didn’t the selectboard suspend the chief of police from duties that involve contact with the public?” Raymond Lanza-Weil asked on Tuesday. “And what is the town’s personnel policy regarding employees charged with any crime – and especially a police officer, the leader ostensibly?”

“Those of us here tonight have noticed how little you’ve done in the face of sexual assault, your apathy towards the issue,” Rutherford told the board. She pointed out that, after Hicks retired in September, no CORI background check was performed before the town rehired him as an auxiliary officer.

“I am so glad that he has resigned, but it was far too late,” she said. “You guys should have suspended him.”

Rutherford also pointed out that Jacob Wrisley, a Millers Falls man arrested in May on child pornography charges who had been working in Buckland as a reserve officer, was “likely hired by Hicks.”

“Again, swept under the rug,” she said. “The town of Buckland fostered an environment for sexual predatory crimes to flourish.” She criticized the selectboard for allowing Hicks to submit a “self-evaluation” during the town’s annual employee evaluations.

“Ignoring allegations of assault by men in power against women is part of the problem we have in the society,” said Carmela Lanza-Weil. “It is not okay anymore.... The selectboard needs to apologize to the citizens of Buckland for not taking action.”

In response to a question from the audience, Turner said the town’s current counsel is the law firm Kopelman & Paige.

A hearing on Hicks’s case is scheduled for this Friday at Northampton district court. According to Turner, the Buckland and Shelburne selectboards will discuss a shared-services police agreement in the coming weeks.



BUMMER NEWS

# Farewell to Hattapon

By REPORTER STAFF

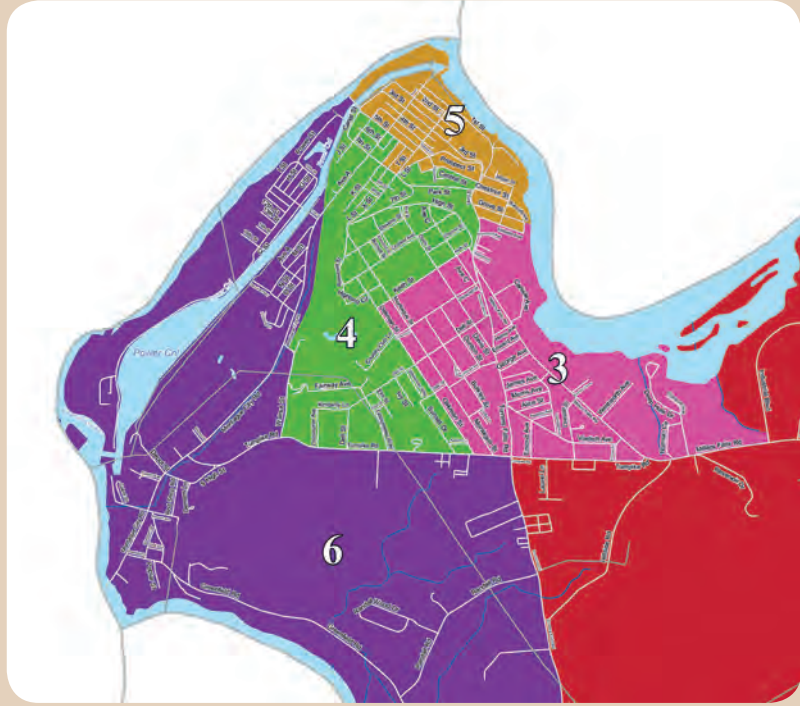
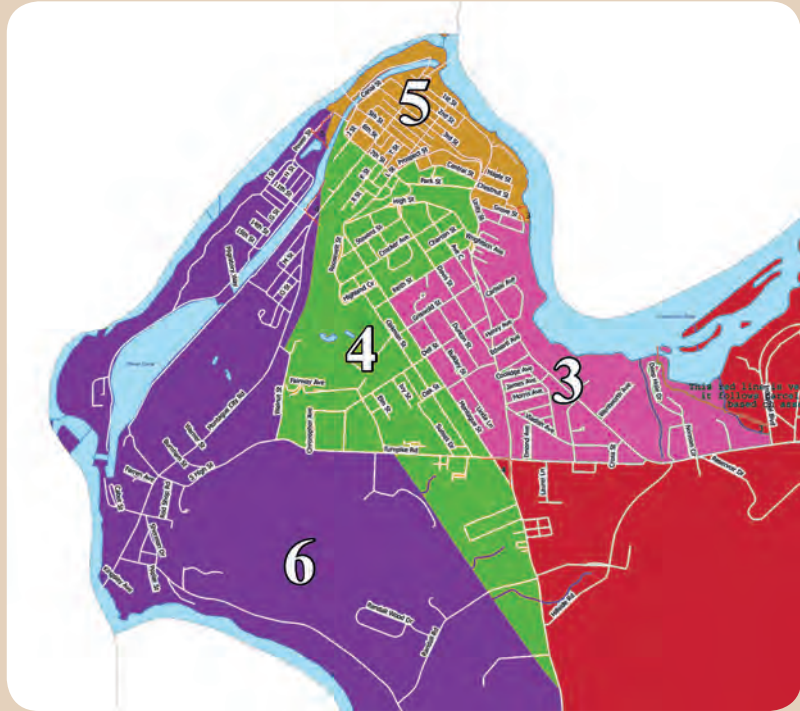
**TURNERS FALLS** – If you’ve been getting your fix of Hattapon’s Thai Kitchen at their food truck since the low-key best restaurant in Franklin County closed its doors last year, we’ve got some bad news. Owners Hattaporn Wattanarat and Beth Greeney are moving away. Last week’s appearance at the Great Falls Festival was the second-to-last time the truck will serve food locally.

Readers who are interested in getting one last taste – or bidding farewell – can catch them in the parking lot at Hitchcock Brewery, 203 South Street in Bernardston next Friday, November 5.



REPORTER STAFF PHOTO

## MINOR TWEAKS



This week the town of Montague approved a new voting precinct map (below), based on 2020 US Census data. The top map shows the precinct borders during the last decade. Precincts 1 and 2 remain essentially unchanged, but minor changes have been made downtown and on the Hill in Turners Falls: the blocks between Fifth and Seventh, Canal and L streets switched from Precinct 5 to Precinct 4; the blocks between Grove Street and Hillside Avenue from 3 to 5; a strip between Montague and Oakman streets from 3 to 4; and an area south of Turnpike Road and west of Turners Falls Road from 4 to 6.

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## MUSIC & MOVIES



**MONTAGUE** from page A1

change of vendor would need to be “wrapped up” by December “to provide reasonable notice.”

“If you had asked me about this three or four weeks ago, when they missed my pickup two out of three weeks,” said chair Rich Kuklewicz, “I might have had a different thought. But I think all communities have had a difficult time with collection, not just those with Republic Services.”

“Well, after my trash was missed last Friday and two types of recycling that I took over to the transfer station,” said board member Chris Boutwell, “and this has happened umpteenth times... I think you know how I feel.”

On the other hand, member Matt Lord said he did “not have an appetite to bid this out at this point... I’m just not convinced we’re going to get something better in terms of service or price.” After ten minutes or more of discussion the board decided, without a formal vote, not to seek a new contract.

**Sludge Study**

Water pollution control facility (WPCF) superintendent Chelsey Little gave a lengthy presentation about a proposal to study an expansion of the facility’s composting capacity. “Sludge disposal options,” she explained, are becoming scarce, and the cost is rapidly rising. The facility is currently sending its “sludge cake” to Rhode Island for incineration.

Little asked the board to endorse a \$35,000 contract with Stantec Consulting Services for the study, which will look at issues ranging from compost location to odor control to the potential to accept sludge from other towns for revenue. \$18,500 has already been allocated by town meeting, and \$16,500 will be contributed by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments.

The board informally endorsed a preliminary contract, pending review by Stantec’s legal counsel.

**New Map**

The discussion of local precinct changes proposed by the state in response to the 2020 US Census was brief; town clerk Deb Bourbeau told the board that “they’re not changing all that much.”

She said that Precinct 3, which is primarily on “top of the hill” in the southeast of Turners Falls, would add population by expanding in the direction of Oakman Street. Precinct 4, to the south and west, would expand into Precinct 5, gaining Sixth and Seventh streets downtown. Finally, a portion of Precinct 4 along Turners Falls Road would join Precinct 6 to the west.

The board voted to accept the proposal.

**Old Poles**

Two officials from the electric company Eversource made one of their now-frequent appearances to explain the large number of old telephone poles standing next to their new replacements for long periods. Eversource says the problem is caused by the failure of other pole users, Comcast and Verizon, to transfer their lines to the new poles in a timely manner, but the selectboard has expressed the belief that Eversource should more aggressively address the problem.

The conversation began on a familiar note, as Kuklewicz told Ever-

source officials Michael Kane and Anna Raby that he appreciated the line upgrades taking place in town, but that the company had not followed through on its commitment to remove the old poles.

Raby, who said she was “speaking on behalf of the double poles,” announced that Eversource had found a “flaw” in its “conversion management system” and thus may not have informed Comcast and Verizon of the upgrades. “We are now going full force,” she said.

Kane told the board that the company had in fact “reached out” to Comcast, who had hired a contractor to move their lines.

Kuklewicz then asked the officials if they would produce a pole removal “timeline” with “milestones.” When the officials expressed doubts about this, Kuklewicz asked if they would return to the board in early December with a progress report. The officials responded in the affirmative.

**Large Buildings**

Town planner Walter Ramsey came before the board to ask that the town release a request for proposals (RFP) to sell the former public works building on Avenue A. He noted that the previous RFP had failed to generate a strong response because the town had not implemented a Phase II environmental study, but this study has now been completed and the site has a “clean bill of health.”

The board voted to issue an RFP with a “base price” of \$75,000, which had been recommended by the capital improvements committee.

Ramsey informed the board that the town was “in receipt of an interest” to purchase Building 11 of the Strathmore mill complex. The building is a free-standing structure which sits next to the former Southworth paper mill, currently owned by New Hampshire developer Tom Cusano. Cusano, it turns out, is the person expressing interest in Building 11, and “has a couple of tenants lined up.”

Ramsey said the sale and development of the building might encounter obstacles since it would require subdividing half an acre of land. “It’s gong to take a little deed and legal research, [but] that can be worked out,” he said. He asked the board whether he should “issue a solicitation” to potentially sell the building to Cusano or wait for more grant-funded planning for the area.

The board opted to begin a solicitation, which could allow Cusano to purchase the building through an RFP process. Ellis said the new owner would need to pay for extensive sewer connections to the new lines coming across the proposed new Fifth Street pedestrian bridge. “We’re not guaranteeing that anyone is going to get lines all the way down Canal Road,” he said.

**Other Business**

The board approved the transfer of a liquor license from the Alvah Stone restaurant, which is leaving its space in Montague Center’s Bookmill building, to the Watershed Restaurant, which is moving in. (*See article, page A1.*) The decision was made after a public hearing attended by Melissa Stetson and her partner James Fitzgerald from the Watershed and Alvah Stone owner Howard Wein.

“It’s always been my dream to own a restaurant,” said Stet-

son. “This whole COVID thing, strangely enough, spurred me to do it.” She said the Watershed would serve “comfort food, but upscale comfort food.” The license transfer could take a month to be approved by the state.

The board approved a memorandum of understanding with the Greenfield Community College (GCC) police department to assist in the investigation of certain crimes. Montague police chief Chris Williams said the MOU was mandated by state law, and probably applied to all the towns in Franklin County. He also said that GCC director of public safety Alex Wiltz was taking a job in Pennsylvania, and wanted to get all his “ducks in a row” before he left.

Town treasurer Eileen Seymour reviewed the future issuing and retirement of bonds for a range of projects. She said she would be meeting with the rating firm Standard & Poor’s next week. “We have a double-A rating now,” she said. “We could go up, [but] I don’t anticipate us going down.”

Transforming itself into the “personnel board,” the Selectboard authorized a credit card for the new library director Caitlin Kelley, accepted the resignation of Laurie Reed from the conservation commission, appointed Margaux Reckard to the same commission, and appointed Gary Downer as a police dispatcher.

The board also “recognized” the retirement of library director Linda Hickman.

A request from Annabel Levine of the Great Falls Apple Corps for an entertainment permit to facilitate the October 31 cleanup at the Unity Park community garden was approved.

Ellis presented the board with an application for a “third-party roof inspection” grant from the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association. The board directed him to make the application, which would also include money for safety equipment for WPCF workers.

Ellis also announced that a state Community Compact grant for a wage study would not be forthcoming, so the study might require a town meeting appropriation.

At the request of Brian McHugh of the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority, the board disbursed \$15,357.11 to Sciaba Construction Corp and \$669.32 to Berkshire Design for work on the Spinner Park renovation.

The meeting began with quick review of local COVID-19 case counts by Ellis, filling in for public health director Daniel Wasiuk.

Ellis said that positive tests for the coronavirus had declined over the past month in both Montague and Franklin County. “We had a peak in our cases that brought us back to levels we hadn’t seen since last January, and there’s been a quick trailing off of that,” he said, showing a county timeline since the beginning of the pandemic.

The board held off on a discussion of the future of the mask mandates approved last month until it meets with the board of health next week.

The board then retired into an executive session to consider “the possible purchase, exchange, taking, lease or value of real property...” Its next meeting is scheduled for November 1.



**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)

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Brian Beck, Superintendent  
35 Crocker Ave  
Turners Falls, MA 01376

or [www.schoolspring.com](http://www.schoolspring.com)

**LOOKING BACK:  
10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK**

*Here’s the way it was on November 3, 2011: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.*

**Montague Police Chief  
Zukowski to Retire**

Through a letter to the selectboard on October 31, police chief Raymond Zukowski announced his upcoming retirement on November 26.

“I will miss all that is associated with being a police officer,” he wrote. “Especially the many wonderful people I had the opportunity to work and associate with over the past 36 years. These people, and the many memories, I will never forget.”

Members of the selectboard were clearly disappointed by the announcement, but with no actual say in the matter, they could only accept his retirement “with extreme regret.”

Pat Allen further stated that hiring Zukowski to be police chief in the beginning of 2006 “made a huge difference” in the whole tone of the police department, improving morale. She hoped Zukowski might continue to participate in the TRIAD project (through the Franklin County’s Sheriff’s Office) which helps keep seniors safe in the community, especially during widespread power outages like those experienced this week.

During Zukowski’s tenure as chief, in 2009 the police department was finally – after 40 years of studies – able to move from cramped quarters in the dark basement of town hall to the new, \$4 million police station adjoining the Turners Falls Fire Depart-

ment on Turnpike Road.

**Food City to Host  
Experimental Theater**

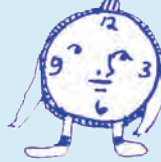
A truly unique theater experience is coming to an unlikely venue in downtown Turners Falls. On Saturday, November 12, Food City, Montague’s only supermarket, will stay open late not for food sales but for a one of a kind public performance written, produced and directed by a three-person modern theater company called The Missoula Oblongata.

The Missoula Oblongata is a collaborative, experimental theater group founded by (but not limited to) Madeline Fitch (Ohio), Donna Sellinger (Maryland), and Sarah Lowry (Pennsylvania).

Dedicated to transforming vastly diverse and large-scale creative challenges into original pieces of transportable theater, these performers are not your run-of-the-mill-town thespians. The group focuses on a unique collaborative writing technique they’ve developed to create plays in which the fantastic meets the mundane.

The inspiration for the performance piece is rooted in time-motion study, a theory used to analyze the efficiency of factory workers in the first part of the 20th century. The theory prescribed a set of 18 movements to minimize time lost at work.

The play takes place in Antarctica, features both a robot and a walrus, and promises to grapple with the big questions of life like: *Can inefficiency be cured?* and *What exactly does it take to get oneself on a postage stamp?*



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# THE 2021 GREAT FALLS FESTIVAL



Various food vendors set up along Avenue A, and many attracted long lines.

By mid-afternoon the crowd filled in the Ave from carts to carts and from the Discovery Center to Peske Park, just like in pre-pandemic times.

Festivalgoers dressed in Halloween costumes of all kinds. Joe, who said he did all his makeup himself, dressed as a "Jurassic Park employee who was attacked."

Students from Pizzazz Dance Studio performed on Fifth Street.

A group from Ja'Duke Theater performs the Mary Poppins song "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious."

PHOTOS BY GRACE JILLSON / SILVERLEAF PHOTOGRAPHY

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Amanda Gorman, *The Hill We Climb*

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*Above: The hard-shelled ornamental fruits of the season.*

# Welding a Family Tree

By NINA ROSSI

**TURNERS FALLS** – Metal sculptor Jon Bander of Turners Falls found that installing his found-object creations at Three Sisters Sanctuary in Goshen, MA led to close collaboration with Bruce Rosenbaum. Rosenbaum is a celebrated steampunk designer who works with a host of different fabricators on commissioned installations that go to clients worldwide through his Palmer-based company, ModVic.

(Steampunk, for those who haven’t heard the term, is a style that combines materials.)

Jon, who is also my son, creates sculptures from recycled gears, chains, pipes, tools, engine parts, and other industrial flotsam. His cutlery bird sculpture at Three Sisters caught Rosenbaum’s eye and the two have now collaborated fruitfully on several projects. These include a Jules Verne-inspired aquarium for a client based in Rome, Italy, which is now on display in a museum in California; a large dragon flying on the ceiling of one of the theme rooms at the Adventure Suites Hotel in North Conway, New Hampshire; and a Da Vinci-meets-Ada Lovelace-inspired “Ornijethopter” flying machine, poised on a ramp outside Rosenbaum’s “steampunk



*The tree’s roots are covered with saw blades, and topped with Washington’s signature.*

wonderland” in Palmer.

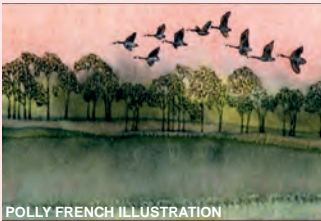
This wonderland home and gallery of Rosenbaum’s is a 19th-century church in Palmer’s Thordike section. Within the chapel are installations and sculptures by Rosenbaum and his wife Melanie representing the union of science, art, and history. (Visit his collection online at *Modvic.com*.)

Jon and Rosenbaum have hit it off, bonding over their favorite seltzer flavor (grapefruit) and their mutual love of creative reuse and steampunk. For Jon to have steady work became very important during

the COVID shutdown, when galleries were closed and craft shows canceled. I have peripherally helped out on a few projects, such as installing grommets on the dragon’s wings and on the mesh panels in the wings of the Ornijethopter.

Every time I talked with Jon over the past two years, he mentioned how Rosenbaum was proposing another fabulous project somewhere. Being dubbed the “steampunk guru” by the *Wall Street Journal* and “steampunk evangelist” by *Wired* magazine has boosted his

see **WELDING** page B4



## WEST ALONG THE RIVER RIVER STORIES AT PESKEOMPSKUT

By DAVID BRULE

**THE FALLS / PESKEOMPSKUT** – The river is wreathed in fog this morning, as it is on many mornings in late autumn. The sun breaks through the ephemeral spirals from time to time, shining golden on the calm surface.

Across the water, geese and ducks stir in the Cove, not bothered by shotgun blasts, since this is Sunday.

Traffic is low; random cars cross the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge. They travel unknowingly over Peskeompskut, or what’s left of what Natives call the “rock that splits the river.” The abutment below the span rests on the great rock, now blasted and reduced in size, some unseen part of it submerged behind the dam.

One thousand years ago, in the flooded meadow where ducks now quietly paddle and 150-horsepower pleasure boats are moored, there was once a bustling village of a hundred wigwams, smoke from their hearth fires rising slowly into the skies.

But since 1794 the great river, the Quonektakut, has been dammed and damned here, the thunderous waterfall now silenced save for a few weeks in late spring when the river vents its wrath, roaring its ancient name. Indeed the place slowly lost its original name, though it lingered partly hidden in the mist over the falls. Bit by bit it is again answering to the name of Peskeompskut. Native peoples are coming back to this ancestral place.

There have been changes. Those changes have shaped the landscape and the riverscape that we now see before us. This was not always a tranquil pond, created by a dam that imprisons the waters flowing down from the far north. Here at the falls, instead of a tamed, lazy river, we would have seen a wild, rushing torrent flowing over a series of rapids, reaching a thunderous waterfall that could be heard for miles.

We would have seen a place of

gathering for 10,000 years. Native peoples later known as Pocumtuck, Nipmuck, and Abenaki lived here in this spot where their homelands overlapped. Visiting clans such as the coastal Wampanoag and Narragansett would have come here annually to fish, feast, find a spouse, or perhaps finish out the last days of their lives in this deeply spiritual and mystical place.

There is the reality of that fateful day in May 1676 when the peace and spirituality here was shattered by an unspeakable massacre of Indian human beings at the falls. The trauma and dark spirit that Native people have long associated with this place has finally and slowly been healing, though it will never be the same.

We can enumerate and name the stepping stones that have provided this new opportunity for healing: the Reconciliation Ceremony of 2004; the protection of the ceremonial hill sacred landscape in 2006; the eight years of the Nolumbeka Project’s Pocumtuck Homelands Festival; the triumphant river launch of the dug-out canoe *mishoon* built by Wampanoag and local residents in 2019-20; and the six-year National Park Service study of the massacre of 1676, conducted to try to find out what *really* happened at the falls.

And now, most recently, the awarding of a \$20,000 Expand Massachusetts Stories grant by MassHumanities to record and share the stories of the falls at Peskeompskut. This grant supports the opportunity to make the various histories and perspectives of this place accessible to residents and visitors alike.

In continuing the model of inclusiveness and healing so successfully realized during the ongoing six-year battlefield study, both tribal and non-tribal individuals are involved in this Montague stories project. Indeed, in addition to the Indigenous stories residing here are also histories of log drives, sawmills, and an industrial

see **WEST ALONG** page B3



## Skiing in Maine: two big mountains to explore.

**SOUTH DEERFIELD** – Maine is a vast state, by far the largest of the six in New England. But Maine isn’t the first state you think of when winter sports and skiing are the topics. That’s usually where Vermont

takes the bow.

Last February, we enjoyed a few days of skiing at two gigantic mountains in western Maine, Sugarloaf and Saddleback. It was a great skiing experience, and the drive home gave

us a glimpse of the beauty of New Hampshire in the peak of winter. I always love scenic country drives, and the world of covered bridges, country stores, and ice-fishing shacks on snow-covered lakes were fun to watch glide by. Our plan was to drive up during a weekday – and I can’t stress enough how good a decision this was.

Both resorts were practically empty in early February, but the conditions were first rate, with no ice, easy-to-ski packed powder, and a breeze from the empty rentals shop to the no-wait lift lines.

### The Saddle is Back

We ran into the press representative from Saddleback Mountain, Doc Tulin, but he was loaded down with camera equipment doing a shoot on the slopes. “Next week we’re gonna all be slammed,” he told us. That’s

see **TRAVEL** page B2



*Ski lifts at Sugarloaf Mountain, a big mountain in western Maine.*



*An 1850s engraved lithograph of the Falls.*



# Pet of the Week



CARMODY COLLAGE

## “OREO”

Oreo came to Dakin because his person was too ill to keep him. He is a big, handsome fellow with an irresistibly sweet face.

He loves attention from people and will shove his head under your elbow and toss it, if you are forgetting to pet him.

As fits his breed, he can be chatty and have his own ideas. He knows many phrases in English, like “Do you want to go out/for a walk?”

He is tolerant of other dogs, but

cannot live with cats.

Oreo is stressed and sad to be in a kennel, and wants to be in a house again.

Interested in adopting Oreo? Animals at Dakin are available only in Springfield currently. Contact adoption staff at [springfield@dakinhumane.org](mailto:springfield@dakinhumane.org) and include your name and phone number. For more information, call (413) 781-4000 or visit [www.dakinhumane.org](http://www.dakinhumane.org).

### TRAVEL from page B1

because the traditional school vacation holiday was sure to be sending thousands of more skiers up to the Rangeley Lake region. While Doc didn’t have a lot of time for chit-chat, he did tell us about the remarkable recovery this mountain made, after being left for dead for a full five years up in the remote Rangeley Lakes region.

An Australian corporation bought Saddleback in 2017 and it looked good for a while. The principal of this group, however, got caught up in the scandal involving selling EB-5 investments that offer foreigners US citizenship for putting money in approved projects, and he was arrested. Thankfully, the Arctaris Impact Fund based in Boston made a new offer to purchase Saddleback Mountain, in March 2019. Since then, they have been great partners and have invested in all aspects of the skiing experience there.

Saddleback Maine is the state’s second-largest resort, in terms of vertical drop (2,000 feet), the number of trails, and snowmaking percentage. Just 29 miles around the bend in the Carrabassett Valley is the largest, Sugarloaf Mountain, famous for its wide open snowfields and a large number of lifts. It also has a 2,000-foot-plus vertical drop. The third largest Maine ski resort is Sunday River, in Newry, 72 miles south.

The people in Rangeley sorely missed having Saddleback open when it closed in 2015, the manager of the Rangeley Inn said. “We were going great up here before the pandemic, despite the mountain closing,” she said. After the ski resort went dark for five years, which is a long time for such a major ski resort, the trees were beginning to grow back on the ski trails and things were dismal in Rangeley.

When we visited during the pandemic in February 2021, it was sad to see the Rangeley Inn’s welcoming lobby, complete with stuffed Bear and Moose, locked up, with the over-stuffed chairs stored away and the famous Rangeley Tavern closed.

But today, you can stroll into this grand lobby like in the old days and chat up the friendly people who run the Inn and have a drink at the big wooden bar. Many of Rangeley’s visitors come for snowmobiling, and there are miles of trails that fan out across the lake and through the woods.

### Eleven New Trails

And after cutting eleven new trails and sprucing up the lodge and other amenities, Saddleback Maine



HARTSHORNE PHOTOS

Hartsborne’s granddaughter Sofie, outfitted and ready to hit the big slopes.

officially opened up for skiing again on December 15, 2020. Saddleback’s terrain consists of 25 Beginner trails, 19 Intermediate trails, and 22 Advanced and Expert trails.

There are also three ski lifts, which include two fixed-grip quads and a high-speed detachable quad. These fast and efficient lifts make a big difference when you’re skiing the chilly slopes of western Maine, compared with the older lifts, and they fit four people on each chair!

At the top of Saddleback, serviced by a perpendicular lift going the rest of the way to the top, is the Kennebago Steeps, advanced terrain with narrow glades that is great for the high-energy skiers. We would not be visiting these steeps during our visit, since my granddaughter Sofie is a beginner skier.

### Sugarloaf Mountain

The drive from Saddleback snakes you through Farmington and Kingfield, Maine until the giant blue Sugarloaf mountain logo is everywhere. You’ll be inside these confines throughout your stay, and the on-site hotel was right next to an older double chairlift. There are shops, cafés, restaurants, and condos here, even a little grocery store at the Sugarloaf complex.

The convenience of staying so close to our hotel room was obvious when the weather grew colder and I needed to add a layer. An easy *clomp, clomp, clomp* to my fourth-floor hotel room!

The five-hour drive up from western Mass made for an evening arrival, and after settling into the comfy hotel at Sugarloaf, I ventured out for a wood-fired pizza, ordering a margherita pie.

We could have dined in the

restaurant, which looked cozy and inviting, but we brought our dinner back to the hotel room, which was the norm back in “those days,” we all remember. It was nice that the hotel room included a microwave, silverware, plates, cork-screw, cups, and every thing we needed. The next night we decided to save money by buying food at a local grocery store so that we could heat it up ourselves and skip the so-expensive take-out pizza.

Sugarloaf has a storied history, being the mountain that was chosen when the US Ski Association wanted a ski area in Maine. It began with T-bars in the 1950s, and later in the ‘60s “The Mighty Gondola” became the resort’s symbol. The most recent owners of Sugarloaf dismantled the remains of the gondola to install the more efficient high-speed detachable quads, though some old-style lifts remain, like the short lift that goes from the lower hotel to the lodge.

We made our way up to the first smaller chair for some easy runs down the beginner slopes, then eventually decided to take the lift about two-thirds of the way up the mountain. Unlike nearly every other ski mountain I’ve visited, when we got off the lift at the top there was no trail map, only signs indicating the blue and the black trails to descend.

Sofie, my 11-year-old beginner ski companion, began to get scared. There didn’t appear to be an easy way to get down, and without the big familiar map, it was all confusing. She ended up panicking and having to take a toboggan down, helped by a friendly and very reassuring member of the ski patrol named Jack. Bless him – but why, oh why, does neither mountain have any trail maps next to the lifts at the bottom or the top? I’ve never seen that at any other ski resort.

Skiing at these two resorts in western Maine is cheaper than most Vermont resorts. It’s a dynamic pricing setup that offers discounts both on weekdays and other days. Maine is always worth the drive, and these two ski areas are a fun combination in the Pine Tree State.

For more travel ideas in the great state of Maine, see [visitmaine.com](http://visitmaine.com).

Local travel editor Max Hartsborne writes about traveling around our region, and a little beyond. Max is the editor of *GoNOMAD Travel*, a website published since 2000 in South Deerfield. Find him online at [www.gonomad.com](http://www.gonomad.com).



## Senior Center Activities NOVEMBER 1 THROUGH 5

### 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. for drop in visitors.

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.

The Gill Montague Council on Aging has access to grant money to help low to moderate income seniors make home repairs, particularly those related to home safety. Please call 863-9357 for eligibility criteria and more information.

### Monday 11/1

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

### Tuesday 11/2

10 a.m. Knitting Circle  
3 p.m. Tai Chi

### Wednesday 11/3

9 a.m. Veterans’ Agent Hours  
10:15 a.m. Aerobics  
11 a.m. Chair Exercise  
1 p.m. Bingo

### Thursday 11/4

10 a.m. Chair Yoga  
10:30 a.m. Brown Bag  
1 p.m. Cards & Games

### Friday 11/5

SHINE Consultations by Appt  
10:15 a.m. Aerobics  
11 a.m. Chair Exercise

### ERVING

Erving Senior Center is open 8:30 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. Mask required if not vaccinated. Proper handwashing and social distancing are still required.

### Monday 11/1

9 a.m. Re-Store & Re-Emerge

### Tuesday 11/2

9 a.m. Blood Pressure Clinic  
9 a.m. Good for YOU  
10 a.m. Line Dancing

### Wednesday 11/3

9 a.m. Strength & Conditioning  
10 a.m. Tai Ji Quan  
12:30 a.m. Bingo

### Thursday 11/4

9 a.m. Restore & Re-Emerge  
10 a.m. Stretch & Balance  
12 p.m. Brown Bag Pick-up

### Friday 11/5

9 a.m. Quilting Guild

### 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).



The charming lobby of the Rangeley Inn in Rangeley, Maine.

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**WEST ALONG** from page B1 heyday, all of which will animate the storytelling project.

The Peskeompskut Walking Tour grant will bring cultural tourism to a new level in Montague, to include not only the original Indigenous inhabitants of this Valley, but also the celebrated industrial development of the complex and planned village designed by Alvah Crocker, which has become known as Turners Falls.

The narratives of the river stories will include those by Liz Coldwind Santana-Kiser of the Chaubunagungamaug Band of Nipmuck Indians; Rich Holschuh, public liaison and tribal historic preservation officer for the Elnu Abenaki; cultural and technical consultant Jonathan Perry of the Aquinnah Wampanoag Tribe; Elizabeth James-Perry, artist and historian, member of the Aquinnah Wampanoag; Rebecca Chase, technical consultant and founder of Audri.Life, which specializes in developing audio tours; Ashley Bissonnette, PhD, research consultant from the University of Connecticut and member of the archaeology team conducting research on the battlefield site at the falls; members of the Gill Historical Commission; and also local hero historians Ed Gregory and Chris Clawson from the Montague Historical Commission and Montague Historical Society, who will provide perspectives on the industrial history of Turners Falls.

This entire team effort of Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous specialists will be coordinated by Suzanne LoManto of Riverculture, and this writer.

The cutting-edge technology will

involve storytelling along a pathway at Unity Park, linked by GPS at designated story points along the river. This self-guided audio tour will be accessible through the users’ cell phones. Visitors will be able to hear the voices of Indigenous speakers and other contributors tell the multiple histories of Peskeompskut as they follow the tour and the flow of the river.

In the words of Rich Holschuh, Elnu Abenaki:

“And so, this place is what it appears in front of us, and simultaneously – it is everything that it ever has been and will become. Although we may see a concrete and steel dam and a multitude of brick buildings, and a torrent of displaced water flooding through an excavated gash in the plain, there are other shapes and realities as well. All the stories that have unfolded here continue to echo off the bedrock and pounding waters, filter through the trees, and drift across hill-rimmed distances. They are inside the white pine trees holding up the sky, gathered in the alders leaning over the banks, and settled under the rocks in the center of the channel.”

Work will begin on developing this project over the winter of 2021-22. We hope that the audio tour will be accessible to visitors and residents alike by September of next year.

*David Brule is the chair of the Montague historical commission, a member of the town’s battlefield grant advisory committee, and president of the Nolumbeka Project. Read his writing at riverstoriesdavidbrule.com.*



## ANNOUNCEMENT

# Chris Janke: “The Thing Itself”

**AMHERST** – Christopher Janke’s installation at the Hampden Gallery at UMass Amherst, *The Thing Itself*, is based on Immanuel Kant’s concept that the world can never be known directly, but only through unreliable experiences; it explores gallery space as one that exists outside of what is placed within it.

History bestows on each thing inside it a series of quirks and happenstance, so each gallery’s attempt to create a neutral space must fail to do so and creates, alongside white walls, a different beauty of the unintended and unattended. To observe the space of observation is to blur foreground and background, to call into question the obscurity necessary for focus, and to ask the observer what was so interesting in the first place about that bright and shiny object that never materialized.

A reception will be held next Thursday, November 4 from 5 to 7 p.m.; Janke will give an artist’s talk at 6 p.m. The installation will be on view until December 1.

Janke, known in Turners Falls as a founding owner of the Rendezvous,

is interested in blends of words, objects, and new media to create awareness of awareness, to examine the ways the observer creates the observed, and participant-created phenomena of evaluation and inequity.

Janke’s book *Structure of the Embryonic Rat Brain* won the Fence Modern Poets Series award, and portions of his latest double volume of poetry *blepharism/psalterium* were featured in *American Poetry Review*, *A Public Space*, and *Boston Review*. His large-scale installations are time-and-place-specific poems that move with the sun and poke at the tenuous connection words have to the physical world. His film *Episode: 2* addresses the issue of political violence in a time of growing political tension. He helps run Slope Editions, which publishes one or two books of innovative poetry each year.

The gallery is open Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:30 to 6:30 p.m.; Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 1:30 to 5:30 p.m. Galleries at UMass require proof of vaccination or negative tests within 72 hours to enter, and masks must be worn.



From The Thing Itself, an installation at the Hampden Gallery, UMass Amherst.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

# Kid Found At Train Yard; Man Looking For Stoves; Traffic Jam Anger; Turkey With A Limp; Bikers

### Monday, 10/18

9:05 a.m. Caller states he was on Greenfield Road near the Bookmill when the car in front of him stopped and the driver got out and yelled at him about following too closely. The female then swung at the caller and knocked his hat off. When the caller left, the other vehicle followed him and even after a couple of stops remained in the area around him, following him and taking pictures. Caller states the vehicle did pull in front of him at one point to cut him off. Caller just wants to have this on record at this point.

11:29 a.m. Caller reporting an incident that occurred last night around 8 p.m. Her 12-year-old son was riding his bike home to his father’s house in the Patch, and a green Jeep was following him and said something to him. Her son stated he took off and the Jeep sped up to catch up with him. The caller stated that her son’s father noticed what was happening and came outside, and that’s when the Jeep took off. Referred to an officer.

2:38 p.m. Caller into station to report that their son has been missing since 10:30 this morning. Montague officers and K9 unit searching for juvenile; Greenfield PD responding with a drone. DPW employee advised that he spoke with the missing juvenile at approximately 11:30 a.m. at the power lines by Dry Hill Road. MSP getting airwing started. MSP located the juvenile at the Deerfield train yard. Juvenile transported back to residence.

5:16 p.m. Party into station to report a vicious dog at a Third Street residence. The dog is described as a large, all-grey pitbull. Caller states that the dog tried to attack him on multiple occasions in the alley between Third and Fourth streets. Animal control officer followed up at residence. No barking heard; nobody came to answer door.

6:06 p.m. 911 caller reporting that her sister-in-law’s vehicle was parked on Griswold Street and was hit at some point today. Referred to an officer.

### Tuesday, 10/19

11:58 a.m. Scotty’s employee reporting that the tenants that live next to the store have gained access to their upstairs storage room. Officers spoke to male party; waiting on statements.

12:01 p.m. Caller from Fourth Street states that she believes the white car parked outside her building is about to sell drugs to a male party. Referred to an officer.

4:28 p.m. Caller advising

that the street sign for Solar Avenue has been knocked down by an unknown vehicle. DPW notified.

7:46 p.m. Caller states that the railroad crossing gates on Lake Pleasant Road are stuck down. Pan Am notified. They said there was a slow train in the area and to call back if they are still down in about an hour.

### Wednesday, 10/20

11:22 a.m. Caller from Federal Street would like it on record that a male party was on his property stating he was looking for stoves.

11:23 a.m. Caller from Third Street would like it on record that her unlocked vehicle was accessed last night by an unknown party. Two phone chargers were taken.

2:32 p.m. Caller states that his employee left work last night and was followed by a maroon van with duct tape on the back. Caller states that he reached speeds of 90 mph attempting to lose the van. Caller states that he terminated an employee who drives a similar van a week ago. Requesting extra patrols in Industrial Boulevard area. Advised of options.

5:11 p.m. Caller from Third Street advising that some kids keep climbing up the fire escape and going onto the roof of her apartment building. She has advised the landlord. They are not there currently. Caller told to call if she sees them again.

10:54 p.m. Caller from North Leverett Road states that it looks as if someone is trying to break into a house across the street from her. Someone is walking around with a flashlight, and they could hear a female’s voice, but a male is the resident there. Male party was outside cleaning cobwebs with a headlamp on.

### Thursday, 10/21

3:05 a.m. Caller reporting dead dog on the side of Montague City Road. Officer located dog and moved it into taller grass. Contact was made with owner, who does not want

the dog but would like the collar. Owner advised that ACO will be contacted in the morning and someone will drop off the collar.

6:51 a.m. Multiple reports of vehicle break-ins. Addresses include residences on Davis Street, Park Street, Central Street, and Chestnut Street. One party states that he has a male party on camera. Units taking reports at each location.

8:39 a.m. Caller states that the traffic jam has gotten so bad downtown that people are getting out of their cars and fighting with each other. Units advised.

9:35 a.m. Anonymous party dropped off multiple packs of suboxone that were found in the road.

3:55 p.m. 911 caller reporting two-vehicle accident at L and High streets. Airbags deployed; unknown whether there are injuries. MPD officer and Shelburne Control notified. TFFD on scene. Rau’s requested for both vehicles. Citation issued.

4:51 p.m. Caller into station to report fraud and misuse of a nonprofit. She was sent over by the district attorney’s office. Report taken.

4:56 p.m. Caller reporting a group of teenagers being inappropriate at Unity Park, swearing and playing rough. She asked them to stop swearing, but they continued. Responding officer advises no groups of teenagers at the part at this time. Officer stayed for a little while, but nothing was observed.

5:28 p.m. Caller from Fourth Street states that her neighbor is building an 18’ x 4’ structure in their backyard and there are explosion sounds coming from that area. Referred to an officer.

5:46 p.m. Caller reporting two suspicious people at Unity Park. They are just standing there watching the kids and do not have any children with them. Caller requesting an officer drive through the area to possibly scare them off. Services rendered.

7:29 p.m. Caller requesting extra patrols of Millers Falls area by the Pub due to people racing nightly starting in that area and up to the airport. Referred to an officer.

### Friday, 10/22

10:06 a.m. Caller from Fourth Street would like an officer to explain to her why the police can’t pull down a security camera that her neighbor has on their balcony. Advised of options.

4:19 p.m. Caller reporting that a male party tried to forcibly take her child’s hand at Unity Park and walk away. The caller screamed, and the male ran away. Described as older male with long grey hair, a Red Sox hat, mask, sunglasses, black hoodie, and jeans, approximately 5’9”. Male took off toward the skate park/Avenue A area. Incident occurred approximately 30 minutes ago. Area searched; unable to locate.

5:04 p.m. Caller from N Street reporting a big wild turkey that appears to be injured across the street from her residence. Officer advises that the turkey does have a slight limp, but they are going to leave it alone.

7:13 p.m. 911 caller reporting motorcycle into guard-rail at Main and School streets. Operator took off on foot. Investigated.

### Sunday, 10/24

1:52 p.m. Report of two loose horses creating a hazard on Turners Falls Road. Horses are now off the road. Owners arrived home shortly after officer’s arrival.

4:02 p.m. Control advised that they received a call regarding a sign in a second story window on Federal Street that says “Help,” and there are no Halloween decorations. Officer advises that it is a Halloween decoration.

5 p.m. Control advised that ten motorcycles are driving 100 mph towards Montague from Erving. Erving attempted to pull four of them over, and they took off. Unable to locate.

## Montague Community Television News

# Festival Footage Coming

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

**TURNERS FALLS** – If you had to miss the Great Falls Festival this year, then you better not miss MCTV’s coverage of it. Within a few weeks, the station will have footage available of the concerts, dance performances and dog costumes, so stay tuned!

The newest videos this week are the Montague selectboard meeting, as well as the Gill-Montague regional school committee meeting. All MCTV videos are available on the MCTV Vimeo page, which can be found linked to our website,

[montaguenv.org](http://montaguenv.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 [infomontaguenv@gmail.com](mailto:infomontaguenv@gmail.com).

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WELDING from page B1

reputation, and he’s a personable, knowledgeable, easy-going guy who is having fun doing what he loves.

Rosenbaum proposed a 15-foot-tall cherry tree for the courtyard of a condo complex in Alexandria, Virginia earlier this year and signed a contract for it in August. A large studio work space was secured in the garage at a former school in Palmer and a delivery date of late October was set.

Rosenbaum brainstormed with each client to come up with a design based on historical motifs, with a sci-fi twist, for their specific site. The narrative for the cherry tree is based on the fact that the land was once a forest owned by George Washington. Washington was unhappy that people stole lumber from his forest, so Rosenbaum imagined metal “tree guardians” around the perimeter.

The tree design incorporates axe heads and saw blades in reference to the “I cannot tell a lie” story about chopping down the cherry tree. There was once a glass bottle factory where the condos are being built, so bottle lights will hang from the tree’s branches, too.

Jon and I talked about how hard it might be to find an assistant with the right skills, creativity, and schedule to come on board at short notice for this large project. It dawned on us that I could be that person! I had machine shop and metal fabrication experience from my years at Eddie’s Wheels for Pets, and could help him ready the workspace and cut, bend, and form branches and other elements of the tree. Perhaps I would even get to do some welding!

I felt that learning from my son would help me appreciate who he has become as an adult artist. I’m an adult learner in many areas, including working for this paper as an editor. I was certain that our mutual respectful relationship would serve us well in my apprenticeship, and that I might have perspective to offer from my experience working in diverse mediums.

I took a month-long break from this paper in September to work on the tree. At first, I really was exhausted by it. The studio is in the maintenance garage of the former school, and a variety of materials needed to be sorted and moved to make room for the project, including bundles of roofing shingles, a pallet of brand new heavy-duty cots, and other miscellaneous items. There were bins and bins of nuts



With most branches in place but with more to go, the tree starts to look more like its final form. The sheet metal stovepipe will hold a lantern at the top, and 27 bottle lights will hang from the branches.

and bolts, gears, and other machine parts from a factory cleanout Rosenbaum helped with that needed to be organized into shelves and drawers. We struggled to locate proper outlets to plug in welding and other equipment, and tried to organize and tally our stock of steel pipe.

Working with Steel

My arms were weak from working with words, no longer used to slinging around metal things and handling equipment. It was an unfamiliar feeling to be “job-soft,” but hey, after all, I am now a 61-year-old woman. The grinders and saws felt big, heavy, and unwieldy. It took a while to get used to them.

The first tasks were the hardest. The pieces of pipe we were cutting for the trunk were eight or ten inches in diameter, with flanges to fit. Cutting and grinding the steel to prep pieces for welding created a fine black grit that got everywhere.

I felt tired, and old. I was sad that I didn’t have the skills to help with the structural welding, as there was a lot of it to do to attach the flanges, trunk, and base together, but glad to

be back working with metal, a most solid and purposeful material. Gradually my arms and hands got used to holding the grinders and cutters. I marveled at the convenience of the little Milwaukee cordless bandsaw and its corded big brother, which I used to cut rods and pipes and make convex “fish mouth” joints on them.

Eventually I got to weld, too. I got used to the short *fizz* of sparks on bare skin, and to finding tiny scabs on my arms and holes in my shirt after a day of it. I had hoped I would be able to get the hang of welding almost instantaneously, being a mom to two welders already, an artist in many mediums, and all that – but it has been a very humbling experience, haha!

It is not like sewing a seam, as I had hoped. It’s been hard to get used to the darkness of it – the helmet visor going black, the work only lit up by the light of the weld, the spark and molten metal as the nozzle moves along. I learned that part of it is hearing, learning how to make the right *bzzz* of the welder that indicates things are going correctly.

Many times I felt the wire of the MIG welder shoot out of the nozzle, missing the piece entirely, because I was off target. Or heard snarling pops and crackles from being too far away from the work or moving too quickly over it, resulting in bubbles and splatters. I would have to stop and cut off the excess wire, or grind off unsightly blobs and bubbles of metal.

Jon would come over, look at my welds, and shake his head. “Mom – try sitting down so you can brace your hand. Welding is all about getting in a comfortable position,” he advised.

Oh, OK. I’ll try that – thanks! As the tree has grown, the diameters have gotten smaller, starting from the base of a 10” pipe trunk. In addition to preparing those big pieces for Jon to weld, I bent smaller and smaller branches, starting at four inches, to three, to two, and then one and now half an inch, with the quarter-inch rod twigs and ¼-20 bolt blossom stems. We started by cutting angles on the four- and three-inch pipes, then turning and welding

them, then bending the smaller ones in a hydraulic pipe bender.

Jon heated and hammered transitions between large and small pipes to smooth them out. The little twigs have been bent with a small jig clamped in a vise. For the last two weeks I have been welding quarter-inch twigs onto half-inch steel pipe and rod branches.

We have made the 27 branches that will carry the bottle lights, and now the rest of the branches can be solid. There may be a hundred or more to go.

Bloomin’ Aluminum

I have also been the blossom maker for the cherry tree. Since over a thousand blossoms would be needed, we pondered how to accomplish such mass production. Nibbling individual flowers or petals out of sheet metal with a shear by hand would be impossibly slow. I thought of weathervane and ornament maker Marian Ives of Hawley, Mass., who uses an old stamp press to cut out her metal ornaments, and called her to find out if we could use it to make our blossoms.

Yes, it turns out, Marian would lend us the use of her press, and if we gave her a drawing, she could cut our custom blossom stamp out of tool steel. We would just need to order an appropriate amount of aluminum sheeting of the right thickness for the press.

We bought .28 gauge aluminum rolls from a roofing company in Alabama, and I went to Ives’ Shelburne studio to turn 60 linear feet of 14” wide metal into almost 1,500 five-petaled cherry blossoms.

The press was operated by kicking a pedal with one foot, causing a heavy weight to slam the two sides of the stamp together and cut the 2½” flowers out of 3” wide strips of aluminum. After each one was stamped, it had to be trimmed, and then I punched a quarter-inch hole in the middle for a bolt to pass through. Each blossom is then cupped and shaped by hammering it into a hole, and then the petals are hammered open slightly, creating sparkly facets of shiny aluminum.

The bolts are welded to the twigs. One nut is threaded on, then a blossom is laid on it with a second nut to hold it tight. A tack weld on top of each assures that they are there for good.

Trunk and Roots

While I have been busy with the blossoms and twigs, Jon has been fashioning and decorating the tree’s roots and trunk. A sheet metal channel, housing the electrical box for the lights at the base, runs up one side to terminate in a lantern at the top. Antique saw blades swirl and wrap around the trunk. Here and there, a quarter peeks out of a steel spiral, and Washington’s signature wraps around one side under the flange.

A line of hatchet and axe heads marches up next to spirals of steel rod and chain. Weld beads create texture to decorate some areas, and 13 stars will be applied to signify the original American colonies. Gears welded to the trunk enhance the industrial look, as well as the large pipe flanges bolting together the top and bottom sections and defining branch quadrants.

The deadline has now been extended to mid-November, and while I have started back at the paper this month, I continue to help Jon on other days. I have about 450 more blossoms to finish, and dozens of branches to complete. Then, the electrician will wire the bottle lights and put quick-connects at the junctions so that the tree can be transported in sections and assembled on site.

This has been a priceless experience, a unique challenge that I am really glad to share with my son. Unlike the many reality shows that feature the drama of family business ventures, we haven’t had any disputes. We have each had “melt-downs” sparked by equipment malfunction and talked each other down from frustrated states of mind. This is not my area of expertise, so it is amazing to me how Jon’s creativity leaps forward on the technical knowledge of the different processes involved. Knowing what is possible with the tools and equipment, means he can think in a totally different direction than someone like me who isn’t experienced in that area.

Of course, I’ve thrown in a few mom things like lunchtime smoothies, leftover meals, finding lost tape measures and pencils, and the general tidying-up of stuff.

I’ll share an update after the project is installed in November. I hope to be a better welder by then!

Visit [www.notorious-weld.com](http://www.notorious-weld.com) to view sculpture by Jon Bander.



Half-inch pipes that will carry wiring for the bottle lights, covered with aluminum cherry blossoms and waiting for installation.



Nina Rossi and Jon Bander in September, with the initial upper trunk section of the cherry tree.

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Interview by J. BURKETT

**TURNERS FALLS** – Mal Devisa is a really talented locally based solo musician who has been playing out and recording for a while now. She has a unique sound, a mixture of R&B, hip hop, jazz, and even gospel. We have been wanting to check in with her and wish her well as she continues to make her unique music.... Check out her stuff ASAP!

**MMM:** *So you grew up in NYC – do you have any early music memories you want to share? Did you like living there? Western Mass is probably much different...*

**MD:** I was born in Manhattan. I wasn’t raised in New York *per se*, I just go back and forth from wherever I’m living back home to the place that always loses me. I was too young to remember living there, although I have a couple of memories from our apartment, and some of our house in Queens.

When I was 5, I was packed up and shipped off to Amherst, Massachusetts where there they boasted their “5%” African American population; but the curriculum and the quality of the air and soil was good. Good enough to be like, raised in the Valley with the morality I had since New York, but close enough to New York and Boston that once I figured out I could sing, I could commute to play shows.

And then at age 12, I started getting involved in the local scene, and that continued until now. New York made me a revolutionary, but Western Mass did, too.

**MMM:** *What kind of music has influenced you? Any particular favorite musicians?*

**MD:** I could talk about this for days and days on end. When I was younger, before I started Mal Devisa Records (which is tiny right now) and got signed, I would look up shows happening in the city – I didn’t have a ride, and I was underaged – and make organized lists of bands by show or genre, and use resources that I had compiled to find bands I loved like Sivu, Miniboone, and Vampire Weekend, who I’d later go on to release. I had a couple of connections, just in terms of people and influences (not to glue myself to them in any official way).

My favorite musicians I’m still learning about, and will still be learning about, but they range from people like Joni Mitchell, to Yukimi Nagano from Little Dragon who has influenced my sound in some ways, Ian St. George, God’s Wisdom, Father, Stevie Wonder, Show Me the Body, and Merrill Garbus as well as Ruth Garbus (even though, if you were to ask me to name a song – I would just ask her to sing, her voice makes me try harder as a musician to stay beautiful and speaks to growing up gracefully or aging. I’m not calling her old, she’s just a few years older than me. With grace and a dedication to the self as an autonomous source of art, and a part of a small musical community).

I don’t think I could ever name all of the musicians I love but Tommy Wright III, Zack Fox, Zelooperz, Laura Marling (for sure), And the Kids, Feist, Jill Scott, D’Angelo, Bad Brains, Celia Cruz (whose music I’m still getting to know), and definitely just some artists that certain people in my life that I’ve known for a while have hipped me to.

**MMM:** *Didn’t you have a grandfather who was a famous drummer?*

**MD:** Yes, my grandfather is the late Bruno Carr,

drummer extraordinaire. He was a super important person to me, even though he passed away before I was born. I owe my rhythmical two cents to his rhythmic \$2 million. He was the drummer for Ray Charles, Herbie Mann, Aretha Franklin, and many many more.

Something I learned about him recently was that he’d assure his bandleader that he didn’t want to be credited for the records, it was just his love of music that made him a running toy. And I just mean like one of those wind-up toys you spin and it just keeps going and going. There’s a video of him at the Newport Jazz Festival, just absolutely throwing down and looking super handsome and clean and beautiful while he was doing it.

I think from his standpoint, had he known how I would come in swinging, he would’ve added his name to those albums, because there’s a lot of music out there that I don’t even know is in my bloodline, whose rhythms literally raised the woman that raised me. And I think that uncertainty has led to a bit of artistic depression of just being this C-level, \$200 sought out musician.

**MMM:** *You were in Who’d a Funk It... did that influence your solo music?*

**MD:** No, not really. Some of it did. The non-filtering out of emotion and thought definitely carried along to Mal Devisa. My solo music is more so music I would listen to on my own time. Who’d a Funk It? was four people combining and putting forth their energy through art and sound. Mal Devisa is a lot more work for me. And in some ways, a lot less work.

**MMM:** *Which do you like more, recording or touring? Are there any places that you like to play the most?*

**MD:** I honestly love touring. With my cases, I’m not sure I’ll ever get to tour again. I live for touring. I’ve been on a lot of tours with bands I’m not proud to say I even know, but when you’re young and impressionable and good, you get used to increasing the validity of has-been or marginal groups – a lot of time white, cisgendered, able-bodied, hyper-privileged pieces of garbage.

**MMM:** *Are there any places you would like to tour?*

**MD:** Sure. I want to go back to Portugal, Paris, California, Berlin, New York, Amsterdam, Egypt (mostly for the food, and re-learning about native music), the Netherlands, Japan, Seattle, etc.

**MMM:** *What’s your favorite instrument to play?*

**MD:** Saxophone is my favorite, the american jazz/hip hop kit is my favorite, and bass is one of my favorites. At this point, that’s it – besides my vocal cords, haha.

**MMM:** *Did you play guitar at some point? Or just bass?*

**MD:** I have one song called “Sleep,” co-written by Emily Moran, on which I’m playing guitar. It’s a part that I wrote, and play as well as I can when prompted to.

**MMM:** *Can you talk about your newest recordings on Bandcamp? Do you have any other recording projects coming up?*

**MD:** Sure. I’m awaiting trial right now, so I added some music up there for people to grab. People don’t seem to be interested, though, which is fine.

But one really interesting thing I put up is an entire audiobook of poetry. It was my first go at that, and its perfectionist moments are amazing, and its imperfections are really fine too. I have to give it up to my longtime friend Bess Hepner, formerly of Who’d a, for recording it for me or with me (I never know which one to say) and helping me finalize the project. It was self-awaited and came together in less than an hour; each poem was one take, give or take a couple flubberies, and the whole process was super rewarding and I can’t wait to do more poetry projects, hopefully on video.

I’m turning 25, and I’d love for this to be my first year of independence. I want to move to a city and not answer my phone except for people who have never shut me down.

**MMM:** *Anything else you would like to add?*

**MD:** Sure. I’m raising funds to go to Windhorse, to get out of this place I’m in, and looking for opportunities to make money, whether it be journalism or singing lessons. I’m also looking for a place to rent in either New York or LA, or extremely reluctantly, Western Mass, as long as it’s not in a high-traffic area. I’m also looking for housing somewhere, whether that be WWOOFing or gardening in exchange for a bed and a square of land to smoke on. (I have butt pouches and a microwave or kettle to make tea in.) Thanks.

F12, fbpharma, Mal Devisa for life, and insh’allah.

ANNOUNCEMENT

A Poetry Book Trifecta

**NORTHAMPTON** – Open Field Press launches three new collections of poetry from Trish Crapo of Leyden, and Bill O’Connell and Anne Love Woodhull, both of Amherst. All three are members of Group 18, the decades-long critique group founded by poets Linda Gregg and Jim Finnegan. Based in Northampton, Group 18 has included many renowned poets.

The launch reading will be held Friday, November 5 at APE@ Hawley Street, 33 Hawley Street, Northampton. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. for a casual meet and greet with the authors followed by a reading at 7 p.m. Books will be available for purchase and signing.

Crapo’s poem sequence, *adrift, a rowboat*, explores the life and loss of the author’s sister, Susan, whose

artwork complements the poems. The sea is essential here, as are intimate moments between the sisters, beginning in childhood. The poems are addressed to Susan, letting the reader into the sisters’ relationship. Beautifully designed, this is a book you want to hold in your hands.

The poems in O’Connell’s collection, *When We Were All Still Alive*, traverse the ancient and the new: the planet of rocks and soil and sea and the planet of the mind looking outward. What lives and dies are enfolded in time. In *Racing Heaven*, Woodhull’s poems explore life in partnership with a succession of loss.

Seating is limited to 50 people. Register at [eventbrite.com/e/187753695357](https://eventbrite.com/e/187753695357). Vaccination and masks are required, and social distancing will be observed.

Learning to Fly Fish: Part XVIII



On the Y Pool.

*Ariel Jones, who recently passed away, penned a series of 21 articles in the Montague Reporter in 2005 on her experiences learning to fly fish. Jones was a pioneer of the local art scene, who moved to Turners Falls from NYC and opened a photography studio on Avenue A in 2000.*

By ARIEL JONES

**WARE** – My first trip back to Ware felt great: a section of the Swift River I am getting to know better and better, and a place where I have caught some good fish. The weather continued to be gorgeous and I went out enthusiastically.

But, I came up short. I tried the expected flies, like midges and blue winged olives, kept changing sizes trying to select the right one, and could only catch the occasional Brookie. The longer this went on, the worse my approach was. I would try nymphs, wooly buggers, and various terrestrials like spiders and grasshoppers cast in along a bank.

I could get interest, but no strikes. Many neighboring fly fishers were having a tough time of it as well, which was some consolation. But to see the trout, to know they have to be eating something, to try a million different flies and to keep coming up empty, can try your patience.

Then, last week in the late afternoon, a man entered the Y Pool and began fishing near me. The first thing I noticed about him was a look of smiling contentment on his face.

I try to avoid mentioning the “Zen” of fly fishing. For one thing, I am no expert on either subject. For another, the phrase sounds rather, well, precious. But it is true: the more you fly fish, something else is

also at work in your inner life. Let’s just leave it at that for now.

The second thing I noticed was he was fishing with a bamboo 2-weight rod, a beautiful, delicate work of art. The third thing I noticed was that he was catching, and I was not.

After a while he smiled over at me and introduced himself as Iris’s husband Rudy. I had met his wife a couple of weeks before. She was like a River Goddess; long hair pulled up loosely on top of her head, negotiating her rod and the river with ease, dressed on top with only a sleeveless tee shirt under her waders. (I had on two shirts...) She is extremely nice, and it was fun to finally meet another woman who loves fly fishing.

Rudy asked what fly I was using, and what weight tippet. I was fishing with a #22 midge and a 6x tippet. He shook his head and waded over. “Try a 9x, and here are a few #32 flies.”

A size #32 fly at first appears to be a speck of dust. Tying a size #9x tippet is like trying to thread a strand of spider web. Put them together, add a little wind and growing darkness, and you can feel tempted to toss the entire enterprise to the wind for the sheer clumsiness of human hands and reflexes.

My small hands suddenly behaved like two paws. Each item was so small and light in weight you could drop them both and keep on fumbling and never know it. I knew that Rudy was right about this difficult selection, but I wished the choice had been a size #14 Light Cahill on a 5x tippet, something I could both see to tie on and watch once it landed on the water.

Fly fishing ain’t for sissies.

To be continued...

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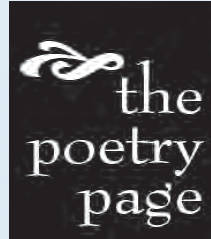


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It is difficult  
to get the news from poems  
yet men die miserably every day  
for lack  
of what is found there.

– William Carlos Williams

edited by Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno  
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*Montague Reporter* at: 177 Avenue A  
Turners Falls, MA 01376  
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# October Poetry Page

## When life hands you lemons...

The weight of life is lifted when I feel your presence near.  
When I feel unwanted and alone you're always there.  
When life hands me lemons, and that's not enough;  
Being there with you makes the bitterness a bit sweeter.

– Kaleb Torres  
*Turners Falls*

## Just Horsin' Around

Gonna fight that virus, I jus' reckon,  
with horse-sized doses of Ivermectin!  
Don't know if it'll kill them COVID germs,  
but at least I wo't have no damn worms!

Don't trust the doctors or the FDA,  
checkin' Facebook Hospital for a better way!  
Why, just last week, I had this cyst  
and found a cure from this manicurist

who heard from a friend of her sister's cousin's brother,  
who learnt it from his pastor's wife's foster mother,  
that ain't nuthin' ails you's beyond the reach  
of hydroxychloroquine and good ol' bleach!

Won't catch me takin' no microchip vaccine,  
gettin' all caught up in big pharma's machine,  
no, thank you kindly, y'all just clear off,  
while I try to get rid of this gall durn cough.

To heck with distancin' and wearin' Fauci's mask,  
I'll be fine once I finish the other half  
of this steamin' bowl of de-worming paste,  
which ain't half bad once you get past the taste.

Fever's worse today, maybe time to call the Vet,  
not ready for no ventilator, not quite yet,  
prob'ly just mud fever, or a touch of that old colic,  
just need to trot it off, maybe a fluorescent high colonic.

No, I'll be right as rain in no time,  
high steppin' and feelin' my oats,  
back in my favorite saddle again,  
with a whole new shine to my coat,

good as gold once my horse's meds kick in,  
(maybe I'll just add a little more 'Quin)  
but in the meantime, to be safe, really just for fun,  
could someone get this bridle off – and dial 911?

– Gary Greene  
*Greenfield*

## The Scent of Rain

The sky is grey and cloudy, the air smells of rain,  
I find a rainstorm can be a soothing sound and scent.  
While some find the rain sorrowful, others find it tedious;  
I like to see the rain as nature's great reward.  
After a long day, lying in bed at the end;  
I like to open my windowsill and smell the rainy air.  
The breeze feeling so fluffy I could hold it in my hands!  
And while I love a few days that feel similar to that;  
I hope that one day, someday, the sun will shine again.

– Kaleb Torres  
*Turners Falls*

## Swirling Surreal Mindscape

Swirling colors, surreal sounds, objects with no meaning;  
a mind is a place, a plain, a realm that lies within our heads.  
But sometimes in this surreal chaos can come a thought.  
a thought that can be printed, a thought that can be planted,  
a thought that can be molded into beautifully bizarre art.  
While some of us are more in tune,  
others are faced with the fast-paced hassle of day-to-day life.  
But despite this hassle some find the time, and to those I salute;  
the ones who find time and find a way to coherently create fine art.

– Kaleb Torres  
*Turners Falls*

## Grass, Trees, and Stump

A walk through the park, with the bright peaking sun.  
I look around the grassy ground and appreciate the texture,  
a light and feathery feeling on my own two feet.  
I gaze about to see the trees, flowing with the breeze;  
the leaves changing colors as the seasons change the soil.  
I continued to gaze about, taking in the sights;  
but then I had realized that something wasn't right.  
I then see a large stump, where a tree should be;  
and all I can think is "Why did they chop this tree?"  
As I approach the stump I then begin to smell, a strong scent,  
a powerful scent, the scent of sap seeping out of the dead tree stump.  
Many days passed, and in each I would visit this stump;  
and each day that had passed it looked more sorrowful than the last.  
The stump had lost its color, the smell had disappeared,  
the roots that once held water are now sticks in mourning soil.  
I myself mourned this tree, for it was always there;  
in bad days or good that tree stood tall and without fear.  
But now that tree is gone, and only the stump remains;  
forever a reminder of the eternal cycle of life.

– Kaleb Torres  
*Turners Falls*

## Contributors' Notes:

Kaleb Torres, our featured poet in March 2021, is a sophomore at Turners Falls High School. His hobbies include antiquing, writing, and singing.

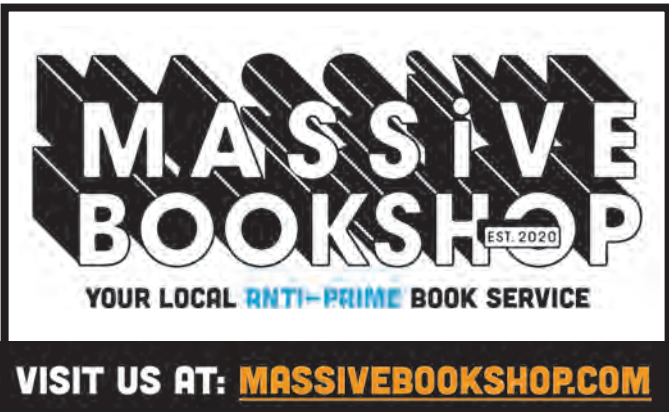
Gary Greene won the bronze award in the 2021 Poet's Seat Poetry Prize. He recently published *Poems In A Time of Grief*, available through local bookstores and in a Kindle edition at Amazon.

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# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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

Mystery Train Records, Amherst: *Federico Balducci, Daniel Gay, Tomatoverse, Flowery Speech, Reticence*. Free. 3 p.m.

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.

HiLo, North Adams: *Habibi*. \$. 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.

The Brewery at Four Star Farms, Northfield: *Appalachian Still*.

Free. 5 p.m.

Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *Ragged Blue*. Free. 7 p.m.

Luthier's Coop, Easthampton: *Shokazoba, Lemon Street, The Quaboag Vibe*. Free. 7 p.m.

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

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

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

Academy of Music, Northampton: *Peter Wolf*. \$. 8 p.m.

The Perch at Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Mamma's Marmalade, Ciarra Fragale, Izzy Hel-tai*. \$. 8:30 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Bomb Track, Back In '86*. Rage Against the Machine tribute

Halloween party. \$. 9 p.m.

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 31**

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Halloween Swing Sunday with Butterfly Swing*. \$. 1 p.m.

Belltower Records, North Adams: *Jeffrey Alexander & the Heavy Lidders, Bridge of Flowers, Lucia Stavros*. \$. 3 p.m.

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 2**

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Bad Bad Hats, Sailor Down*. \$. 7 p.m.

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 3**

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Liz Longley, Dan Mills*. \$. 7 p.m.

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4**

Mystery Train Records, Amherst: *Roachouse, Matt Krefting, Pete Nolan. Lean*. By donation. 5 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *I Am Kawehi, Waiting for Smith*. \$. 8 p.m.

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 5**

The Brewery at Four Star Farms, Northfield: *StompBoxTrio*. Free. 5 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Drew Paton's 1940s Hit Parade*. Free. 7 p.m.

Iron Horse Music Hall, Northampton: *Nada Surf, Pom Pom Squad*. \$. 7 p.m.

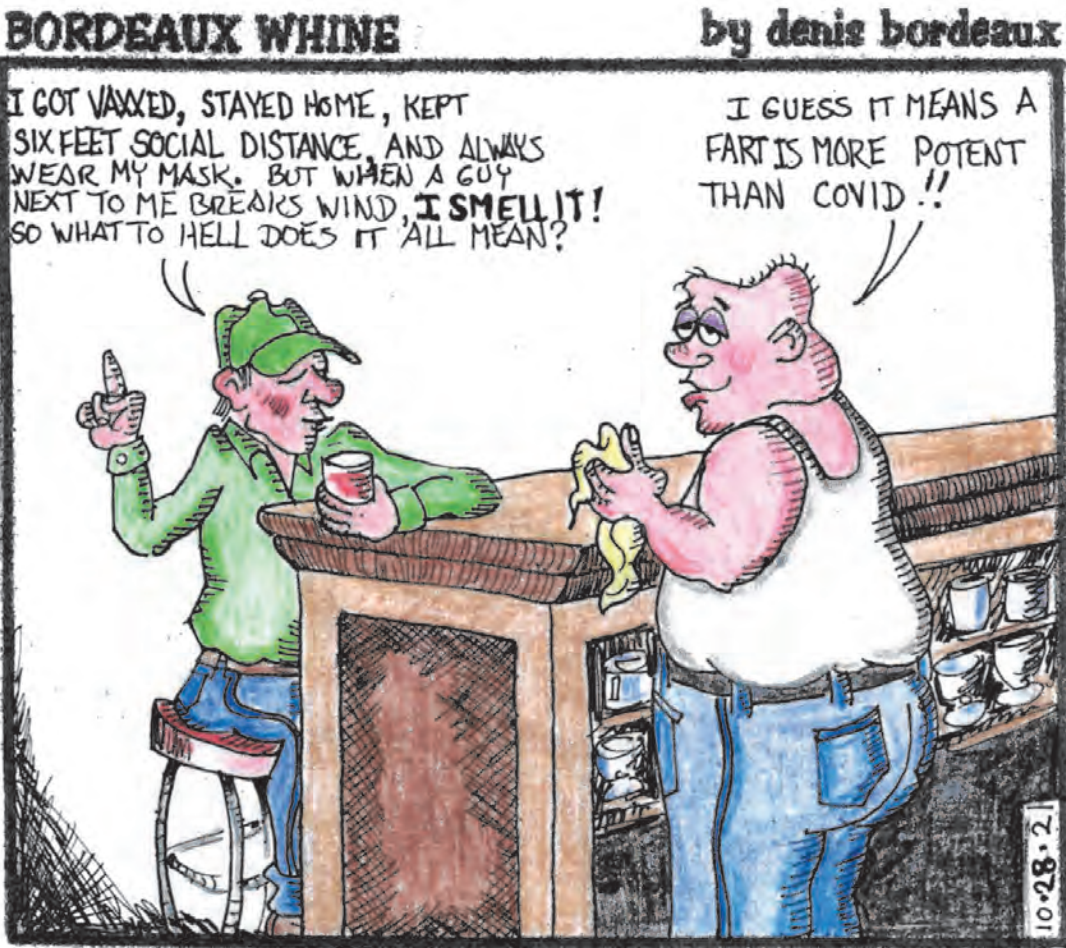
Palladium, Worcester: *Black Label Society, Obituary, Prong*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Re-birth Brass Band*. \$. 8 p.m.

Hutghi's at the Nook, Westfield: *Glambat, Alexandra Burnet, Fragile Rabbit*. \$. 8 p.m.

Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: *Parquet Courts, P.E*. \$. 8 p.m.

Bishop's Lounge, Northampton: *Ruby Lou, Goldsetter, Boyfriend Machine, DJ Quills*. \$. 9 p.m.



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BOOK REVIEW

Justine Dymond,  
*The Emigrant & Other Stories* (Sowilo Press, 2021)

By RICHARD ANDERSEN

**MONTAGUE CENTER** – It is a truth universally acknowledged that interesting characters in search of an author must look far and wide to find one with the ability to put into written words the fabulous stories they have to tell. How else to explain Justine Dymond’s remarkable talent for creating so many totally believable tales in so many different geographical locations with so many visually memorable scenes all narrated in so many different and, at the same time, authentic voices?

Simply put, *The Emigrant & Other Stories* is the best book – fiction as well as non-fiction – that I have had the honor and pleasure of reviewing in my 20-year association with *The Montague Reporter*. Each of the text’s nine short stories is a brilliantly polished gem.

Nevertheless, to recount the attention-retaining plots, analyze the complex thoughts of the characters, take notice of the striking metaphors, and examine Dymond’s mind-blowing rhetorical skills would do a serious disservice to the stories themselves. You can take apart a wood stove, but not a sunset.

How many of us have felt the slight sense of superiority that can come when we experience some of the differences between the ways we do things where we live, and the way the same things might be done in the places we visit? “Cherubs,” the first story in Dymond’s collection, tells the story of an American couple staying at a French chateau where they’ve been invited to attend a wedding of distant relatives. The two amuse themselves as they mar-

vel at how anyone can possibly sleep comfortably on those ubiquitous, much-too-soft French mattresses. They also allow themselves the pleasure of feeling some small sense of national pride when they learn how a company of American soldiers liberated the chateau from occupation by the hated Nazis during World War II.

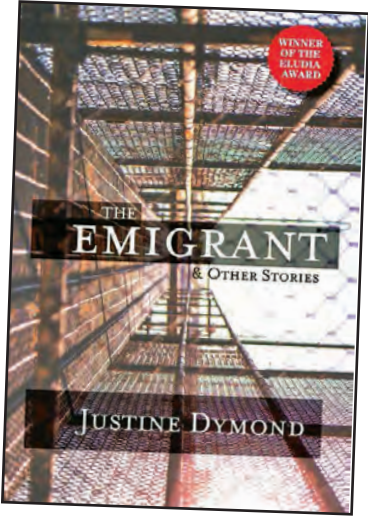
Their pride turns to embarrassment, however, when they are told that their liberators fired on the estate’s cook who, waving her white apron of surrender, ran out of the chateau to greet them. Fortunately, none of the soldiers hit his mark.

But what seemed to start out as gratitude that the French bestowed on the couple just for being Americans, now seems to have devolved into a joke. The couple is not quite sure what to think or how to react. Are the American troops conquering heroes or bumbling fools? Are the French hosts honoring their guest couple or lightly ridiculing their not-quite-totally-suppressed sense of smugness? In what way has the couple’s experience shaped their thinking about and behavior toward the French? Toward Americans? Toward themselves?

This relatively small part about the mattresses and the soldiers and the cook runs to the final paragraph as a curious subtext for what is taking place in the rest of the story. It’s

also a measurement of the degree to which Dymond refuses to compromise the complexity of thought and action she gives to any of the central characters in any of her stories.

Have you ever done the wrong thing for the right reason? Have you ever violated a seemingly unnecessary rule for a better good? Have you ever acted in an unconventional way without considering the cultural consequences? Welcome to “The Emigrant,” the story from which Dymond’s book is entitled.



Ariel teaches English grammar and punctuation in a French prison. She takes a special interest in one of her students, Kahlil, and visits him when her class is not in session. This is a violation of prison rules. Employees are not allowed to have personal relationships with the prisoners.

Ariel also gives Kahlil the present of a dictionary. This, too, is against the rules. Who made these rules? Why should sweet, intelligent, attractive Kahlil be subjected to them? Why should she? Is this a human rights issue? Or is it a matter of naive romantic impulse?

“Pickpocket” takes place in an upscale section of Washington, DC. A young brother and sister have secret lives. Neither knows what the other does. Their parents don’t have a clue that their children are doing anything they wouldn’t approve of. The boy is a compulsive pickpocket who sometimes follows his sister to try to discover where she goes when she sneaks out of the house at night. He keeps what he steals in a collection box: wallets (including his father’s), keys, a cigarette lighter, a gold box. He’s not interested in money; only in the thrill of the take, and

the inconvenience he causes his victims.

What does all this mean? Why do these kids behave the ways they do? How can the parents not see what is going on – are they in some kind of denial? The story is told from the boy’s point of view in a voice that gives no indication of the author’s gender.

France, Washington, DC, middle America, the west coast of Ireland. It doesn’t matter where. All Dymond’s most important and clearly beloved characters are in some way marginalized from the mainstreams in which they exist. All are living on the fringe of a culture in which they can function but not quite comfortably fit. Nothing is clearly black or white in these varied worlds. All the matter is grey as we journey to discover what exists in the locations, the characters, and in ourselves.

Dymond’s most extreme tale of marginalization is “The Intruder.” It’s also her most frightening, haunting, based-on-truth story, and the only one located in another century.

Sarah Brewster’s husband Josiah has just been dismissed from his job as a church pastor through a movement led by Colonel North. Sarah wants to return from Maine to her family’s home in Connecticut, but Josiah refuses to budge until a local judge rules on the defamation lawsuit he’s brought against his nemesis.

This is when Sarah’s troubles really begin. The townspeople shun her and her two children, and then, while her husband is away, rocks start landing on the roof of her small house, fists start banging on the front and back doors, and a strangled hen is left where Sarah and her children can’t miss seeing it. Before long, the house is violently entered and so is the terrified woman.

As she does in all her 21st-century stories, Dymond doesn’t just tell us what it’s like to be marginalized in an 18th-century community. She puts us directly into the entrapping rooms of Sarah’s house and makes

us see, think, and feel as close to the ways Sarah sees, thinks, and feels as literature can provide. Dymond accomplishes this challenging feat through the specific details that she vividly describes and the various narrative voices she creates.

It’s hard to believe all her stories are written by the same person. These narrative voices are also exquisitely rendered. The sentences are tightly constructed, and the language usage is often of a higher elevation than ordinary, everyday speech. At the same time, they never lose that all-important, ever-accessible, natural sound of conversation. Here are some examples:

*The classroom is a small country of freedom.*

*I feel myself swimming in his throat.*

*All this reminds me how specific our pleasures are, how bound up they are in deprivation.*

*Every word I speak in the prison is the cruel gift of hope.*

*A sandbag of grief walloped her chest.*

*She had given up pleasing the bad luck gods.*

*The bus exhaled to a stop, like a yellow dragon, at the end of the driveway.*

*The cold passed through my bones as though I wasn’t made of solid matter, but of cheesecloth.*

Dymond is an award-winning writer. She’s been nominated for two Pushcart Prizes, had a “distinguished” story included in *The Best American Short Stories of 2006*, been honored with a O. Henry Prize in 2007, and was the recipient of a Massachusetts Cultural Council Award in 2020. *The Emigrant & Other Stories* earned the Eludia Award in 2018. This award is given for a first book-length, unpublished novel or collection of stories by a woman who is 40 years or older.

Look for *The Emigrant & Other Stories* online and at local bookstores. Get the book, crack the binding, and fasten your seat belt. You’re in for a great ride.

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