

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 20 – NO. 3

also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

\$1

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

NOVEMBER 18, 2021

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

‘Dizzying’ Grant Spree Prompts a Request for Larger Town Hall Staff

By JEFF SINGLETON

At the Montague selectboard’s November 16 meeting, town administrator Steve Ellis unveiled a proposal to add two new positions to his staff – a full-time assistant administrator, as well as a part-time assistant to executive assistant Wendy Bogusz. Ellis has floated the idea a number of times during the past several months, but put some bones on the proposal, including a list of duties for his potential assistant and a cost estimate for the staff expansion.

The meeting was attended by a number of members of the town finance committee, but lacked the presence of selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz.

The proposal comes only a few weeks before Montague departments are requested to turn in their initial FY’22 budgets, generally expected

to be at “level services” – that is, with no service increases without prior warning to Ellis.

Reviewing his “budget message” for the upcoming fiscal year, Ellis said that the fundamentals, particularly projected revenues, “look very consistent relative to last year.” He said that he had authorized level-service department budgets unless informed otherwise by this Friday, with final budgets due December 13. This timeline would, he said, avoid a “data dump” in January.

After winter and spring hearings by the fin com and selectboard, a final operating budget will be presented to the annual town meeting in May.

Ellis noted that the town has been taxing well under the levy limit, the amount that would require a Proposition 2½ override vote, leaving “just over half a million dollars

see MONTAGUE page A5

SAFELY REST



Above: Don Girard plays Taps at last week’s Veterans Day ceremony at the Soldiers’ Memorial Park on Avenue A in Turners Falls. Our photo correspondent Joe R. Parzych, reporting from the scene with close-up shots, said he would like to thank all the men and women who have served our country. The annual event is put on by the Soldiers’ Memorial trustees and the Montague Elks Lodge.

LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Board Cannot Accept Gift Of Historic Sawmill; Does Promote Sergeant

By GEORGE BRACE

At their Tuesday meeting, the Leverett selectboard declined to state their support for the acceptance of the North Leverett Sawmill property as a gift, citing a lack of information with which to make a decision. The board also noted that it did not have the authority to accept the property on behalf of the town, saying the matter would need to be voted on at town meeting. The board also interviewed Steven Gould for promotion from officer to sergeant within the police department, and unanimously approved the move.

Members of an *ad hoc* committee appointed by the selectboard to look into the possibility of the town accepting the sawmill and dam as a gift presented their findings, and said they needed to learn the board’s

intentions before they did more work on the project. The historic property, whose image appears on the town seal, has fallen into disrepair, and has been offered to the town as a gift by the Kirley family.

“We recommend the town acquire the building,” said Richard Nathorst, a member of the *ad hoc* committee. Nathorst said a variety of potential uses had been researched by the 10-plus-member committee, ranging “from minimal to elaborate.” He said the group has looked into the property becoming a museum, a recreation area, or a small hydro-electric generating station, possibly in line with ideas previously put forth by others to create a “micro-grid” with the library’s solar array.

Nathorst reported that the committee had also looked into different

see LEVERETT page A4

WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Wendell Town Coordinator Peaces Out; Search Begins

By JOSH HEINEMANN

Unstated until well into the Wendell selectboard’s November 10 meeting was the fact that Alisha Brouillet is leaving her position as town coordinator. She started work as coordinator early this summer, replacing longtime coordinator Nancy Aldrich.

Finance committee chair Doug Tanner said he would take care of essentials while the town conducts a search for Brouillet’s replacement, and Brouillet said she would help him with details. Her last day in the office is November 18.

The selectboard opened the Zoom meeting at 6 p.m., an hour early, so members could listen to comments and opinions of citizens about the role of policing in town, and how it should proceed and evolve as the Leverett police department takes over policing in Wendell. Leverett police chief Scott Minckler listened in and answered questions for the first 40 minutes, then left the discussion to allow hesitant Wendell citizens to speak more openly.

Without Leverett, Wendell’s policing needs after chief Ed Chase’s retirement would be answered only by the state police. Anticipating Chase’s retirement, a years-long effort of the police succession committee had concluded with Wendell hiring the Leverett police for limited patrols in town and to respond to calls. The agreement allowed the towns to get a grant to overhaul Wendell’s unoccupied police station, add plumbing and connect it to the town’s water and septic systems, and add insulation,

see WENDELL page A6

THEATER PREVIEW

Turners Falls High School Steps Through the Wardrobe



Aslan the Lion, built by filmmaking teacher Jonathan Chappell’s classes, chats with members of the stage crew and cast during a break in Wednesday’s dress rehearsals.

By IZZY VACHULA-CURTIS

TURNERS FALLS – This Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, Turners Falls High School is performing its first-ever fall play: *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*!

In the beginning of September, director Kimberly Rose and assistant director Alyssa Comeau, held auditions for the play, which is about a little family living in Europe in the 1940s, during World War II. It is based on the first book in the *Chronicles of Narnia* series by British author C.S. Lewis.

Due to complications from the war, the four Pevensie children – Lucy, Edmund, Susan, and Peter – are sent away to live with a relative they barely know in England. Once they arrive, their temporary home is dreadfully boring. The Professor who owns the house is always busy in his study, and his housekeeper Mrs. Macready is awfully strict. While playing a game

of hide-and-seek to pass the time, the Pevensies discover a magical wardrobe that enters into Narnia, a fantastical world with dwarfs, witches, and talking animals!

Soon after arriving in Narnia, the Pevensies find out that there is a longstanding war going on between most of the animals in Narnia and the White Witch, an evil queen who wants Narnia to stay winter forever. The Pevensies have to decide whether to stay in Narnia and help defeat the White Witch, or go back to the real world in England.

Narnia is such a fun play! It’s so magical, and I think it was an amazing choice for Turners Falls High School’s first fall play. The White Witch is played by Fiona Hutchison, and the four Pevensie children are played by Lilya Glabach (Lucy), William Hutchison (Edmund), Grayson Bowse (Peter), and me – I play Susan Pevensie!

I could go on forever about how fun being in this play is, and all see WARDROBE page A7

High School Sports: Two Eliminations

By DAVID HOITT

TURNERS FALLS – I was fortunate that a “Press Pass” was the magic key to open the door at the sold-out MIAA Division 5 state volleyball quarterfinal in Williamstown last Friday: the Turners Falls Thunder facing the Mount Greylock Mounties.

The Thunder came energized, hoping to continue their record of upsets. Spoiler alert: What a thriller! But one with a disappointing ending.

These are my broad observations as a sports photographer. I’ll leave the play-by-play details to the real sports writers....

For the first two sets: Wow! Turners wanted pay-back for their previous loss to the Mounties, and got it, playing with great energy, enthusiasm, and skill. The 22nd-seeded Thunder was kicking sand in the faces of the experienced 14th-seed Mounties – and on the Mounties’ home court. The nerve!

Turners came out strong, and made a very bold statement by winning the first two sets. Unfortunately, it was difficult to consistently maintain that high energy and enthusiasm throughout the third and fourth sets.

The Thunder continued to make some great plays, and came back from point deficits, but the Mounties set their sights on Turners’ vulnerabilities. They shook off the shock of Turners’ two-set lead and drew on their depth and experience. They tightened up their game and hammered away, outscoring the Thunder in the third and fourth sets.

The game came down to a 15-point tie-breaking set, see SPORTS page A7

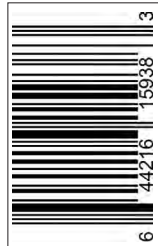


Turners Falls’ Tatiana Carr-Williams looks up as Madison Liimatainen attacks over the Mountie defenders during the state Division 5 quarterfinal game in Williamstown last Friday. Liimatainen delivered 18 kills, one block, and four digs in the thrilling five-set contest, which Mount Greylock won, 3-2.

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Show Your Work

We believe that the announcement by Trinity Health Senior Communities at the November 8 Montague selectboard meeting that it would demolish the Farren Care Center over the coming winter without a transparent reuse study is an outrage. It contradicts the commitments Trinity made a year ago, and the norms of Montague town government.

Before the state approved the Farren's closure last year, Secretary of Health and Human Services Marylou Sudders "committed to... holding Trinity accountable to working with the town to secure the Farren facility and fund a site transition plan." Trinity, a subsidiary of a large corporation based in Michigan, also pledged to implement a "comprehensive redevelopment study in partnership with the town of Montague."

While we can debate the wording of that pledge, one can hardly be blamed for thinking that this would mean costing out a number of options for the facility, and documenting the results on a piece of paper or two. This tends to be the norm in Montague, after all.

But at last week's meeting, various huge numbers for the cost of a renovation were thrown out verbally, apparently based on the theory that the only reuse option was to return the facility to its status as a long-term care facility. The Trinity spokesperson listed some annual renovation costs, which added up to approximately \$28 million, but then a second representative of the company threw in a figure of \$60 million. No documentation was provided to support any of this.

Trinity also promised to "gift" the vacant land to the town, after destroying over 100 years of history.

One resident of Montague City, the village where the Farren is located, noted that "the building" is in fact two buildings, one of which is a hospital dating back to the turn of the 20th century. She asked whether consideration had been given to preserving this earlier building. "No, we have not given any thought to that," was the company's response.

We initially heard this as the response of a large, faceless corporate entity simply wanting to rid itself of a small-town headache. But then something odd happened.

Our reporter read a statement from Trinity we had printed the previous week saying that no decision had been made about demolition, and asked if this was an "untrue

statement." "No," Trinity New England Senior Communities president Janice Hamilton Crawford replied, the demolition proposal was only "a recommendation," and the Montague selectboard could say "no, they don't want that... So, a decision has not been made."

The conversation became even odder when town administrator Steve Ellis seemed to object to her offer to give the town major input into the demolition decision, pointing out that the selectboard would have "no ability to veto a private organization's decision."

As it turns out, Ellis could well be wrong. The town would need to issue a demolition permit, which should consider the recommendation of the historical commission involving a historic structure. But the commission, like the selectboard, has received no documentation about various options for the historic portion of the Farren.

Putting that process issue aside, Trinity just handed the town the right to have significant input into the final demolition decision, but our town administrator tried to reject it. Why?

Ellis and his staff at town hall are doing a tremendous job for Montague, particularly in dealing with our decaying infrastructure. But their many successes, especially in applying for grants, have heaped a great deal of work onto their plates. This is why they are asking for an expansion of town hall administrative staff, and may be why they do not want to deal with another old, labor-intensive and potentially expensive historic building.

But implementing total demolition of these structures on the fly is just plain wrong, and it was just plain wrong to verbally throw out a bunch of scary big numbers at a meeting with no documentation, hoping to shut down debate. The selectboard received more paperwork at that meeting for a footbridge over the Turners Falls power canal, and for a box culvert over the Sawmill River in Montague Center, than for the Farren recommendation.

And this approach bodes ill for many other historic buildings in our community, including the Carnegie Library and the old town hall at Montague Center. As one resident pointed out at last week's meeting, we would not have the Great Falls Discovery Center, not to mention the Colle Opera House or the Shea Theater, if this attitude had prevailed back in the 1980s.

NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION

Bill Doyle scrubs his '54 Ford pickup truck in one of the bays at his Montague Road car wash. Doyle reports that operating a car wash is significantly more involved than bringing quarters to the bank – there are constant repairs, and more than a few “customer errors” to handle every week. People put coins into the credit card slot and gum up the works, he said, or they don’t pull forward far enough in the automatic wash bay and then call to complain that it isn’t turning on. Pay attention, people!

Letters to the Editors

Well Geez

Each time I read the *Montague Reporter* I am more thankful than the time before... I read the *Montague Reporter*.

There are as many causes for this as there are writers, and reasons for the writers' columns.

In the spirit of brevity and the “tyranny of words,” I will keep this succinct.

I carry a depth of gratitude for Mike Jackson, a kind of superman of sorts, flying around the town and surrounding areas, picking up where others may have left off, or simply getting the necessary jobs done – however the commitment beckons, however demanding and unreasonable.

Gratefully,

Mary Kay Mattiace
Montague City

Caught the Bug Early

Some of your readers might be interested in a little more of the backstory of retiring Turners Falls Fire Chief John Zellmann (note the spelling). Zellmann did get his start with the Lake Pleasant Fire Department when he was a teenager, but his father, John Senior, did more than “serve” there – he was the long-time Chief. He was an outsized presence in Lake Pleasant, helping to build the fire station there and to acquire the first motorized fire truck.

Young John's brothers joined as well, and the fire phone rang in their house, so it's perhaps fair to say that the fire department was at the center of Zellmann family life. Eventually, his brothers moved on to other things, but John was bitten by the fire-fighting bug, and he kept at it.

In those days, there was a rivalry between the Lake Pleasant and

Turners Falls fire departments, but John's dedication bridged the gap, and the rest is history.

Chief Zellmann comes from a fire-fighting family, he's been a fire-fighter all his life, and he's had a long and distinguished career rising to the top of his profession. You don't come across people like that every day, and I think it's a story worth telling.

Mike Naughton
Millers Falls

We add: It speaks volumes of Chief Zellmann's dignity and professionalism that he never mentioned we repeatedly misspelled his name – on our front page! Our embarrassed apologies to the Zellmann family and to our readers, and thank you Mike for this addendum. – Eds.

Happily Immersed

Much has been made, in some corners of the Internet, of “forest bathing” – the contemplative practice of immersing oneself in the sights, sounds, and smells of the forest.

I enjoy weekly Friday “analog bathing” – immersing myself in the *Montague Reporter*, Funky Friday on WRSI, and a local microbrew or two. Over the course of one evening, I can absorb exhaustive and sometimes exhausting local reportage; the 1950s musings of a Turners Falls boy in basic training in the

Army; tales of thrown punches and intimidating turkeys in the Police Log; deep natural history explorations and other bits and bobs.

These peripatetic rambles are entirely worthwhile. Thank you, *Montague Reporter*, for twenty years of this. I have contributed to your current fundraising campaign, and I urge all reading this letter to do the same. I can't imagine Friday nights without the *Montague Reporter*.

Mark Lattanzi
Montague Center

CORRECTION

In last week's report on a Leverett Conservation Commission meeting (November 11, *A Hobbled Con Com Again Puts Pond Plan*, page A1), we wrote erroneously that planning board chair Richard Nathhorst said the selectboard “had voted unanimously in favor” of the town accepting the North Leverett Sawmill. Untrue: A study committee unanimously recommended the town take it. This week's selectboard notes (page A1) should help set the record straight.

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Compiled by NINA ROSSI

Reminder to our readers: we are **not publishing next week**, due to the Thanksgiving holiday. Our next issue will come out Thursday, December 2. We folks laboring behind the stacks of back issues and empty seltzer cans are going to take a nice little break in the weekly news-cycle-o-rama.

Join the **Full Moon Beaver Gathering** at the Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls this Saturday, November 20 from 1 to 4 p.m. to see an Eastern Woodland beadwork presentation with Dan Shears, Nulhegan Abenaki.

Shears is a beadworker, traditional hide tanner, and birchbark artisan who also holds the title of material culture advisor for his tribe's Cultural and Historic Preservation Department. He will speak about Eastern Woodland beadwork, including origins and techniques, and a display of finished and work-in-progress pieces will be available for viewing.

After the presentation, there will be a raffle drawing of items donated by the Pocumtuck Homelands Festival vendors. The event is co-sponsored by the Nolumbeka Project and the Department of Conservation and Recreation, and it is free.

The Hilltown Draw-Around, a public drawing marathon sponsored by the Art Garden in Shelburne Falls every year, is still on COVID break and won't happen in 2021. But the Art Garden is offering **Draw-Around To-Go**. To reserve a crafting bag and arrange pick-up, email csartgarden@gmail.com and then come to the Art Garden on November 20 and pick up big rolls of paper and tape, then choose supplies to make paper birds, fabric flags, self-portraits, mandalas, "crankies," placemats, and other fun things.

Also at the Discovery Center on Sunday, November 21 there is another **Exploded View gallery**

event from 1 to 3 p.m., with artists from the *Maintenance & Repair* exhibit. Enjoy a large screen showing of Exploded View's short film *Bitter Sweet Feast* at 2 p.m., with performative readings by Exploded View members. There will be light refreshments in the courtyard and the final session of the (Giant) Listening Ear with Christian McEwan.

The LAVA Center in Greenfield looks for **artists and crafters** for their Saturday Holiday Salons in November and December. Email your interest to info@localaccess.org or call (413) 376-8118.

RiverCulture director Suzanne LoManto is also seeking **artisans interested in a popup sale** in the lobby of the Shea Theater in Turners Falls on one or more weekends in December. Email her for details at riverculture@montague-ma.gov.

Organ music fans will be flocking to Ashfield on Sunday, November 21 at 10 a.m. for the rededication of the First Congregational Church's **George W. Reed pipe organ**. The guest organist will be Jerry Noble. The choir, under the direction of Margery Heins, will sing music by Charles Villiers Stanford as well as lead hymns for the occasion.

Visitors and guests present in the congregation will include Bill Czelusniak, whose firm undertook the complete restoration of the organ, as well as Helen Boyle, great-grand-daughter of the organ's builder, George W. Reed. The 1903 organ, built originally for Holy Trinity Church in Greenfield, consists of eighteen ranks and over one thousand pipes. George W. Reed (1851-1915) produced about 66 fine pipe organs for locations in the Northeast, but unfortunately all but about 11 are lost to history.

The event is free. For more information, visit ashfieldducc.org

Salmon Falls Gallery is hosting **Artists For Food!**, an exhibit designed to directly support the

effort to end hunger in our region. At least 20% of all sales go to the Food Bank Farm of Western Massachusetts and all exhibitors are local artists. The Artists For Food exhibit goes to the end of the year.

There is also a Salmon Falls Gallery team page for Monte's March to End Hunger 2021. You may navigate there to donate directly to the Food Bank Farm. Check out the Gallery's website (SalmonFalls-Gallery.com) for updated information and links to the fundraising page for Monte's March.

Stretch those legs after Turkey Day by going on a **Go Green on Black Friday walk** along the power canal in Turners Falls. Yeah – forgo the shopping frenzy! Learn a little local history on this leisurely three-mile bike path stroll. Meet at the front entrance to the Great Falls Discovery Center at 1 p.m. on Friday, November 26. Appropriate for ages 8 and up; dress warmly and bring water.

After your walk, consider relaxing inside the Great Hall for a free **Napping Workshop** with Exploded View. Bring a mat or blanket and pillow to rest on the floor while enjoying some live theremin music woven into the ambient soundscape and mutating colors of Brian Eno's Bloom:10 Worlds app projected onto the big screen. Masks and social distancing are necessary at this event, which starts at 2:30 and ends at 4 p.m.

The Shea Theater has several concerts booked for the rest of November, including Suitcase Junket, the David Bromberg Quintet, Avram Fefer, and more. Programming partners at the Shea include DSP Presents, Eggtooth, Signature Sounds, Pioneer Valley Jazz Shares, RiverCulture, and more.

The **Shea is holding a campaign to raise \$40,000**, which will fund the addition of a sorely-needed theater marquee, replace old chairs, and upgrade some lighting. Give as generously as you can to this valuable local resource. See sheatheater.org for how to donate, and for complete concert listings.

The **Pioneer Valley Symphony returns** for its 83rd season virtually on Saturday, November 27 at 7 p.m. The theme is "Season of Rebirth," and the Symphony will

explore "Movements in Time" for the first concert, with Giacchino Rossini's "Barber of Seville," contemporary composer Mary D. Watkins's "Soul of Remembrance," and Franz Schubert's revolutionary Symphony in C D.944.

Tickets for streaming concerts are by donation, with a suggested contribution of \$15. Find out more at www.pvsoc.org/tickets.

Paul Mariani will read his poems at the first Slate Memorial Library Series, with guest poets Ginny Sullivan and Marina Goldman, on December 2 at 7 p.m. Paul Mariani is an award-winning poet, biographer of William Carlos Williams and Robert Lowell, and author of fourteen books including five poetry collections.

The event is free and open to the public. There is limited seating at the library, and masks are required to attend. The library is located at 332 Main Road in Gill.

Ja'Duke Theater is proud to present *Elf, the Musical* as this year's family-friendly holiday show in their brand new theater. The show is described as a "hilarious fish-out-of-water comedy that follows Buddy the Elf in his quest to find his true identity." There are shows on December 3, 5, 17, 18, and 19. For exact showtimes and tickets, visit jaduketheater@gmail.com.

Farm: Early Frost, an audio installation with images by Samantha Wood, opens at Looky Here in Greenfield on Friday, December 3 between 6 and 8 p.m. "This installation, which brings together field recordings, observations and images, is the result of spending time on two local farms, Leyden Glen Farm and Just Roots, and observing the forces at work there," reads Wood's description. "An exploration of the landscape amidst rational despair, *Farm: Early Frost* is an invitation to listen."

There will be a screening at 7 p.m. at the opening, and the exhibit will run through December 30. Looky Here gallery hours are Sundays, noon to 3 p.m., and by chance or appointment. Email lookyheregreenfield@gmail.com for more information.

Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org

Dear Friends,

We are now entering our 20th year of providing you with the best possible coverage of local news, sports, opinion, and culture.

Ours is a rare, non-profit 501(c)4 community newspaper, run by a small staff of dedicated personnel, supported by a large number of volunteers, and kept afloat by subscribers, advertisers, and most importantly donations. Our editors, writers, and staff work well beyond the basic pay we are able to offer, yet for nearly twenty years have succeeded in bringing you the information you need to follow and under-

stand the workings of your community.

We have been challenged, like most enterprises and organizations, by this ongoing COVID-19 epidemic. We have persevered, doing the best we can with a smaller crew; we are thankful that the support staff was able to work off site when needed. As the pandemic continues, though, the challenges become more significant: many of our advertisers are also struggling; our Northampton printer closed in 2020, and we are now paying more to publish the newspaper in Springfield; our mailing costs have risen twice. Despite all the challenges, we have actually increased our reader-

ship, including many who have taken advantage of our newly offered digital subscriptions.

At this crucial time, we need to address a number of goals to help guide us into the coming year:

- We must increase the amount we pay our writers. They often put in many hours attending meetings and events, researching and interviewing, and then writing their articles – for a minimum fee. At the very least, this should rise along with the cost of living.
- We need to update our online presence, and make our archive more accessible and search-friendly.
- Like all stable and enduring businesses, we need to maintain a cash reserve for those weeks when expenses exceed revenues, to make sure that staff and vendors are paid on a timely basis.

We have set a target of \$10,000 for this anniversary campaign to support these goals. To make a gift, please use the envelope sent with the November 4 edition for your donation. You may also contribute online at www.montaguereporter.org (find the "Donate" button, and specify that it is for the anniversary campaign).

Thank you for helping us keep on growing.

Sincerely,

David Brule, President
Montague Reporter Board of Directors



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LEVERETT from page A1

legal forms the acquisition might take, seeking to provide a “firewall” between the town and the entity of the sawmill for tax and liability purposes. He suggested it might take the form of a town foundation, operated in a similar way to the municipal lighting plant (MLP), which is not administered by the town.

Chair Julie Shively listed a number of concerns she had, and noted that the selectboard was not empowered to accept the gift and the matter would need to come up for a town meeting vote.

Shively said she was “definitely not opposed” to the idea, and “would love” for something to happen, but cited the board’s “fiduciary responsibility” to the town as a reason to decline to make any commitments, given the lack of information about insurance costs, who would run the entity, and possible future contingencies. She said the board should discuss the matter with the town’s attorney before forming a judgment on such a complicated project.

Shively also recommended the board not create a town meeting article, though she pointed out that in an absence of a change in the board’s position, the committee could create the warrant themselves through a citizen’s petition.

Board members Tom Hankinson and Melissa Colbert agreed that more information was needed, but said the committee should not take the board’s restraint too negatively. Colbert expressed gratitude for the work they had already done, saying it was a good starting point but suggesting they “get a few more ducks in a row” before town meeting. “We love a good problem to solve,” she said.

The committee was invited to come back with more information.

Police Interview

The board unanimously approved the appointment of police officer Steve Gould to the position of sergeant, after conducting a formal interview. Chief Scott Minckler and the personnel board had recommended the promotion, but the interview was added to the process in response to residents’ and board members’ desire to increase engagement between the police and the community.

Residents had been invited to send questions to the board, some of which were asked at the meeting. Before questioning began, Minckler was invited to respond to a social media post which suggested Gould’s promotion might have something to do with his own recent application

for the job of police chief in Northfield, suggesting that he may be interested in moving on.

Minckler was not selected for that position, but said that he was “not actively seeking to leave” Leverett. He added that it was the only time he has sought employment elsewhere during his eight years of service in Leverett.

He also added that his application was based on specific ties to the community of Northfield. “My grandfather is buried there,” he said, adding that he had previously served on the Northfield police department for seven years, coached secondary school baseball teams for four or five years, and had lived and owned a house there.

Shively noted that if Minckler were to leave, anyone could apply for the position of chief, and a different process would be involved, not relevant to the promotion of Gould.

Gould was asked a number of questions related to his experience and attitudes towards policing, some coming from the board, some from residents.

On dealing with non-English speakers, Gould said he had dealt with the issue many times as a police officer on Cape Cod and in Los Angeles. He said for simple matters, Google Translator

see **LEVERETT** next page

AT LARGE

Orthopedics, Too, Feels the Crunch

By CHIP AINSWORTH

GREENFIELD – Local residents who rely on Baystate Health wonder where all the doctors have gone. Staff cuts at Baystate Primary Care of Turners Falls – formerly Connecticut River Internists – forced patients to find new providers, and now a dearth of orthopedic surgeons is impacting the region.

“If you called me today and said your grandkid broke his arm, I’d say don’t bother going to Baystate Franklin,” said a retired local orthopedic surgeon, who asked me not to use his name. “They can splint and reduce fractures, but there is no ortho care. They will ship him to Springfield, or to Colin Cooper in Northampton.”

Why is this happening? “Corporate medicine,” said orthopedic surgeon Dr. Jeffrey Hayer. “The evolution of medicine is nothing from where it began.”

Hayer has practiced in Greenfield since 1982, first with Dr. Thomas Echeverria at the Franklin Orthopaedic Group (FOG) and more recently for Valley Orthopedic Surgery in Baystate’s medical office building on Sanderson Street. His recent retirement marked the first time in over a half century the county was without a full-time orthopedic surgeon, since before a German Jewish immigrant named Werner Nobel moved here in the 1950s.

The aforementioned Dr. Colin S. Cooper lives in Greater Springfield and was on staff at New England Orthopedic Surgeons (NEOS). According to a November 12 press release by Baystate Franklin Medical Center spokeswoman Anita Fritz, Cooper is now on Baystate’s medical staff and “currently sees patients in his office at NEOS located in the Baystate Health & Wellness Center on King Street in Northampton.”

But wait, there’s more. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Akron, his medical degree at Northeast Ohio Medical College in Rootstown, Ohio, and did his post-graduate training at the University of Kentucky Medical Center and at the Mississippi Sports Medicine and Orthopedic Center in Jackson.

“[Cooper] will use the Franklin

Medical Center’s surgical center for arthroscopic surgery of the knee, shoulder and hip as well as arthroscopy. [He] plans to expand his office hours to include time in Greenfield... [thereby] continuing to ensure a strong orthopedic presence to Greenfield/Franklin County.”

Others beg to differ, saying that Baystate’s intention of having only one part-time surgeon come from out of the county isn’t viable. “Let’s say you go into Baystate Franklin for an outpatient arthroscopy, and afterward you’re puking. You’re going to have to stay overnight. No one’s going to check your wound,” said the unnamed surgeon. “This is an absolute total screwup on Baystate’s part. They either don’t care or they’re inept.”

“Cooley-Dickinson became part of Mass. General, and they didn’t screw around,” he added. “I think [Baystate] doesn’t understand how orthopedic surgeons support hospitals, that for every dollar I brought in for myself I was bringing in \$3.00 to \$3.50 to the hospital by ordering MRIs and other diagnostic imaging.”

Franklin County residents have long been accustomed to quality orthopedic care, from Dr. Nobel’s day to when Mayo Clinic-trained orthopedists Don Parberg and Richard Chiroff practiced here to when FOG opened in 1980. While others came and went it was Hayer and Echeverria who backboneed orthopedic care in Greenfield and Turners Falls for almost four decades.

“Tom went to Deerfield, and Brown and got a Master of Science in Medicine at Dartmouth,” said Hayer. “I grew up in Greenfield and went to Mount Hermon and Dartmouth medical school. Tom came back because he loved Deerfield, and I came home.”

Helped by a full complement of nurses, x-ray techs, medical assistants, and administrative staff, Hayer and Echeverria performed operations at the FMC and saw as many as 50 patients a day. On nights and weekends they covered high school sports to save schools the expense of having an EMT on site.

“We were good stewards,” said Hayer. “We never turned anyone away. If a primary doctor called with a patient that needed immedi-



The last full-time orthopedic surgeon stationed in the county recently retired.

ate ortho care, they came in or we’d meet them at the ER.”

When sports boosters asked for money to put lights at Vets Field, they gave \$10,000. “They sponsored softball teams and the [Montague] Mug Race,” said Ann Fisk, who was an x-ray tech and medical assistant at FOG for 20 years. “They were local community guys.”

This reflects Hayer’s reference to corporate medicine – Baystate won’t donate time to staff local sports. Even if it did, Cooper would be down in Springfield, and not in Franklin County.

In 2007, Fisk was enticed by a good benefits package and moved to the new Valley Orthopedics practice at Baystate Health’s medical office building on Sanderson Street. “It was good,” she said. “The offices coexisted. They were busy, we were busy.”

Valley Ortho’s surgeons included Dr. Brian Hoffman, formerly of Mt. Sinai Hospital in New York City, Dr. Jeremy Stevens of Maimonides Hospital in New York City, and Dr. James Bullock, who studied at both Harvard and Yale. “He was a top-notch sports doctor,” said Echeverria.

Eventually all three surgeons became irked by Baystate’s penchant for bottom-line business practices, like requiring them to type out their own notes rather than use dictation.

Pair that with what Baystate Health’s president and CEO Dr. Mark Keroack told MassLive’s Jim Kinney – “It was a lean and perilous year” – and cost-cutting will likely continue to impact the quality of healthcare at its northern outpost.

Stevens left after five years in Greenfield and returned to his native Illinois to practice at the Sarah

Bush Lincoln Health Center in Mattoon. “It took two years for Baystate to recruit Bullock,” said Fisk. “He left in the summer of 2019 and is in South Florida. We were down to Brian Hoffman, and he left just before COVID. Now he’s on Route 5.” She was referring to Cooley Dickinson Orthopedics in West Hatfield, which was formerly the Hampshire Orthopedic Group.

This brings us full circle back to Hayer, who left for Valley Ortho after Echeverria retired. He estimated that he treated 75 patients a week but added, “It piddled down the last few weeks. We tried to find them basic coverage and called people at Cooley Dick. People don’t want to travel all the way to Springfield.”

Asked to describe the state of Valley Ortho in one word, Hayer said, “Chaotic.”

Ann Fisk concurred with that assessment. “Dr. Tom warned me not to leave FOG,” she said. “He told me the new ortho doctors would be gone in three years. The timing was off, but he was right. Baystate just doesn’t run its offices well.”

Now with winter coming, Dr. Cooper will need to drive over 100 miles round trip from his home near Springfield to Greenfield to treat and operate on patients.

Will that, as Baystate claims, ensure a strong orthopedic presence in Franklin County? Hardly, said Hayer. “I can’t describe how terrible this thing’s been transitioned. They think their way is better than what we did for 40 years, and now a lot of people feel abandoned.”

Chip Ainsworth writes sports for the Greenfield Recorder, and opinion and features for the Montague Reporter. He lives in Northfield.

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LEVERETT from previous page

can often work, while in Los Angeles it was practice to call dispatch, as translators could usually be found quickly due to the size of the department..

Gould said dealing with people experiencing mental health or anger issues was “tough,” and said police often don’t have information on a person, but that there are often people nearby associated with the person in crisis, and it can be best to “listen to them, take their lead.”

On the topic of gender and racial diversity in policing, Gould said Los Angeles had a policy of reflecting the population as a whole, adding, “I’m into equality and fairness.”

Asked if he had made changes to his method of policing since the murder of George Floyd, Gould said, “I don’t think I’ve changed anything,” reiterating his commitment to fairness and equality.

Colbert read the definition of community policing from the US Justice Department’s website, and asked for Gould’s thoughts. He responded that it was difficult in a large city like LA, and could at times be a catchphrase, but was easier in rural areas. “It’s more effective,” he said. “We’re accessible.” He said Minckler had more ideas for community engagement, but the pandemic has made it difficult.

Asked where he saw himself in five years, Gould

said there were a lot of opportunities elsewhere, but that he would love to remain in Leverett, and found the experience “way more rewarding” than other work he has done. Gould had previously commented on his ties to the area, the small-town atmosphere, and his ability to house his Nigerian dwarf goats in saying he wanted to put down roots in Leverett.

Upon the board’s approval of his promotion, members of the Leverett police department in attendance were joined by others in a round of applause.

Other Business

Town administrator Marjorie McGinnis reported that issues remain with the lease of the property which is to serve as a police substation in Wendell under an inter-municipal policing agreement between the two towns.

McGinnis said her contact in Wendell had told her the town was waiting on word from its lawyers over what had previously been described as minor wording issues.

Though the lease remained unsigned, the selectboard authorized further renovation work on the Wendell property, by approving a \$7,800 electrical contract with an electrician. The board had previously authorized several other components of the project in the absence of a lease, citing the need for certain jobs to begin before winter’s arrival.



MONTAGUE from page A1

in excess capacity, a situation the town did not have in previous years and thus was not able to consider this kind of strategic investment.”

In justifying the assistant town administrator proposal, Ellis emphasized the strains on town hall staff caused by their success in applying for state and federal grants.

“This town has done remarkably well,” he said. “We’ve really benefited from the capacity, we have, but we need more, because we are struggling to manage those grants.” Later he said that Montague has obtained “a dizzying number of grants.”

Ellis also stated that he had become the town’s “*de facto* facilities manager,” and stressed the almost total absence of a human resources capacity to address the labor-intensive details of employee benefits. He cited two studies of town hall by the UMass Collins Center, one of which focused on human resources, which he summarized as concluding, “Wow, you guys are putting this together with a lick and a promise.” He connected this to the need for “succession planning” for when veteran town staff retire.

Ellis estimated that the two new positions would have a budget impact “in the vicinity” of \$117,000, or a 60% increase in the “select-board” line of the town budget. He said the new assistant town administrator would focus on “facilities, development and infrastructure,” and shared a list of responsibilities he would split with the assistant under the scheme.

Regarding the part-time assistant to Bogusz, Ellis said that “Wendy is vastly exceeding her hours,” and could “unload a lot of the low-skilled work.” “I don’t want to demean it by calling it that,” he added.

“I intuitively agree,” said finance member John Hanold of the second proposal, “because I have seen what Wendy goes through,” but he said the assistant administrator proposal would take a “little bit of thought.” He wondered whether there had been serious investigation of reassigning tasks to town hall staff to “clear up the chokepoints.”

Town meeting member Ariel Elan supported Ellis’s argument by giving a lengthy description of the work of the former public works building

committee, on which both she and Ellis served. She said Ellis was not only responsible for grant management, but “project management.”

Finance committee member Jen Audley said she wanted the selectboard to review the proposal carefully before sending it to the finance com. “I would really like to hear more from the selectboard tonight, if that’s possible,” she said.

Selectboard member Matt Lord said that Ellis seemed to be attempting to free himself for more “big-picture” planning, and wondered if that would produce a “division of labor” between him and his assistant.

Ellis responded that “they’re inextricably interwoven” and “this is a leadership team.”

Selectboard member Chris Boutwell said that by adding health insurance and pension costs, as well as “office relocation expenses,” the total budget increase could be as high as \$150,000. “That’s just scary to me,” he said.

More Growth

The selectboard also heard about “expected staffing requests” from two other departments.

Police chief Chris Williams said he planned to propose adding a position to the dispatch department, and another police officer to increase the level of community engagement.

“There’s too little community engagement, and we want to change that,” Williams told the board, adding that he would come back “with a solid plan” in the next few weeks.

Ellis stated that Turners Falls airport manager Bryan Camden is now a full-time administrator, but is not paid at the same level as other department heads. He said he wanted to “alert” the board of Camden’s potential salary increase, and also that the airport might propose “expanding” one of its part-time positions.

Ellis said the costs could hopefully be covered by airport revenues.

Later in the meeting, Camden reviewed the airport budget, reporting that the financing of the acquisition of the property and buildings of Pioneer Aviation “has gone as planned – the revenues are covering the expenditures. Everything, knock on wood, is going right.”

Capital requests from departments have already been received,

Ellis announced, and capital improvements committee chair Greg Garrison was scheduled to present them to the finance committee this Wednesday.

The board approved a cell phone stipend for town planner Walter Ramsey, and a stipend for police officer John Dempsey. Ellis expressed “shock” that Ramsey did not already receive a stipend.

Other Business

The planning board carrying out an ongoing study of school regionalization, which involves the six towns that currently comprise the Gill-Montague and Pioneer School Districts, is now seeking public input.

Ellis shared a list of dates for presentations and input in the six towns. Two “hybrid sessions” are planned at Montague town hall this Thursday, November 18 at 5:15 and 6:30 p.m., and next Monday, November 22 will be a “day of focus groups” at the Turners Falls High School auditorium. Sessions in the other five towns are posted on the website of the regionalization planning board.

The selectboard briefly discussed the need to post the meeting under the state open meeting law, but decided that it was not necessary because there would be no deliberation, no voting, and perhaps even no quorum of the board.

RiverCulture director Suzanne LoManto received approval to use Spinner Park for the annual “It’s A Wonderful Night” event on Friday, December 10 from 6:15 to 7 p.m. The event features an appearance by Santa, transported by the Turners Falls Fire Department, and the movie *It’s A Wonderful Life* will be shown at the Shea Theater for free.

LoManto also said she would be organizing late downtown shopping on three Friday nights, December 3, 10, and 17.

Ellis reviewed the previous week’s press event at the airport industrial park, covered by this newspaper, announcing a \$169,000 state grant to upgrade a vital pump station. He also announced a grant from the state Department of Public Health to improve COVID-19 contact tracing in the region.

The board then retired into an executive session to discuss collective bargaining strategy.



MONTAGUE PLANNING BOARD

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Montague Economic Development and Industrial Corporation (MEDIC)

2022 Economic Development Plan

In accordance with MGL Ch. 121C, the Montague Planning Board will hold a public hearing on the MEDIC 2022 Economic Development Plan on Tuesday, November 23 6:30 p.m. MEDIC is a corporation established in 1984 by Montague to implement economic development projects. MEDIC has the powers and duties imposed by Chapter 121C to undertake and carry out the economic projects covered in the plan. These powers include the ability to purchase, sell, and manage property and the ability to receive local, state and federal grants, among others. Projects have been identified at the Airport Industrial Park, Sandy Lane, Canal District, 38 Avenue A, and the Farren Care Site. Review the plan at www.montague-ma.gov. The Hearing will take place at Montague Town Hall Second Floor Meeting Room with an option for remote participation.

Join Zoom Meeting: us02web.zoom.us/j/85059846351

Dial in: 1 (646) 558-8656

Meeting ID: 850 5984 6351

Passcode: 811207

Montague Selectboard seeks proposals for the redevelopment of

500 Avenue A (Former DPW Garage)

- 11,250 square foot garage on 0.87 acres.
- Zoned for industrial and commercial use
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The Town hopes to hear from qualified proponents who can commit to a redevelopment of the property in a manner that will enhance the southern corridor of Avenue A in Turners Falls.

Visit www.montague-ma.gov/BIDS for more information.

Site briefing 11/18/2021

Proposals are due 12/9/2021

The Six Town Regional Planning Board

invites you

to participate in a Focus Group and Survey

The Six Town Regional Planning Board (STRPB), representing the Towns Bernardston, Gill, Leyden, Montague, Northfield, and Warwick, has been exploring the concept of a six-town regional school district. Critical to this exploration are the perceptions and perspectives of the students, parents, school staff, community members, elected officials, and business partners of these communities.

Focus Groups

From mid-November to early December, Mary Broderick, a consultant working with the STRPB, will conduct a series of focus groups, both in person and via ZOOM, to gauge the communities' perspectives on the pros and cons of an expanded region. Community participation will ensure the STRPB makes the best-informed recommendation possible. We urge everyone to participate. Please see the **schedule that follows** and select the date, time, and location that work best for you.

Survey

In addition to focus groups, an anonymous survey, with a **response deadline of December 3**, will be available at this site:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GillMontagueStudy>

Feedback from the focus groups and surveys will be incorporated into a report that will guide the STRPB in identifying the best recommendation to serve the needs of our students and communities. That report is expected by the end of the year.

The STRPB encourages the community to be a part of this important process and looks forward to incorporating the results of your participation into the recommendation of the STRPB.

Focus Group Schedule

Town	Stakeholder	Date	Time	Location
BERNARDSTON	General Public	December 7	5:00 pm	Bern. Senior Center 20 Church Street
	General Public		7:00 pm	Bernardston Elem. 37 School Road
GILL	All	December 1	7:00 PM	Gill Town Hall
LEYDEN	All	November 23 (Snow date December 8)	3:00 pm	Leyden Town Offices Main Meeting Room
			6:30 pm	
MONTAGUE	Selectboard/Finance Cmte	November 18	6:30	Montague Town Hall 1 Avenue A
	Middle & High School Staff		2:30 pm	Turner Falls High School Auditorium
	Elementary Staff	November 22	3:45 pm	"
	General Public		5:15 pm	"
	School Committee		6:30 pm	ZOOM??
NORTHFIELD	ALL	December 1	5:00 pm	Pioneer Valley RHS 97 F Sumner Turner Drive, Northfield
WARWICK	Parents	December 6	2:00 pm	Warwick Community School 41 Winchester Road
	General Public		6:00 pm	
ALL	Students	November 29	3:00 pm or 6:00 pm	ZOOM
ALL	Teachers/ Support Staff	November 30	4:00 pm or 6:00 pm	ZOOM
ALL	Town Officials/Town Staff	November 29	7:00 pm	ZOOM
ALL	General Public	November 30	7:30 pm	ZOOM

Please contact focus group facilitator Mary Broderick mary-broderick@att.net or 860-608-1763 to receive a ZOOM invitation.

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WENDELL from page A1

modern heat, secure wifi, and policing equipment to make it into a useful substation for Leverett.

The selectboard scheduled the discussion after two citizens said they felt threatened when a Leverett officer questioned them as they left the town office building. Other citizens responded to that complaint at the October 27 meeting, and the board invited the public to a Zoom forum.

Four early comments by moderator Katie Nolan, former selectboard chair Christine Heard, citizen Jenny Gross, and assessor Anna Seeger were favorable to Leverett patrolling and their presence in town. Seeger mentioned their visibility, and the fact that speeding through town has decreased since they started patrolling.

Minckler said he is trying to have a Leverett officer cruise through Wendell once as part of a normal shift, or to extend responding to a call with a short drive through town. He mentioned one “almost-criminal speeder,” clocked at 69 mph in a 35 mph zone. He said his officers are getting to know the town, and know now that people park outside town buildings to use the internet or get cell phone reception, and that they come and go from buildings at odd times of day or night.

Citizen Sally Alley Muffin Stiffin said that when she was teaching, she often stayed at Swift River School

until 2 or 3 a.m. She said the officer involved in the incident should have shined the light on himself. At the October 27 meeting, selectboard member Gillian Budine justified checking buildings at night by pointing out Swift River School has been the object of some vandalism.

Firefighter Matt O’Donnell said the police presence managing traffic at collisions freed firefighters and EMTs to pay attention to vehicles and patients. He said he responded alone to an alarm at Kemsley Academy not knowing what was causing the alarm to go off, and was reassured when a Leverett officer appeared in case something really wrong was happening.

Others were less enthusiastic. Morgan Mead said the selectboard should remember that they (and the citizens) are the boss, and said the police “should be kept on a short leash.” But he prefaced that statement saying, “I know there are bad people.” He cautioned against letting the police department slide when there is a problem within the department, citing recent events in Buckland and Leyden.

Citizen Dan Leahy said that what the two citizens should have heard when the officer approached was, “Do you need some help?” He said there has been no recent rash of break-ins.

“Like it or not, there is a power differential,” said Sam Birch. “There needs to be transparency.” “I want to know the person,”

Nina Keller said. “We need to know who you are.” Chase lived in Wendell, knew many residents personally, and was well known in town.

Days before the forum, two Leverett officers came to Wendell’s Coffee Connection, which has been extended week by week as temperatures stay mild. One, off duty and wearing normal clothing, introduced herself as an officer, came with a box of donuts, and apologized for the cliché. The other officer, on duty, stopped in his cruiser, in uniform, but introduced himself (behind a mask) and soon had to leave for a call.

Selectboard chair Dan Keller ended the discussion and opened the regular meeting at 7 p.m., leaving open the possibility of another forum. The policing agreement between Wendell and Leverett calls for an oversight committee that includes citizens and meets at least quarterly.

Property Cleanup

Brouillet opened the regular meeting saying the town got two bids for cleaning the property at 131 Lockes Village Road: \$54,243 from Hilltown Demolition, and \$30,000 from Duke, LLC. The property abuts a wetland, making the cleanup a water quality issue, so the town may be allowed to spend American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) money.

“We already have spent \$20,000 on legal fees,” said Tanner. The

town can put a lien on the property for the cleanup money, which would be recovered if the property is sold. For now, payment could come from the stabilization account, with the hope of getting it back.

Selectboard members said they would take time to look over both proposals, and send copies to Charlie Kaniecki for his opinion. Kaniecki has worked for the town in its effort to get the property cleaned up. Bids are valid for 30 days.

Special Town Meeting

The planning board is calling for a special town meeting before December 7 to allow citizens to vote on a solar bylaw before the town’s moratorium expires. Other articles may include cleanup money for 131 Locke Village Road, and transferring municipal light plant money in case the state certifies the amounts in time.

Weather is not likely to allow an outdoor meeting. The town hall windows can open, allowing cross ventilation, but also allowing cold air to pass through the building.

The board picked Wednesday, December 1, at 7 p.m. for the indoor meeting, with masks called for by the board of health. The warrant had to be posted by November 17.

Other Business

The selectboard appointed Kate Lee to the website committee, and Sarah Jenny as animal control officer. At the end of their Zoom meet-

ings, board members schedule the times on Thursday each member plans to come into the office to sign necessary papers. For Thursday, November 11, these included both appointment slips.

After he gets more information from the town accountant, Tanner said a one dollar per hour wage increase for hourly town employees may be possible. He said he would look into a similar increase for salaried employees.

Selectboard member Laurie DiDonato reported that WG&E recommends a security monitoring system for the fiber-optic hut. Installation would cost \$12,000 to \$13,000, and then there will be an annual maintenance fee. Keller asked if there is money left from the original construction account. DiDonato said there was “plenty,” and that ARPA money may be used as well.

Anticipating the creation of a wood bank, tree warden Cliff Dornbush has continued putting logs left from cutting dangerous trees on the lot at 97 Wendell Depot Road. That house and property were sold to Tom Chaisson when the town accepted his response to the town’s RFP.

Chaisson has not complained so far, but the next step is to find out from him how long he is willing to have the wood there. Then it will be time to find another place for storing trees cleared from the roadside to be cut and split into firewood.



NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Sewer Main Mostly Done; Traffic Still Messed Up; “Family” Archaic

By KEITH WATERS

The Erving selectboard meeting on Monday, November 15 began with a brief update on the COVID-19 situation. Cases in the town are up to an average of two per week. They had been at one per week in October. Cases countywide are down, though, it was noted. As part of the effort to increase vaccination rates, the state has a service called the Vaccination Bus, which will make a stop at Erving Elementary School from 2 to 6 p.m. next Tuesday, November 23.

The repairs to Poplar Mountain Road related to July flooding have been completed. The flooding was significant enough to cause an official state of emergency, and as a result state money may be available to fund these repairs. It is believed the state has about \$7 million in this fund, and that the state believes Erving may have cause to claim about \$1.5 million.

The selectboard heard some updated numbers on the Arch Street sewer main repair due to unexpected problems encountered in the process. The most recent of these is a patch of contaminated soil on the property of Tim’s RV. That soil will need to be removed and remediated. The town received four quotes for the work ranging from \$2,500 to \$10,000. It was decided to go with the low bid which was from Western Mass Environmental, whom the town has amicably done business with before.

There is also an ongoing dispute over the price of concrete removal and repair of a six-inch clay pipe encountered under Route 2. The contractor wants more money, but the town believes the services in question are fully covered under the contract as written. It was stated that the contractor has removed only about 300 cubic yards of waste from the site, while the contract anticipated up to 600 cubic yards.

The work has largely been completed, and the new sewer main is functional already. Work still outstanding is landscaping-relat-

ed, and will happen next spring.

Erving Center

Traffic related to the lane closure on the Church Street bridge continues to be an issue. William Bembury, a selectboard member who lives in the neighborhood, said that while traffic is significantly down, there are issues both with people going too fast over the bridge and with people going the prohibited direction over the bridge. Bembury suggested perhaps an overtime detail could ticket at that location.

Selectboard member Scott Bastarache agreed, and said he would be interested in a traffic study at the location. It was noted that the hardware related to a traffic study could be damaged in the event of plowing.

A North Street resident said people are driving faster on North Street, and that he and his family have had to defensively move out of the way when walking on the sidewalk when drivers round the corner to and from Route 2. He asked if traffic lights could be added on both streets.

Selectboard chair Jacob Smith noted that MassDOT foresaw these problems before the lane was closed, but it was decided to not add traffic lights at that time. Adding lights would require an engineering study, which would be an added cost. The results of the study would be sent to MassDOT in Boston, where the decision to approve or deny would be made.

It was estimated the cost for four traffic lights – one for each direction on Route 2, one on North Street, and one on Arch Street – would be around \$130,000. A warning sign would also be needed for drivers approaching the intersection from the west.

Jacob Smith said that the best case solution will be the least bad one. He said he would talk to the police chief about the idea of increased traffic control.

Ervingside

The town property at 18 Pleasant Street,

a former grade school, was approved as surplus to be sold. There are issues related to its zoning, which should be ironed out before the sale.

Assistant town planner Mariah Kurtz noted that the town currently has no way to permit residential buildings with more than four units. The property at 18 Pleasant would be more attractive to developers, and perhaps the interests of the town, she said, if there were a way to put more than four units of living space there.

Kurtz recommended changing the zoning bylaws by changing the definition of a “multi-family dwelling,” currently “three but not more than four” units, and making the town more current in its legal language by changing references to “family” to “unit.” Projects with three or more units would still require a special permit, but this would give the town the ability to permit a larger building if it wanted to.

These proposed changes were generally supported by the selectboard.

These changes directly tie in with a \$60,000 grant the town received last week from the state Rural and Small Town grant program, for a comprehensive review and update of zoning bylaws.

Brian Smith said he has met with a number of developers interested in both 18 Pleasant Street and the former library, and that he thought these changes would be welcomed by these developers, even if they caused a delay. It was agreed to extend the process to late January.

Also related to Pleasant Street, there is a little name changing and signage about to happen. To the south, Maple Street will surrender its name to Pleasant Street, and will have stop signs installed. The other change will be less noticeable: the portion of Pleasant Street to the north, just before it hits Moore Street, is still officially North Street, although it has not been referred to as that in many years; it will now officially be Pleasant Street as well.

These changes will require a town meeting. Brian Smith said he would draft a town meeting warrant article, with the meeting date left to be determined.

Other Business

The selectboard approved Jean Daley to replace Natane Halasz, who is departing her role on the screening committee for a new building and grounds maintenance staffer.

In more surplus-material news, the town is deaccessioning a number of old printers and computers. Bastarache suggested alerting town residents in case anyone wants them. They are all pretty old. They will be recycled if no one wants them.

The board also approved the sale of a wastewater truck, a 2012 F-150 that needs some repairs, to the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District, who have been asking about it. The truck will be sold to them for \$6,000, as-is.

The town’s insurance provider has asked for a guarantee of contract renewal through FY’24. The board agreed that the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association has provided good service, and a guarantee was approved.

In a very brief extra meeting held Tuesday afternoon, the board approved the Ten Town Loan program, administered by the Franklin County Community Development Corporation, to lend \$50,000 to the Gill business Fats, LLC.

The control system for the boiler at the police station broke. The board approved replacing it with a system recommended by highway superintendent Glenn McCrory, at a cost of \$3,500.

The next selectboard meeting will be in person! Or at least, it will be for those interested in attending in person. It will also be streamed live, similar to how the meetings have been, but with technical support from local community broadcast group BNCTV.

The meeting will take place at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, November 29 at the senior center.

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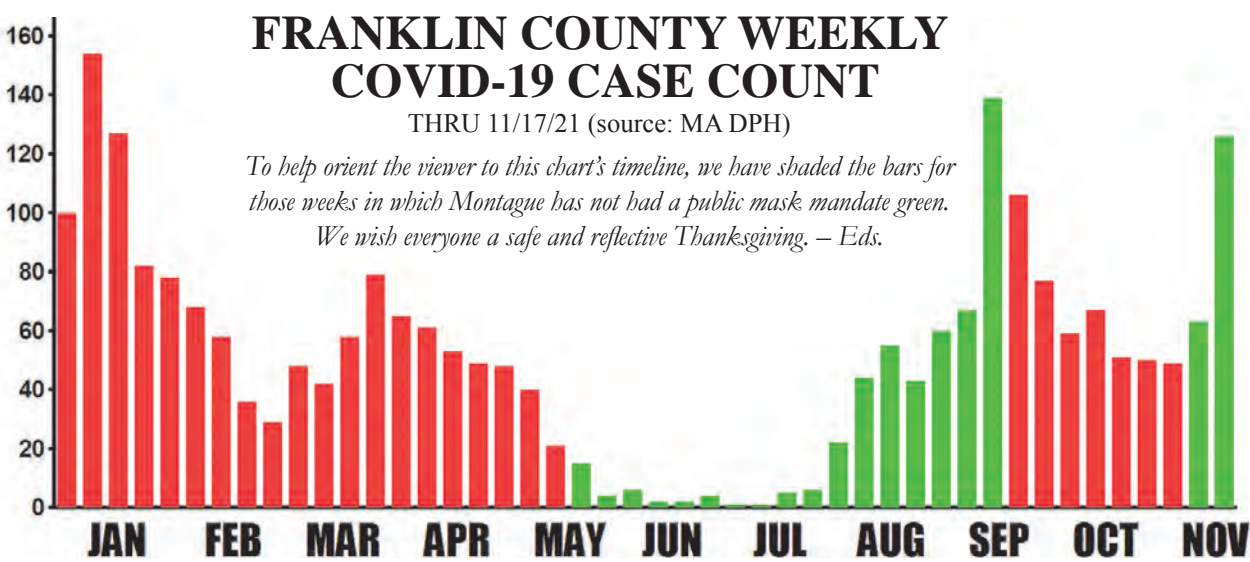
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SPORTS from page A1

with the teams tied 2 to 2. Turners made an excellent comeback effort in the fifth set, fighting back from a 9-3 deficit, but didn't have enough time to achieve the win. The Mounties won the set 15-13, and with it, the quarterfinal game.

The Thunder almost had it: just a few points short in a five-set marathon. It was a disappointing way to end the season, but what a remarkable season it was!

The game stats, despite the loss, indicate how strong Turners was in the contest. Madison Liimatainen made 18 kills, one block, and four digs. Taylor Greene came through for the Thunder with 28 assists, two aces, and six digs.

Seniors Emily Young and Olivia Stafford "went out with a blast," noted coach Kelly Liimatainen. Young notched 16 kills, two blocks, and three aces, and Stafford was a key defensive player for the Thunder with 10 digs.

The rest of the team also worked hard, contributing to the effort.

A look at the rosters indicates the challenge Turners was facing. Mount Greylock listed 18 players – four seniors, a junior, seven sophomores, and six freshmen – while Turners had only 11: two seniors, three juniors, two sophomores, a freshman, and three 8th-graders.

It is remarkable that the two teams were even competing against each other in the quarterfinal, and that Turners came out so strong at the start, winning the first two sets!

Turners is a young team, coming up just short of the the way they wanted to finish the season. But look how far their determination, effort, and skill got them: one of the top eight Division 5 teams in the state!

Coach Liimatainen was, of course, disappointed with the outcome, but she stressed, "I am extremely proud of these 11 girls, and how far they have come. They worked hard since August, and we won some tough matches, fighting 'til the last point. League champs, Western Mass semifinals. and Elite 8 in the new state tournament is something to be pretty darn proud of!"

Congratulations to the Thunder on a remarkable season. I'm already looking forward to next year!



Turners Falls senior and co-captain Emily Young sends the ball over the net during last Friday's quarterfinal.

Football: South Shore Voc 28, FCTS 19

By MATT ROBINSON

On Veterans Day last Thursday, the Franklin Tech Football Eagles traveled out to Hanover to take on the South Shore Vocational Green Vikings in the first round of the Massachusetts Vocational Athletics Directors' Association (MVADA) small-school football tournament.

The Vikes won the MVADA championship last year, but the Eagles weren't intimidated. After the opening kick, the Eagles set up camp on their own 24. Josiah Little took the handoff on the first play from scrimmage, and cut through the line. Then he sprinted past everybody and scored a 76-yard touchdown.

"The kids came out fired up and prepared to play a complete game," coach Joe Gamache said later.

In the second quarter, sophomore QB Gabriel Tomasi completed a pass to Max Bastarache, who raced 70 yards to score the Birds' second touchdown of the night.

But South Shore capitalized on some Tech defensive mistakes, and answered with scores of their own.

"[We] just had a couple of minor miscues, that you cannot afford to have against an evenly-matched opponent," Gamache explained.

Tech's last score of the contest came in the fourth quarter, as Chad Adams scored from Voc's 25-yard line to bring the Eagles to 19 points. But it wasn't enough, and the Vikings knocked Tech out of the tourney, 28-19.

Little amassed an incredible 234 yards on the ground, returned a punt for an additional 15, and scored a touchdown. Bastarache caught three passes for 90 yards and scored a touchdown, and Adams rushed for 39 yards and also hit pay dirt.

Ryan Demers rushed for 27 yards and caught a pass, William Ainsworth caught a pass for 10 yards, and Tomasi completed six passes for 100 yards. And Logan Call (9) and Dillon Gagnon (5) each returned kicks.

Although Tech only tried one extra-point kick, Jack Reynolds split the uprights for the one-pointer.

Defensively, Landen Hardy made 10 solo tackles and assisted on two others, Call had 10 total tackles, Adams was in on nine, and Camryn Laster made a tackle for a loss.

Franklin Tech was eliminated from the playoffs, but it is not the end of their season. On Turkey Day the Eagles host another Norse team, the Smith Voc Vikings, in their annual Thanksgiving morning throw-down.

WARDROBE from page A1

my favorite parts of the performance, but I thought it would be super interesting to hear from a couple cast members and our director Kimberly Rose about their favorite parts of the play.

"My favorite parts of the production are when the kids meet the Beavers," Ms. Rose said, "because the scene offers such comedic relief, and the battle scene. The battle scene looks so cool! It's going to be a lot of fun. Everyone has put in a lot of time and effort, and I'm excited to see it all come together this week."

Grayson Bowse, who plays Peter, replied, "My favorite scene is where the four kids first discover Narnia. All the improv we do while shoving our way through the wardrobe is really funny, and makes us be able to be playful with what we say!"

The White Witch, Fiona Hutchison, said her favorite part of the play is when she "slaps" her little brother, who plays Edmund, and the battle scene.

I also asked Grayson and Fiona who they would pick if they could

play a different character than they are currently playing. "If I could play any other character, I would play Mr. Beaver," Grayson told me. "I love his sense of humor, and the way he jokes around with Mrs. Beaver."

Fiona said, "Probably Susan, but I really enjoy playing the White Witch."

And finally, I asked if Ms. Rose prefers directing plays or musicals. "I can't decide," she said. "They each have their highlights for me. I can say this about plays, though: I appreciate that plays allow for students to hone their acting skills much more than they are able to do during the musical."

I am so excited about *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*, and as you can see, so are our cast members, and our director! If you would like to see this performance, the dates are November 18 and 19 at 6:30 p.m., and November 20 at 7 p.m., in the Turners Falls High School theater. Tickets are \$8 for students and seniors and \$10 for adults. Our cast hopes to see you all there!

LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here's the way it was on November 23, 2011: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

Shutesbury and Leverett Meet Up on School Plans

The Shutesbury and Leverett school committees met in joint session at the Leverett Elementary School last Thursday and, in the midst of other topics, discussed forming a regional planning board to explore the possibility of creating a new three- or four-town school district with Pelham, and possibly Amherst.

The board, to be formed out of three-person committees approved by town meetings in all four towns, but not yet formally appointed, could also look at other possible arrangements for school governance for the Leverett and Shutesbury elementary schools, including the possibility of remaining part of U-28, the current superintendency union with Erving, Wendell and New Salem.

Michael DeChiara, chair of the Shutesbury school committee, commented, "I do have flashes of *déjà vu*." DeChiara served with Leverett school committee chair Farshid Hajir on a regionalization planning board studying the same questions only two years ago. But DeChiara said, "Significantly, the law has changed – we now have the ability to have the money to do this."

Hajir has also referenced, in recent meetings, a multi-million sum set aside by Governor Patrick to incentivize school regionalization. If Leverett were to regionalize with other towns for school governance, Hajir believes the state could provide enough of an increase in Chapter 90 aid to Leverett to improve programming at the elementary school, and, as he put it on Thursday, "ease the transition."

Hundreds Helped at Food Pantry

The Franklin Area Survival Center has had a busy week. Due to the generosity of local donors, the food pantry distributed nearly 200 turkeys and chickens to families to help with holiday cheer in difficult economic times.

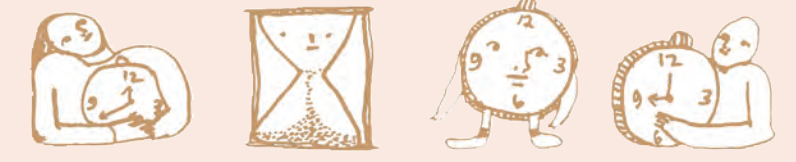
Long time volunteer food pantry staff member Jean Thurber took a break from the action on Tuesday to reflect on the pantry's vital role alleviating the threat of hunger in Franklin County. "We serve a growing need," she said. "We used to average 20 new families a month. These last few months, we have seen 35 to 40 new families come through the door."

That's in addition to the regulars. Thurber said the food pantry serves 1,013 individuals a month now, and there seems to be no let up in demand for the staples and nonperishable food items.

Sandy Beighley of Erving was there to serve the overflow crowd on Monday and Tuesday, and she seemed proud to have been able to help. She explained she was simply filling the shoes left empty when her mother, Mary Tirell, passed away not long ago. Tirell had volunteered at the food pantry for years.

Thurber said the pantry was able to buy 71 chickens at Food City this year for distribution at the pantry, thanks to anonymous cash donations of two longtime supporters. She said the Emblem Club of Greenfield and the Montague Elks made it possible to purchase \$700 worth of turkeys. People also walk in unbidden with birds to donate, including one man who brought in five this week to give away to food pantry clients.

These are tough times, but there is plenty to be thankful for in Franklin County.



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PERSONAL INJURY, WILLS & ESTATES, WORKER'S COMP

Local Organization Collects Gifts for a ‘True Christmas’

By DONNA PETERSEN

MONTAGUE – Your chance to brighten the holiday season for a local kid comes with a big red fire engine, Santa, and a professional photo emailed to you. On December 5 and 12, True Christmas, a local nonprofit, will be holding events at Our Family Legacy Farm in Montague to accept donations of gifts for local kids who may not get much in this season of giving.

I spoke with David Shea of Turners Falls about his work at the nonprofit and the purpose behind it. Shea said he “grew up in poverty” with often meager Christmas celebrations, and later in life was “homeless with kids.” Seven years ago he found out there were about 250 kids in Greenfield living in shelters or emergency housing. Knowing what some of these children faced at Christmas, he got stuffed animals and toys to be distributed to the kids.

The next year, Shea formalized his efforts by establishing a Massachusetts-registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit. He got lists of kids of all ages, from toddlers to teens, whose families were in need, and he began to solicit donations while also providing funds and resources to expand the program.

“I didn’t want any child to know the feeling of waking up Christmas morning and having no presents,” he told me.

Now in its sixth year, True Christmas events will be at Natalie (part of the Garbiel clan) and Cliff Spatcher’s Our Family Legacy Farm at 442 Turners Falls Road just north of Montague Center, same as last year. On two December

Sundays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., you can come with an unwrapped gift donation, visit with Santa, and have S. Gale Photography take a picture that will be emailed to you.

I asked Shea about whether people could have their pets’ pictures taken. “Absolutely!” was his happy response.

We talked about what gifts might be appropriate, and he said people love to buy gifts for young ones – stuffed animals, toys, games – but that “teens are always the toughest component, and there is always a demand for those kinds of gifts.” Apparently, the Salvation Army has an age cutoff of 12 for kids’ gift giving; Shea feels “teens still deserve to be included in the giving.”

I asked if perhaps gift cards might work well for older kids, and he replied, “Yes!”

Shea said the organization happily accepts cash or check donations, which will be used to buy gifts, wrapping paper and the like. Funds can be sent to his home address at 39 Grove Street in Turners Falls. He told me that ideally, people could schedule their visit to the farm. That can be done by calling him at (413) 824-4170, emailing dauidshea71@gmail.com, or by finding the “True Christmas” page on Facebook.

Shea explained that, though he is still taking applications from families in need, they are going onto a waiting list at this point. He is hoping for more donors so he can move kids off the waiting list. There are more people looking for help this year than in any previous year. True Christmas expects to fulfill everyone nonetheless, and readers wishing to



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Santa hangs out on a fire truck at last year’s True Christmas event.

apply should contact Shea personally by calling or emailing.

David Shea is a nurse now – homelessness is a thing of the past – with a decent income, and some of that income goes into the project as well as his time. “I’m a busy beaver,” he said, as he runs the events and readies the gifts for distribution.

So, stop by the farm with the big red fire engine in the front yard and Santa waiting for

you, and bring a gift – 257 kids were included last year! Even if you don’t celebrate Christmas or are kind of a Grinch, you will make some tot or teen happy and, who knows, they may pass it on some day.

True Christmas will be held on Sunday, December 5 and Sunday, December 12 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Our Family Legacy Farm, 442 Turners Falls Road, Montague.

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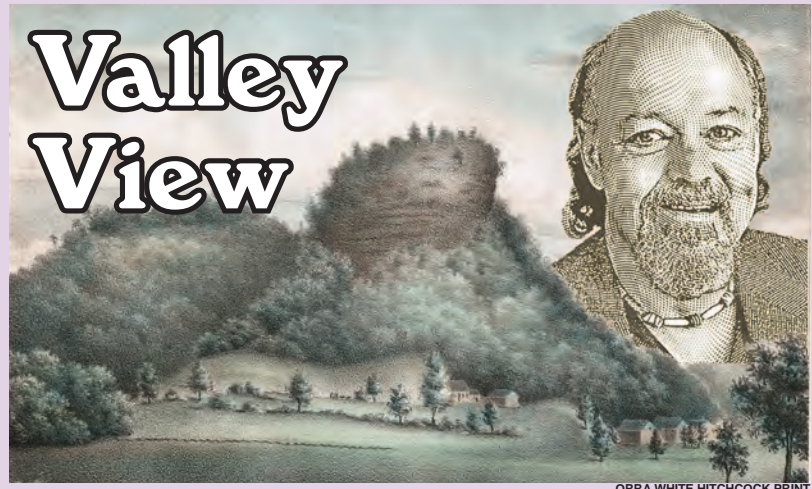
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WILLIAM HAYS PHOTO



By GARY SANDERSON

GREENFIELD – As bright, colorful leaves drop to the ground in visible, audible rain out the window, and fall creeps toward winter, I’m thinking about transitions.

Seated at my desk in the south-west-parlor study, I’m peering through gray morning air toward Colrain Road, which, some 714 feet west, becomes Brook Road leading to eastern Shelburne and Colrain. In stagecoach and tavern days, and even after the railroad came through, it was known as the Post Road to Bennington.

I hear water from the roof dribbling through the downspout outside to my left, and the occasional purr and splashes of passing vehicles. Finally, the Japanese maples are shedding their leaves, depositing an almost-shiny red carpet underneath. Though the annual shedding seems a little late this year, I don’t record such annual events, and can’t say for sure. It just seems late to me.

The brilliant carpet enveloping the tree base looks like a reflection when leaves of an identical bright hue are still clinging to the two tall ornamental trees above. Soon I will mulch them into the lawn with the mower, once again going right down to the wire for the scheduled winter swap-over from mower deck to snowblower.

My last yardwork of fall is always chopping up those red Japanese maple leaves and blowing the tiny pink burning-bush leaves out of sight as winter insulation under the overhanging branches. Over time, those leaves, too, decompose into fertilizer, a natural process.

Once that final fall chore’s behind me, I’m pretty much buttoned down for winter, awaiting snow and ice and its quaking fall off slate roofs that shakes my home’s skeleton to a tremble after big storms. My cats used to get sketchy whenever the sun came out and the roof began to drip. At the first hint of dropping snow, beginning with small chunks, they’d disappear under a bed or closet shelf to ride out the thunderous, vibrating roar of falling, window-rattling snow. Me? Well, that familiar sound signals that it’s time to throw on a light jacket and remove the thin, 40-foot-long snow pile blocking the vehicles parked in

the carriage-shed garage.

The last leaves that must be cleaned up annually are those dropped from my northern neighbor’s Norwegian maple in the back yard. Another neighbor and friend who grew up here remembers when it was planted in the 1950s. The town was giving them away and the people then living there planted a pair between my house and theirs. One was dying and had to be removed many years ago during my residence here, and the lonely survivor appears to be not long for this world.

I suppose it’s inevitable. Norwegian maples don’t belong here. They’re from another continent. No wonder they seem confused, dropping their leaves so long after our native marsh maples, early harbingers of fall, and the bright-orange sugar maples that light the landscape during the peak a month later.

As a working man, Thanksgiving was a day I looked forward to annually. With the upland-bird-hunting season near the end and my flush-and-retrieve springer spaniels in optimal form, Turkey Day represented the start of a month-long vacation. I used to take the time off in one long chunk to hunt deer, relax, and putter around at home.

The break provided much-needed relief from daily deadline pressure and the stress of running a sports department. Toward the end, the daily stress was compounded by shrinking circulation and ad revenues, poor management decisions, and my own irreconcilable differences with the people calling the shots.

“When the folks sitting at Adam’s Donuts and Brad’s Place know more than the local newspaper about Lunt Silversmith’s demise,” I used to say to anyone who’d listen, “you have a fatal public-perception problem.”

Well, let’s just say the brass didn’t welcome such statements, even went so far as to deem them “nasty” when shared in email or during meetings. OK. Fair enough. I guess nothing cuts deeper than the truth, and there was no denying that the paper was hemorrhaging readers at an alarming rate, with no end in sight.

But let’s not go there. I just couldn’t resist a brief digression.

see **VALLEY VIEW** page B4

The Delicate & Daring Art of Glass

By LEE WICKS

Above: The mighty Sanmill River, as it passes behind the mighty Montague Bookmill.

LEVERETT – An eclectic and exciting group glass exhibit with international glass artists from the Northeast is up at the Barnes Gallery at Leverett Crafts & Arts. The annual *Oh Beautiful Glass* exhibit will be there until November 28.

Curated by glass artist Sally Prasch, who lives in Montague and began working in glass at the age of 13, *Oh Beautiful Glass* is a celebration of the versatility and beauty of the medium. On white pedestals pieces of blown glass, flat glass, glass that looks like it’s been molded by a potter, and glass that looks like sand dribbled over a castle all demonstrate beauty and the imagination of their creators. There are pieces that make political commentary, and there’s a piece that celebrates women’s suffrage. It’s not a huge exhibit, but its scope is impressive in demonstrating the range of expression made possible by this combination of sand and fire and talent.

Prasch places otherworldly figures in glowing globes filled with rare gases and constructs portraits of friends from broken shards picked out of the glass trash barrels. One item she is well known for are goblets made with coiled stems that bounce when handled. Her latest work incorporates cast bronze with glass.

Prasch has taught flameworking workshops at Urban Glass in New York City; at the famous Nijijima Glass School in Japan; Pilchuck



WICKS PHOTO

Montague artist Sally Prasch poses with her work at the Barnes Gallery in Leverett.

Glass School in Stanwood, Washington; Penland School of Crafts, and many, many more.

Those who visit the gallery will be the recipients of Prasch’s skill and experience. Her awards and honors are too lengthy to list, but combined they allowed her to call upon impressive colleagues and make selections that reflect all the possibilities of glass art. Some of her own work can look deceptively

simple, like a stem of wheat suspended between two pieces of glass. In reality the wheat has been magnified by the glass. The painstaking process of handling molten glass and a thin stalk of grass is not evident; only the beauty remains.

Marta Bernbaum, from Brattleboro, Vermont, uses oversized glass beads to make “Heavy Necklace,” a statement about the ways in which

see **GLASS** page B4

GREAT FALLS APPLE COLUMN



LEVINE PHOTO

A calendula blooms bright in a November garden.

By ANNABEL LEVINE

TURNERS FALLS – The Great Falls Apple Corps is taking a breather for November, so I thought I would use the column this month to take you along with me as I give you an update from the home garden. Part of the mission of the Apple Corps is to advocate for all kinds of community gardening, which today will be interpreted as giving a glimpse into the messy beauty of the garden of someone who’s been a little bit too busy (aka me).

Last year I wrote about channeling some of the fearful energy at the onset of the pandemic into digging myself a garden bed and trying my hand at more conventional vegetable production. While I was able to grow a few spring crops as planned, the seeds I started got supplanted by lambsquarters, and by summer I had let the whole plot go.

Lambsquarters, or wild spinach, is a delicious edible in its own

right, but it was not the neat rows of vegetables I had envisioned. I had tried something that works for others that I knew wouldn’t work for me. It was worth it to try, if only at least to check it off the list. I know I’m not the only one who is either not of a personality to maintain a garden like that, or too busy to. There’s a reason that working on a farm is a paid job!

This season I changed my expectations significantly, which turned out to be necessary when the calendar began filling up. Thankfully, my interest in perennials means that there’s a whole aspect of the garden that just happens whether I’m there or not. The almost fierce independence of these plants provide me some relief, for as the years go by they take up more of the space that needs to be maintained by my hands. This transfer of work is very much appreciated, and more than enough to pay me

see **APPLE CORPS** page B8



“Ms. BROWN”

Ms. Brown has been in foster care. Foster mom says Ms. Brown is very active and her favorite thing to do is jumping. She is playful, social and independent, and just loves to have her ears rubbed! The older children enjoyed caring for her and playing with her. Ms. Brown would do well in any kind of home.

The adoption fee for rabbits is \$75 for a single or a pair. This rabbit

was rescued from a home where rabbits were being bred for meat, and is looking forward to a pet life instead!

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

Surviving Breast Cancer

By Julie Cunningham

Part 13: This Time Last Year

AMHERST – This time last year was so different. I was getting ready for Thanksgiving with my now-ex, thinking about Christmas for both our kids, and getting ready to put up Christmas decorations. I was, basically, blissfully unaware of what was coming for me just a few short months later. If I had known, I probably wouldn’t have done anything different except maybe eat a little healthier.

The thing is, I had this thing inside me I didn’t know about that was threatening my life. I was thinking about and planning a future that I probably didn’t have at that point, because my cancer was untreated and growing inside me. I was worried about getting all the presents wrapped and making sure the kids had a good holiday, not surviving. Now, I’m worried about my son having a good holiday. But I am also surviving.

This year I might not get as many nice gifts and I might not have as many Christmas decorations, but at least I have my health. I’ve changed since last year. I care about the Christmas experience, the magic and the ambiance, but I also care about the time I spend with my son overall. It’s not just about how many presents he has under the tree, or even what I get under the tree. It’s how he remembers me. Memories are what last.

Since my son was a baby I have made a Christmas tree in his room,

decorated with the ornaments he gets every year. It’s in addition to the other trees throughout the house. He gets to pick out the tree topper, helps with the decorations, and yes – it looks like a kid’s tree. It’s kind of lopsided at the moment, because the star he picked out at Walmart is a little heavy, and I’m missing one of the stems in the middle of the tree, so there is a not-so-noticeable hole.

There are red ornaments, big ornaments, gold ornaments, colorful lights, and white lights. It’s not going to win a contest any time soon, but it makes him happy and it makes me happy. I come from a long line of premature Christmas decorators, so it’s already up.

I think having a tree in his room helps fight the winter blues until early January, when I take it down. I am a firm believer that the lack of vitamin D in the winter impacts us all, and January is one of the hardest months to get through. December is made a little easier because of all the festivities. We’ve got a little residual vitamin D left in our systems, it hasn’t been winter and snowing for too long, and we are still able to muster a sense of happiness.

Unless you ski, which I don’t, there is also a decided lack of outdoor exercise. I believe that this is a huge contributing factor to the winter blues. Fresh air and sunlight is a great way to let the day go and to relax.

Honestly, if I tried to ski I would probably fall flat on my face. However, I am thinking of learning this year. Stay tuned. I think anyone who does ski has the right idea because it’s a great way to get out and it makes the snow make sense. The rest of us are just sitting at home thinking about summer.

I recently started my immunotherapy that I am going to be doing for another year. Technically it’s still a treatment, but it’s a lot easier than chemo. The first dose is the hardest dose, and that’s over. They give you what they call a loading dose, and if you can get through that the rest of the doses are about half. I’m doing immunotherapy every three weeks, instead of every week with chemo.

I’m grateful that this treatment isn’t going to impact my life the way chemo did. I can’t imagine trying to plan and decorate for the holidays on chemo. I keep thinking about what it would be like trying to be in that relationship during the holidays on chemo. I keep going back to it in my mind and comparing, probably to ease the anxiety I have about giving my son a good holiday.

I do believe everything happens for a reason, and I am where I am for a reason. Hunter is six now and will be seven when I’m done with my treatment, and fingers crossed, next year at this time I’ll have a full head of hair and chemo will be a distant memory.

Senior Center Activities

NOVEMBER 22 TO DECEMBER 3

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.

Monday 11/22

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

Tuesday 11/23

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

Wednesday 11/24

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

Thursday 11/25

Closed
4 p.m. Mat Yoga

Friday 11/26

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

Monday 11/29

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

Tuesday 11/30

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

Wednesday 12/1

9 a.m. Veterans’ Agent Hours
10:15 a.m. Aerobics

11 a.m. Chair Exercise
1 p.m. Bingo

Thursday 12/2

4 p.m. Mat Yoga
10 a.m. Chair Yoga

10:30 a.m. Brown Bag

1 p.m. Cards & Games

Friday 12/3

10:15 a.m. Aerobics

ERVING

Erving Senior Center is open 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Mondays through Fridays. 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 11/22

9 a.m. Re-Store & Re-Emerge
10 a.m. Tai Ji Quan

Tuesday 11/23

9 a.m. Good for YOU
10 a.m. Line Dancing

Wednesday 11/24

9 a.m. Strength & Conditioning
10 a.m. Tai Ji Quan

12:30 a.m. Bingo

Thursday 11/25-Friday 11/26

Closed

Monday 11/29

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

10 a.m. Tai Ji Quan

Tuesday 11/30

9 a.m. Good for YOU

10 a.m. Line Dancing

Wednesday 12/1

9 a.m. Strength & Conditioning
10 a.m. Tai Ji Quan

12:30 a.m. Bingo

Thursday 12/2

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

10 a.m. Stretch & Balance

Friday 12/3

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.

Learning To Fly Fish: Part XXI

This is the final installment in a series of articles penned by Ariel Jones in 2005 on her experiences learning to fly fish. Jones passed away earlier this year. She was a pioneer of the local art scene when she moved to Turners Falls from NYC and opened a photography studio on Avenue A in 2000. This column originally ran November 17, 2005.

BY ARIEL JONES

TURNERS FALLS – I am already feeling bereft of the flexibility long daylight hours and warm weather provide for continuous fishing. Weather and other demands have also diminished the amount of time I have spent on the river. Over the past month I have been out as often as possible, but autumn grows late.

It has been hard to write. I have been working on the tactics I learned over the summer and early fall, and trying to catch fish more consistently. This has been primarily a matter of learning to be patient, and patience is the real key to fishing well.

I read somewhere that one’s line should spend more time on the water than in the air in order to catch trout. There are many issues surrounding this simple idea. The first is that it is fun to cast a fly rod. The sheer joy of producing a good cast is addictive. And if one is not catching fish, it is also entertaining.

However, repeatedly casting ensures you will spook the fish. In effect, you stop thinking, and are not employing the tactics of a predator. Perversely, the more time that goes by without a hit, the greater is one’s tendency to keep the line in the air rather than on the water.

If one definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and still expecting different results, well... It really is all about patience and careful watching. After wading to the spot you want to work, wait until the water calms down again before casting.

Look for the fish. Where are the trout located, or if you can’t see them, likely to be located? Are they rising? What insects are they feeding on? Did you just line



your prey with a bad cast and spook him? If so, wait. Then, wait some more until you cast more carefully, making your fly drift towards him rather than splashing the line over his head.

There are so many issues like these to be aware of and to constantly improve upon. And when it all comes together and you feel the surge of excitement of a strong strike on your fly, it is both intoxicating and deeply satisfying.

And this part cannot be explained any more than “why” one falls in love. You just do. And it just is.

Writing this column has been a pure delight and I plan to continue off and on through the winter. I hope to begin learning how to tie my own flies, repair my now leaky waders, and to fish whenever the weather is above 40 degrees.

Happy Thanksgiving to us all.

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GAME REVIEW

Unpacking *Unpacking*

By W. KAIZEN

AMHERST – When I was in graduate school, the term “unpacking” had a certain academic cachet. We would sit around the seminar table and unpack the meaning of an essay or idea, as if it contained multitudes of other ideas that would be revealed by studied probing. The term was derived from “Unpacking My Library,” an essay by German cultural critic Walter Benjamin where he unpacks the idea of collecting as he unpacks his book collection after moving to a new apartment.

Although collecting things, Benjamin says, is a way of making order out of the chaos of life, collections themselves are a kind of chaos of happenstance dictated by the situation in which each object has come to be obtained by the collector. Collections, he says, are also about memories. Each of his books is a reminder of the circumstances of its acquisition and the role it plays in relation to the others in his collection.

In the recently released video-game *Unpacking*, the player spends their time unpacking someone else’s things. The game begins in 1997, in a child’s bedroom. The bedroom is depicted in isometric perspective and rendered in detailed pixel art that recalls the videogames of the era. Cardboard boxes are stacked on the floor.

When I clicked on a box, it opened. Each subsequent click revealed an object from the box, which I placed somewhere in the room. My first click revealed a book, which I promptly filed on a bookshelf. By the time I was done, I had tucked games into a chest, lined up figurines, a soccer trophy, and a Rubik’s Cube on top of the chest, and arrayed plentiful art supplies on a desk tucked under a raised bed upon which I sat a phalanx of stuffies.

Whew. Job done. Except that some of the items were suddenly throbbing with a red outline that I immediately realized meant I had put them in the wrong place. After some more shuffling, everything was in its proper home, and the game allowed me to move on.

Upon completion, the camera zoomed out, revealing that the room was actually a snapshot in a photo album. A click moved me on to the next page in the album, which jumped in time to 2004 and the protagonist’s college dorm room, her

first home away from home.

Players follow the unnamed protagonist through a total of eight moves, from roughly age eleven to thirty-one. With each move, the objects being moved change along with the spaces. Tracking which things she moves, versus those she leaves behind, is one of the primary ways in which the game tells the story of her life. The player acts as a detective, piecing together the scraps of her life through the things she has owned. Creating order out of the chaos of her stuff allows the player to empathetically connect with her.

The protagonist’s female gender is revealed through various details beginning with her choice of purple as the primary color of her childhood room (not a dead giveaway) to the appearance of boxes of tampons and sanitary pads in her dorm room, where she lives alone. The inclusion of these very un-video-game-like details allows *Unpacking* to capture both the quotidian character of such everyday objects in our lives and their importance.

That she keeps moving a pink plastic cup from bathroom to bathroom, to hold her toothbrush and toothpaste, is apropos of nothing except the ways in which we get attached to objects and drag them around with us. Other things, such as her college graduation diploma or her book collection, play more dramatic roles in advancing the narrative.

The other way *Unpacking* tells the protagonist’s story is through her succession of homes as she moves in with roommates and love interests. It’s remarkable how much I learned about her without the game’s use of voiceover, cut scenes, dialog, or logbooks. The game turns something as mundane as unpacking into a rich means of evoking the story of the protagonist’s life.

That said, *Unpacking* can be a slog. It’s not long – maybe four or five hours of playtime total – but I had to take breaks from unpacking her things like I would in real life. I got annoyed that she kept moving her stuffies around as an adult, although this eventually became an important story beat. I’m decades older than the protagonist and have a young daughter. To get through the game, I had to imagine I was the protagonist’s father, helping her unpack as she moved.

The ways in which memory inheres to objects is reinforced by the photo album that metaphorically contains the game and the protagon-

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Seven Vehicle Break-Ins; Two Gunshot Complaints; Something About A Dog; Crazy Rainstorm On Friday

Monday, 11/8
3:18 p.m. Caller from Fourth Street reporting that a white limo has been in the area three times today. Caller suspicious of drug activity. Referred to an officer.
9:26 p.m. Greenfield PD requesting assistance checking a G Street location for a party of interest. Officer confirmed involved vehicle is at Cumberland Farms. All units, including Greenfield PD, now on G Street. Officer advises one in custody; GPD will be transporting suspect.
10:10 p.m. Caller from Bridge Street reporting a woman screaming outside of the apartment building right next to the bridge that goes into Erving; sounds like multiple voices yelling. Second call came in reporting same incident; added that the woman was shoved against the wall. Officer advises situation was mediated and all parties were advised of their options.
Tuesday, 11/9
1:49 a.m. Officer out with U-Haul van in the turn lane in front of the Erving police station on Route 2; driver appears to be asleep behind the wheel. Driver states he was lost and tired. Officer didn’t observe any signs of impairment. Vehicle moved to parking lot for driver to rest and be on his way when he feels refreshed.
7:06 a.m. DPW advises kids played in the wet concrete at Unity Park; requesting officer to respond and speak to crew for a report.
8:27 a.m. Four reports of vehicles broken into overnight on South Prospect Street and Craig Avenue. Investigated.
2:20 p.m. Caller reports male party walking in Seventh Street area with a possible open container.
5:38 p.m. 911 caller reporting an erratic driver following too closely, flashing their lights, and honking. Driver then passed the caller and sped away. Caller is traveling on Route 47 and turned onto Route 63 towards Millers Falls. Vehicle described as a white muscle car. Unable to locate.
Wednesday, 11/10
3:36 p.m. 911 caller reporting erratic driver on Loomis Road swerving and hitting a curb. Call transferred to Greenfield PD.
5:05 p.m. 911 caller reporting an erratic driver on River Road in Deerfield. Call transferred to Shelburne Control.
9:51 p.m. Caller from Taylor Hill Road reporting hearing a shot fired near his home then seeing two guys run to a black Nissan Maxima and speed away. Caller states that he has heard gunshots five or six times this week. Area checked; nothing found.

onist’s life. Of all the books in Walter Benjamin’s collection, he most cherished two sticker books that he had inherited from his mother, who had assembled them when she was a child. For Benjamin, such personal albums, designed to be shared with others and passed on as cherished objects, are the epitome of collecting.

Unpacking’s designers have passed on a magical photo album of the protagonist’s memories that allows the player to make order of the things that surround her lived experience. *Unpacking* reveals that while some of the collecting that people do is purposeful, all the stuff around them helps make them who they are. In so doing, it turns moving from one life’s biggest stressors into a unique and well worth playing videogame.

Unpacking was developed by Witch Beam and is currently available for PC, Nintendo Switch, and Xbox One.

Thursday, 11/11
4:34 p.m. Caller reporting plastic bin in middle of road on Federal Street near Lake Pleasant Road. Officer checked area; unable to locate.
10:02 p.m. Caller reporting a woman yelling for help standing next to a silver Monte Carlo in the Second Street alleyway. When the caller approached the woman, she yelled at her to go away. Referred to an officer.
Friday, 11/12
5:36 a.m. Board of Probation requesting an officer go take a look at a monitor bracelet to make sure it wasn’t tampered with. Officer advises everything looks good.
10:37 a.m. Vehicle entered overnight on Montague City Road; change taken. Caller wanted this information logged.
11:17 a.m. Report of water built up in front of the Turners Falls Post Office due to the heavy rain. DPW notified.
12:43 p.m. Caller from Turners Falls Road reports hearing two transformers blow. Shelburne Control advised. Eversource notified.
12:47 p.m. Caller states tree is down blocking Ferry Road; unknown if wires are involved. DPW advised.
12:58 p.m. Tree blocking sidewalk on Crocker Avenue. Officer and DPW advised.
1:07 p.m. Tree and wires across Ripley Road. Officer and Shelburne Control notified. Eversource notified.
1:07 p.m. Caller reporting tree across alley between I and H streets blocking all travel. No wires involved. DPW advised.
1:14 p.m. Officer reports standing water on Crocker Avenue and a large branch on the sidewalk. DPW advised.
1:15 p.m. Caller states the bridge on Greenfield Road near the Book Mill is flooded with approximately four feet of water on it. Road not passable; can’t see the sidewalk. Officer and DPW advised.
1:20 p.m. Officer reports tree on house on Montague City Road. Homeowners are home.
2:43 p.m. DPW reports Montague City Road is flooded between Walnut and Turnpike. They are putting up barricades and would like the area checked later and the barricades moved to the side if the water level goes down. Emergency vehicles can get through if necessary.
3:15 p.m. Caller reports tree down with some wires on J Street. Shelburne Control contacted to dispatch FD.
3:28 p.m. Caller reports wire down in roadway

at Edward Avenue and Millers Falls Road. Area checked; no hazards located.
5:31 p.m. Caller from Randall Wood Drive states that his 14-year-old German Shepherd Pointer got loose. Caller states dog is brown/white and is blind and deaf. Caller called back and advised he located dog.
5:42 p.m. Caller reports a group of individuals having a fight on K Street. Caller reports a group of kids who went into her house and stole something; advises they are still outside in this area. Investigated.
8:24 p.m. Greenfield PD reports a white Audi struck a pole in their town on Maple Street, possibly headed into Turners Falls dragging a bumper. Later advised to cancel.
10:54 p.m. Caller reports someone being wheeled around in a wheelchair on Bridge Street yelling for help. Unable to locate.
Saturday, 11/13
3:29 p.m. Report of gunshots that sound like they are too close to the caller’s home on Lake Pleasant Road, possibly coming from the Scalpers Lodge. Area checked; no shots heard.
Sunday, 11/14
1:48 a.m. Caller from H Street states her motion light came on and she noticed a male dressed in all black kneeling down in front of her car. Caller states that he took off when she opened the door but left a bag of stuff behind. Officer spoke with caller and took possession of property; will be on lookout for male.
9:40 a.m. Caller from I Street would like on record that someone went through his vehicle last night. Some change appears to be missing.
3:41 p.m. Caller came to station to speak to an officer regarding his lights for his outside decorations being cut.
5:22 p.m. Caller reporting raccoon acting strange at corner of Unity and Central streets. Officer met with caller and looked for raccoon but could not locate it.
8:06 p.m. 911 caller from Main Street reporting five or six people arguing outside across the street from his residence. Caller heard something about a dog and someone being an alcoholic. Caller stated that they are all now back at their porches. Officer advised that both parties have been spoken to and advised of options.
9:24 p.m. Caller from Keith Apartments reporting that someone tried opening the locked door to her apartment. Area checked; unable to locate.



IMAGES BY WITCH BEAM

Each level of *Unpacking* begins with the protagonist moving into a new room (left); the player follows the story by unpacking her boxes (right).

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GLASS from page B1

women are weighed down by expectations. The pear-shaped beads are huge and heavy. No woman could ever wear this necklace, nor should she.

William Rathbun of Leverett wraps neon bands of color around an electric guitar made from a flat piece of colored glass. The construction seems to pulse with energy. In his artist’s statement he writes, “I like to make images and objects that express personal feelings about my life and surroundings.” In addition to his work in glass, Rathbun paints in oils and watercolors to create works of art that reflect what he calls “our contemporary psychological environment.”

Martha Giberson, who makes lampwork beads, says, “I like playing with fire.” That statement seems to exemplify the spirit of this show that features acclaimed artists playing with fire and creating with a substance that can shatter in a moment, while exploring powerful social issues and personal feelings.

Giberson states that making one of her beads takes from ten minutes to more than two hours. She explains in a written statement, “My beads are made by melting glass rods at about 1,400 degrees F and winding the hot molten glass around a coated steel rod. I then melt small



Left: Marta Bernbaum uses oversized glass beads to illustrate the idea of weighty expectations that can be placed on women.
Right: William Rathbun of Leverett electrifies a glass guitar in this piece at the Barnes Gallery.

bits of different colored glass onto this ‘canvas’ to arrive at a finished bead. The bead is then annealed in a glass kiln to line up all the glass molecules at a constant temperature of approximately 960 degrees F to prevent the bead from shattering or breaking from thermal shock.”

Thermal shock refers to breakage caused by sudden extreme changes in temperature. I was constantly aware of the tension between the delicacy of the pieces in this show and

the dangers of working with molten glass. These artists are brave souls.

In this small gallery on a country road in Leverett, nationally and internationally known artists have come together to delight and amaze visitors. There are many more artists than I can mention and describing all their work is no substitute for seeing it. Visit the gallery at 113 Montague Road, and while you are there don’t miss the paintings by Susan B. Mulholland also on exhib-

it until November 28.

Mulholland’s landscapes capture Leverett Pond at different times of day and in all four seasons. They are soft and moody, sunlit and frozen, familiar and also revealing in that they make the viewer see something new in a landscape they might have driven by but not stopped to examine closely. Mulholland is also showing a series of small animal portraits. These are charming and reveal her deep love for animals.

Leverett Crafts & Arts, established in 1966 as a community arts center, offers studio space, a gallery and an area for group functions. The Barnes Gallery is open 1 to 5 p.m. on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. There will be a holiday store and art show and open studios on December 4 and 5 and December 11 and 12 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. At this writing, masks are required for everyone who wants to enter the building.



VISITS

Meet Santa at Yankee Candle

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

DEERFIELD – Every year Yankee Candle in South Deerfield has a Meet Santa event for the holidays. This year, it’s going to be a virtual Santa experience again, for which you have to make reservations (see santaoctober.eventbrite.com). You could make reservations starting in October up until December.

Their website describes it this way: “Walk through our touch-free interactive woodland magical forest, bring a letter for Santa to leave in a Special Mailbox, and follow the whimsical path to a life-sized 3D shadow box photo op. Experience a live virtual one-on-one visit with Santa Claus while he is at the North Pole! Take some photos with our Green Screen Photo Op – they will be sent to your phone/email.”

Meeting with Santa started on October 13, and will go on until December 23.

On another website, I found out what this whole thing is going to be like, and where in Yankee Candle it is going to be. It will be at the place known as the candle-making museum. Enter between Powder Hollow Brewery and the gazebo on the south side of the place. Two families at a time can be involved in each visit. (See www.yankeecandle.com/south-deerfield-village.)

“This is our second year doing the visit with Santa virtually,” one Yankee Candle operator told me. She also mentioned that the Santa they are using for this is named Dave. “He has been there for quite a few years...” she said. “The man is normally here.” That is how it is when it comes to Santa being at Yankee Candle.

As for how the event has usually been done, an employee out of the Hillside Pizza located in the



The Santa who is a man named Dave (not pictured) is staying at the North Pole again this year, but is booking virtual appointments at Yankee Candle.

place told me, “Usually he arrives by helicopter.” I also learned it’s a pretty busy day around the place when he comes. That seems like a good sign that this version of this event will be just as successful as it always is.

I found out that the timing of it normally starts after Thanksgiving. In the words of a long-term area resident who wishes to remain anonymous, “Santa arrives on a helicopter after Thanksgiving – that’s how it always was.” She added, “[For] years and years – even when Kittredge owned it.” (From what I understand, Mr. Kittredge was the original owner of Yankee Candle.)

Yankee Candle appears to have done well when it comes to being involved with the holidays. I personally like some of their candles and other products in connection with the season. I believe the Bavarian Village they have is also very busy, and reasonably well-liked by people, so right there is another reason that this event will likely be hugely successful.

VALLEY VIEW from page B1

Anyway, I stopped deer hunting long before retiring in June 2018. The end came after my older son’s death 11 years ago and, honestly, I can’t say I miss it. Yes, I love waking with the forest and blending into the habitat. But, likewise, I love and respect deer, and enjoy observing them in my travels, be it along the road or bumping into them on walks through wild lands. So graceful and alert. So beautiful to observe. If hungry, I could still kill and process one for the freezer. But I’ve cut way back on the amount of meat I eat, and I still do get a taste of venison here and there and from friends. That’s enough for a man whose wife won’t touch wild meat, is almost nauseated by the smell of it cooking in bacon fat in an iron skillet.

Well, guess what? Now, I’m phasing out bird-hunting, my last outdoor game – one I genuinely loved for the robust exercise, the wing-shot challenge and dog work, and clung to longer than baseball and softball, fishing and turkey hunting, and golf. I clung to the activity with a white-knuckle grip for as long as my deteriorating legs cooperated, which frankly is no longer.

Oh well. I’ve been through transitions before. I stopped golfing in my teens, when I was forced to set my priorities. Baseball was No. 1 in the warmer months, then trout-fishing and, later, turkey-hunting. I could live just fine, thank you, without country clubs and well-dressed warriors in a gentleman’s game. Golfers were good boys who followed dress codes and golf etiquette. Not for me. Give me an early-morning or rainy-day trout stream any day of the week. That was an easy decision.

Adult softball was a different story. Honestly, when playing baseball into my mid- to late 20s, I never anticipated playing in men’s softball leagues. It was a game for fat old men still trying to prove they were “ballplayers” even though they never could hit the fastball, forget the 12-to-6 curve. I tried to continue after blowing out my left knee in 1976, but by the time I got married in 1979, my baseball days were behind me. My wheels were gone and I was done playing physically compromised, unable to go into the power alleys to make the play or take the extra base.

When my grandfather died soon after my wedding, I bought his South Deerfield home, and that of his father and mine, where I grew up as a boy. Back in town as a married man, my youth-baseball buddies approached me about joining their men’s-softball teams. Reluctantly, I took the bait, figured I’d give it a shot, and ultimately settled on the modified-pitch game in which I lingered through age 41. By that time, I was a pudgy catcher/designated hitter limping around the bases with a knee brace.

Hey! Whatever it takes, I thought, catching my last chance to stay in the game. It was fun. I got to analyze the hitters and give targets that I reasoned they’d have trouble hitting squarely. I loved working with the pitchers, hitting in key situations, the dugout and

bench camaraderie that had been part of me since boyhood. I hung on far too long and, frankly, thought I’d miss it when I quit. Well, I was wrong. Dead wrong. I soon discovered there were other activities to keep me busy and fully engaged. Baseball’s for young men. I was not young. Time to move on.

Which brings us to my current situation. In my second year without my own gundog, I’m in the process of phasing out pheasant hunting, even though I have a world-class springer available when needed. I hunted that dog as a pup last fall while his owner was making a living as a painter. A near flawless flush-and-retrieve gundog of royal pedigree, he’s fun to watch, and the exercise is great. But now my 20-year, 78-year-old hunting companion has lost sight in his left eye and is reluctant to brave the dense tangles for fear of injuring his good eye. Can you blame him? I understand completely. One tumble in the swamp or stray, snapping twig could blind the man.

So, what should I do? Try to find another trusty, new hunting buddy at 68? No. I think not. It’s time to move on.

My knees are shot from athletic injuries, surgeries, and years of wear and tear. Plus, I ruptured my Achilles tendon last year hunting a dense, thorny swamp for young men, and, hampered by an unsteady base, I don’t shoot like I used to. So why humble myself like I did on the softball diamond? I have other activities that stimulate my energies – things like reading, researching local history and prehistory, tugging at exciting new threads connected to my own genealogy and place to see what unravels, and, of course, writing about it.

On Veterans Day, my trusted old hunting buddy with the bad eye joined me for our first hunt of the season. A packed parking place at our favorite covert forced us to an adjacent field t’other side of the stream, along the northern periphery. We know it well, it has been part of our routine for more than 20 years, and mine for more than twice as long.

Less than two hours later, after three flushes, one wild shot and no hits, we were traveling our familiar route home immersed in conversation. I interjected that, after all our years and good times together, I was losing my interest in hunting like I had previously lost interest in baseball and softball and fishing and turkey-hunting.

He seemed perplexed.

“For Christ sakes, why?” he responded, “You’re only 68 and still have many good years ahead of you.”

He must’ve misunderstood me. I didn’t tell him I was terminal, ready to curl up and die; just that I was turning the page to a new chapter. Maybe my last. Maybe not.

Once stubborn to a fault, I’ve learned how to transition with age. Those thorny tangles I once enthusiastically attacked and conquered are now punishing me, and gentle cover is not my cup of tea.



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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 18
Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Kathy Mattea*. \$. 8 p.m.
Bombyx Center, Florence: *¡FÉ, DJ Bongohead*. \$. 8 p.m.
Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: *Real Estate, Kate Bollinger*. \$. 8 p.m.
10 Forward, Greenfield: *Landowner, Chris Wardlaw*. \$. 8:30p.m.
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 19
Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *Rosie Porter and the Neon Moons*. Free. 7 p.m.
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Sean Rowe*. \$. 7 p.m.
Shutesbury Athletic Club, Shutesbury: *Tom Shields and Barely Standing*. \$. 7 p.m.
Luthier's Coop, Easthampton: *Daring Coyotes*. 7 p.m.
Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: Screening, *Linefork* (2016), on legendary Kentucky banjo play-

er Lee Sexton. Opening performance by *Carling Berkhout*. \$. 7:30 p.m.
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 20
Mystery Train, Amherst: *Shrinirs, Gracious Calamity, Liz Tonne & Vic Rawlings, Frozen Corn*. Free. 3 p.m.
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Kris Delmhorst*. \$. 7 p.m.
Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: *Underground System*. \$. 7 p.m.
Calvin Theater, Northampton: *Melissa Ferrick, Carrie Ferguson*. \$\$\$. 7 p.m.
Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Pioneer Valley Jazz Shares presents *Avram Fefner*. \$. 7:30 p.m.
Mt. Toby Friends Meetinghouse, Leverett: *Joe Jencks*. \$. 7:30 p.m.
Academy of Music, Northampton: *Pat Metheny Side-Eye*. \$\$\$. 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Masala Jazz*. Free. 9:30 p.m.
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 21
10 Forward, Greenfield: Film night with *Lady Snowblood* (1973), Stan Brakhage's *Night Music* (1986). \$. 6 p.m.
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Bach and Banjo* feat. *Chris Devine, Michael Nix*. \$. 7 p.m.
Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *David Bromberg Quintet*. Seriously. \$. 8 p.m.
Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: *Vanessa Carlton*. \$. 8 p.m.
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 26
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Whiskey Treaty Road Show*. \$. 8 p.m.
Academy of Music, Northampton: *Dinosaur Jr., Ryley Walker*. \$. 8 p.m.
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Men in Motion: All Male Revue*.

\$. 8:30 p.m.
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Pöp Tärt, Hinkle & Egg*. Three synths. Free. 9:30 p.m.
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 27
Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *Tommy Fuentes Band*. Free. 7 p.m.
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Roger Salloom*. \$. 7 p.m.
Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *The Suitcase Junket*. \$. 8 p.m.
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Moxie, Thus Love*. \$. 10 p.m.
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 29
10 Forward, Greenfield: *Phantom Erratic 18* feat. *Stephanie Borgani & Isabel Crespo Pardo, Webb Crawford, Triish, Bromptreb*. \$. 8 p.m.
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Dan Weiss / Miles Okazaki Duo*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2
10 Forward, Greenfield: *Baldwin/Silbert, Nace/Meginsky, and Powers/Rolins* duos. \$. 8 p.m.
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3
10 Forward, Greenfield: *Bill Nace, Julie Bodian, Matt Krefting, Noise Nomads*. \$. 8 p.m.
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4
Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Harvest & Rust*, Neil Young covers. 7 p.m.
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Riff Raff*. \$. 8:30 p.m.
MONDAY, DECEMBER 6
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Open Mic Night*. 8:30 p.m.
Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: *Squirrel Nut Zippers, Weege & the Wondertwins*. \$. 8 p.m.
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9
Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *Advance Base, Ruth Garbus, Dear Nora*. \$. 8 p.m.



Interview by J. BURKETT

TURNERS FALLS – This is a rare treat... talking to the great Peter Stampfel! He is most famous for being half of the great Holy Modal Rounders, who started in the early ‘60s, and were the first band to use the word “psychedelic.” The Rounders ended a while back, but he is still going at full speed as a solo musician, and just released an amazing box set... covering 100 songs, one from every year of the 1900s!
We should mention that he was also on the first Fugs album, and was part of the Unholy Modal Rounders, too. He did some duo releases with other folks, and had a great group called the Ether Frolic Mob, and he has tons of solo albums now too.
All of these releases are worth checking out, but we especially recommend the first two Rounders LPs – they are as mind-blowing as they are historic. They were also on the *Easy Rider* soundtrack. Their sole LP on the ESP label, called *Indian War Whoop* (1967), is wild, too...
MMM: Hi, Mr. Peter Stampfel! So, can we start with your childhood? Where did you grow up, New York?
PS: No! Milwaukee!
MMM: You started doing music really early – with Steve Weber and Michael Hurley? Have you talked to Hurley lately?
PS: Well yes, played with Weber of course, there were the records. Hurley... he’s out in Oregon. Last

time I went there was in 2012, we worked on *Have Moicy 2* out there. Which he unfortunately didn’t want to take part in. Oh, I saw him play in Brooklyn since then.
MMM: And was Hurley doing his music back then, when you first met him?
PS: Well, of course. He and Weber and Robin had a band called “Blues Doctors,” and there are no recordings of them. I would absolutely kill to hear that... I mean, those three guys... playing together in the ‘50s and early ‘60s... I mean, %\$#!
MMM: And how did you really start playing music?
PS: You mean... in my life?
MMM: Yeah!
PS: Well, maybe when I was a few years old... singing to my mommy, while sitting on the potty! I would sing songs like “On The Shores Of Tripoli”... the war was on, you know... and songs like “Sitting Under the Apple Tree” and “Put Your Arms On Me Honey” and “Paper Doll.”
MMM: Did you go out and see blues people and stuff like that when you were younger?
PS: I saw Joseph Spence! Yeah, that was amazing. And when I first came to New York I saw a lot of the soul and rock and roll people. I saw Ray Charles at a nightclub in Milwaukee. I mean... like seven feet away.
I saw Chuck Berry in 1959... I

saw him do the duck walk, man. And I saw Little Richard... yeah! And I saw Bill Haley in this little club... they were awful, just the most terrible thing ever! I saw Carmen McCrae too, in a show in the ‘50s, which was like an amazing unexpected treat.
I was going to go to college in 1956. I was going to be the first one to go to college, my father was a factory worker. But then I ran into some bohemians/folk musicians... and after a month, that basically changed everything. And I went to see Pete Seeger, in 1957? And you know, it was like... world-changing. And I saw the New City Ramblers...
But the Harry Smith Anthology was more of a game-changer than Pete Seeger. That was about the same time I did hallucinogens, a strong dose of peyote. The point is... peyote and the Harry Smith Anthology made me realize that the world was infinitely more strange than I realized. And infinitely more vast. And that combination really gave me a whammy that changed everything.
MMM: Yeah! How did the Rounders start?
PS: Antonia, my ex, used to go with [Weber], before we met. And she would tell stories of this sinister evil speed freak... actually were called A-heads... not speed freaks. He came over to visit in May of 1963, and we immediately took a bunch of methedrine and started playing music... it lasted for three days.
Then, weirdly, Weber and Hurley and Robin Remailly and Jesse Colin Young had all met in the fall of 1959, in 11th grade, in Bucks County. And the weird thing is, that’s exactly when I got to NYC. Because I asked Hurley when had they all met – I thought they met later – but he said “Put Your Sweet Lips to the Phone” was a hit that year. And the first gig I had in NYC had a radio, and that song was one of the ones that I heard. And... wow... me getting there the year they all met... isn’t that the most cosmic thing ever!
MMM: Wow. Did you visit western Mass when you were younger?
PS: There was a Rounders gig there... and an Unholy Rounders gig there. And there was a Bottlecaps gig around Amherst. Just those occa-

sions, that was the only time... five ten minutes before the shows.
Oh! And actually... one of the songs on my new box set, “Chirpy Chirpy Cheep Cheep,” I learned in a jukebox in Amherst.
MMM: How did you listen to music back then? Did you buy 78s at all?
PS: I wasn’t a record collector back then. But a lot of my friends would give me tapes of their collections, stuff that wasn’t available on the LP format.
Back then, the amount of LP releases of 78s could fit in the trunk of a small car. Especially before the Harry Smith box set – before that there weren’t any releases!
MMM: What did you think of Harry Smith? Did you get along with him?
PS: Well my mental picture of him was like... him looking like Harrison Ford. I thought he was one of the greatest geniuses of that age. And when I actually saw him, in ‘64, it was like “there’s Harry Smith”... and I looked, and there was this sleazy guy... looking like a Bowery bum. I was pretty gobsmacked!
So yeah... appearances, etc., etc... So, I didn’t talk to him much. But he did record the first Fugs album, and in the middle of one of the songs, he smashed a bottle of booze into the wall! I was like, Yes! My kind of producer.
MMM: Did you do a lot of tours back then?
PS: Not much. The Rounders went to California, and there were a lot of gigs here, and we went as far away as Minnesota and northern New England too.
The rest of the band went to the West Coast in ‘72. Then the Unholy Modal Rounders played in New York and Mass, and the Bottlecaps played in the same places in ‘81. In the ‘80s there was also a tour with Weber out to North Carolina and to Boston, when our last record came out. And then there was a Rounder reunion in 2000.
MMM: Did you meet any punk type bands back in the day, like the Ramones? What about Neil Young?
PS: No, never met the Ramones. I was in a different orbit

than punk bands. I wish I had met Neil Young, but no.
MMM: So you did a newspaper column too, right? Back in the ‘60s?
PS: Yes – in Broadside, from the mid ‘60s to early ‘67. I would smoke dope and write a first version in ballpoint.
MMM: Have you done anything else like that since then?
PS: Well, there are the 40,000-word liner notes in the box set. And I wrote a memoir.... started in the late ‘70s. It’s like 350,000 words, but the editor only wants 120,000. So it’s been a serious job of cutting off most of it.
MMM: About the box set – it’s so great, by the way! – was it hard to keep going with it? One hundred songs?
PS: Well, the hard thing is – the engineer is in Louisiana, and I’m in NYC. We had to arrange to get together, to get blocks of time to work together. I would go down there and he would travel here.
The whole thing, as far as finances go, probably cost \$35,000, all out of pocket. But you know, all of this, it took its time.
MMM: Do you have any advice for younger musicians who are starting out?
PS: Yes! Go to YouTube and look up “Peter Stampfel – advice to musicians.” Also: play with as many peeps as possible, as often as possible – that is some of the very best advice. And always play with people who are better than you are, and different ages, as well.
MMM: Thanks so much for talking to us! Anything else to add?
PS: Well, I always like the sound of oil cans. And I have these small cans, and a lot of bands, they have two oil cans, and I have these... [Plays some music with the small cans.]
Also, I’ve been working on about 50 songs since lockdown... I’ve written about five or six new ones. I’m not a frequent songwriter, but I have been learning more songs from the ‘30s and ‘40s, so like the box set but different ones.
I’m obsessed with that era. Just love the way those beauties are built!

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

– William Carlos Williams

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

November Poetry Page

September 23

Be brave...
Stand her border
as sun leads
autumn to her
Delicious
Laced with stars.

– Alice Thomas
Greenfield

SCORPIO

Cut from
page of the
Sunday Times.
This day
Is a slice
of gutsy.

– Alice Thomas
Greenfield

Ask

Things fall.
Planets turn.
How is it that
space and time
are curved;
then gravity
cradles? Oscillates. .

– Alice Thomas
Greenfield

After the Election

Now once again we see the shape of things.
November brought it out. Voluptuous green
had overstayed her welcome, and we craved
a little silhouette and filigree.
This fine oak obliges, making lace
of sky, while hickory in nearby groves
Stutters its shaggy edges. Arched crowns
of sumac make majesty of swamps.

Fox, deer freeze. The moose blunders.
Instead of a blur, the long legs and tiny
head of a bobcat are revealed.
Old routes must be re-knit, tinked to fit
new realities. Stealthily, like the cat,
or splendidly effusive, like these trees.

– P.H. Crosby
Gill

Prediction *A Found Poem*

Donald Trump, verbatim
ABC News Town Hall, Pennsylvania
9/15/20
“You’ll develop,
you’ll develop herd,
like a herd mentality.
It’s going to be,
it’s going to be herd-developed,
and that’s going to happen.
That will all happen.”

– P.H. Crosby
Gill

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Don’t call it a widget.
It’s someone’s ingenuity
and labor.
It can make things fly,
turn, run, shine,
speak.
You may not know its name,
but its makers know *you* –

have studied you and learned
what it is you need.

They’ve spent long hours

in the earth, in the sea, with a digger, on a rig,
with iron, oil, wood, getting dirty, getting killed,

and many more hours

over a board, at a screen, in a plant, at a machine,
on a platform, in a truck, getting tired, getting stuck.

They’ve mined, designed, fashioned, honed, shipped
this rod, cylinder, cone, valve, screw,
this wire, film, mast, stamp, die

specifically, precisely
for *you*.

– P.H. Crosby
Gill

Ode to the \$&/%\$XX! Mice

Fall’s in the air,
heat’s on in the house,
as I lament the arrival
of the little, grey mouse.

Most of the year
they just take their ease
hiding in the forest,
perhaps nesting in trees,

but when the weather turns cold
and things get a bit frosty,
they head for my house,
as the cold can be costly.

The garage is a favorite,
the heat pump, too,
where they nest, and they pee,
and leave all their doo,

and if that’s not enough
to inspire my ire,
the fuzzy little bastards
love to chew through my wires!

I’ve tried steel wool and sprays,
noisemakers and apps,
but nothing works better
than simple snap-traps.

Peanut butter’s their treat –
I use it for bait –
enticing them closer
to be dispatched to their fate.

I check on my trap line,
keep track of my counts,
resetting the traps
as the rodent count mounts,

and, yes, it’s sad,
but what can you do?
If it’s my wires or them
you know what I’ll choose,

but there’s comfort to be had
in their broken-necked strife,
there’s purpose to be mined
from a dead mouse’s life,

as I lay them down gently
in the driveway for the crows,
who swoop in and take them –
to a better place? Who knows?

But with their lives now ended,
secure from downs and ups,
they live on in crow’s bellies
as Meese’s Peanut Butter Cups!

– Gary Greene
Greenfield

Contributors’ Notes:

Alice Thomas is a regional artist, poet, and Editor-in-Chief of Footstep Press. Her most recent exhibition in a juried venue of poetry and art, *ACCESSIBLE*, was in the month of October 2021 at the Art Guild in Manhasset, NY.

P.H. Crosby lives in Gill and is raising \$2,000 for the Center for New Americans by writing a poem a day in November. Sign on for as little as \$20 and get a poem in your inbox every day this month. Follow this link to sign up: cnam.org/civi/pcp/info/

Gary Greene won the bronze award in the 2021 Poet’s Seat Poetry Prize, and placed second in the October Robert P. Collén Poetry Competition. He recently published *Poems In A Time of Grief*, available through local bookstores and in a Kindle edition at Amazon.

RAISA SANDSTROM PHOTO

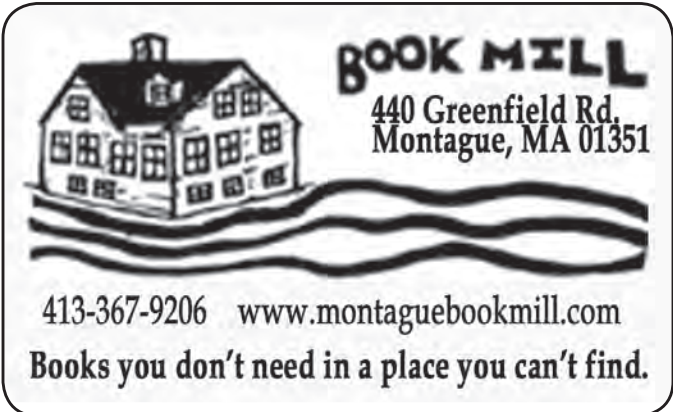
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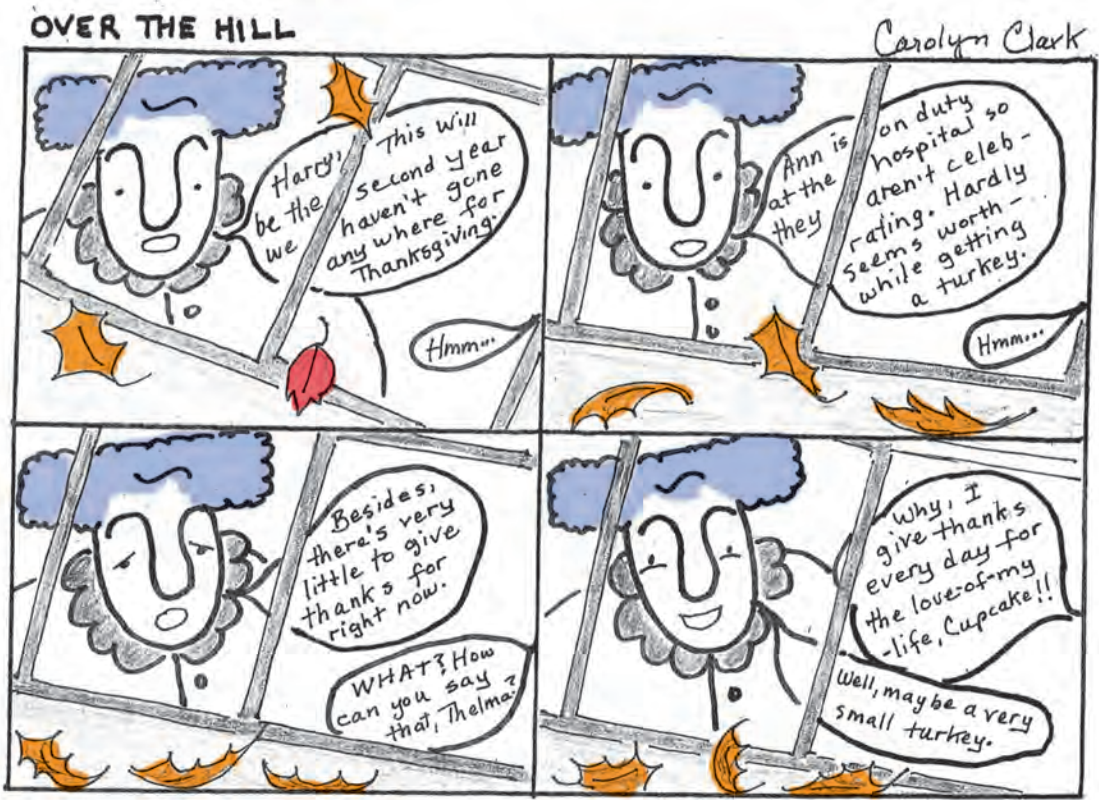
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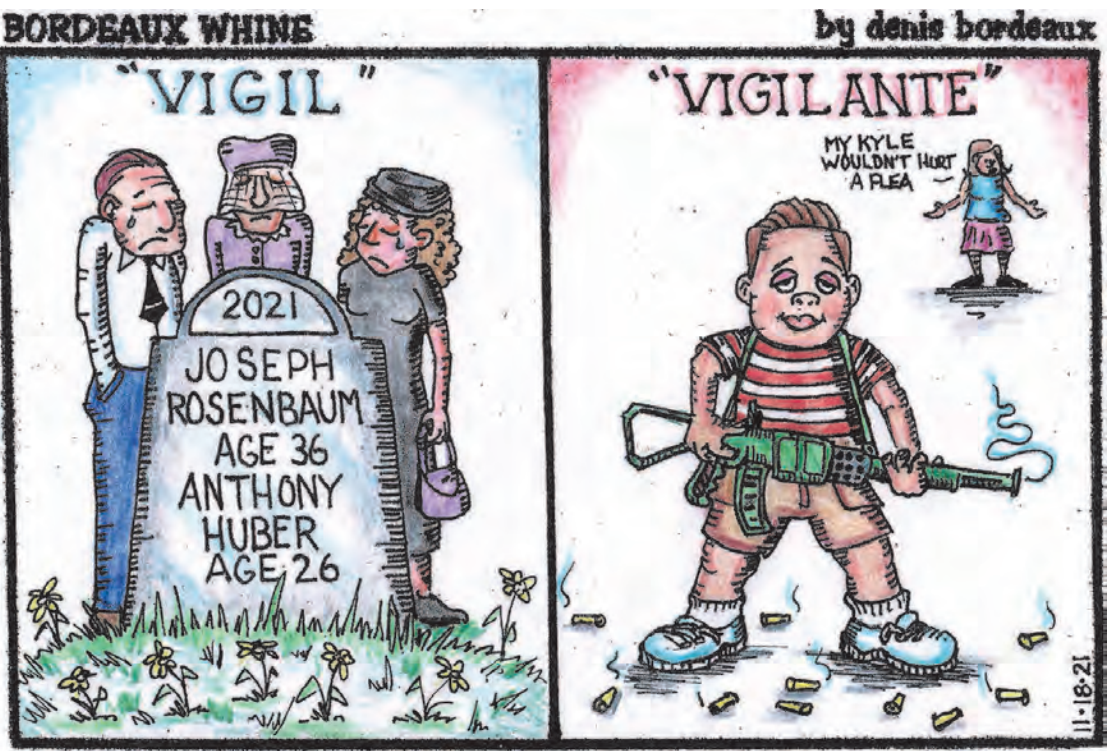
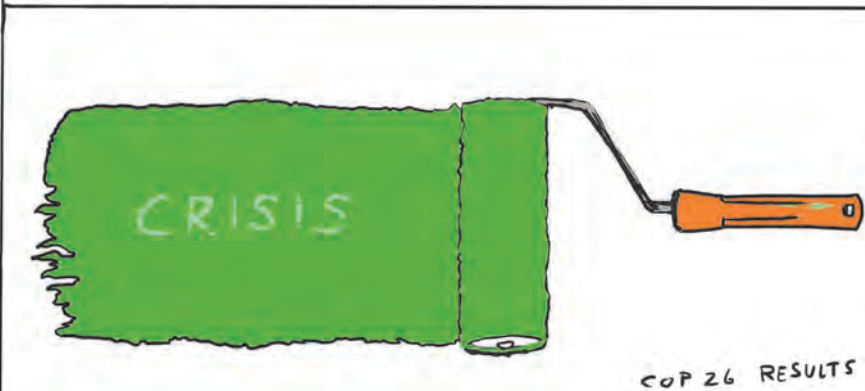


ED GREGORY PHOTOS

Dennis “Chuvvee” Underwood’s retirement party last Saturday attracted a large gathering of friends, relatives, and acquaintances to his business location in Gill’s Riverside neighborhood to wish him well. Underwood (pictured at right) told our photographer Ed Gregory his 38 years as owner and proprietor at Riverside Radiator “was a good ride!”



Three Degrees of Warming
By Janice Rowan



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Montague Community Television News

And to Think That I Saw it on MCTV

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

TURNERS FALLS – There’s a finance committee meeting from Montague, and a selectboard meeting has been posted, too. The Gill-Montague school committee met. Visit MCTV to find more meetings yet. If you missed Word Fest this year and want to see the show, off to montaguetv.org you shall go! All MCTV videos are available online; you should check out the website when you have the time.

Or, if you find yourself by a TV, try switching it on to Channel 17. There you will find all the movies we’ve made, which are featured as well on our Vimeo page. And don’t forget that *you* can make movies, too! MCTV has all the equipment for you. Cameras, tripods, microphones, lights, and even assistance so you get it just right! Do you happen to know of a thing folks should see? Get in touch with the station, and there we will be! Contact us at (413) 863-9200, and at infomontaguetv@gmail.com.

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SUZEE'S THIRD STREET LAUNDRY
TURNERS FALLS

APPLE CORPS from page B1

back for the time it took to get these plants established.

Without any work of my own, lupines threw up their pink and purple sprays in the spring, and herbs like bee balm, oregano, and chives ventured out a few more inches in all directions. Strawberries continued their ruthless spread across the lawn. Some of the fruit trees that I planted bare root, looking like no more than a twig in the ground four years ago, shot up a few more feet and finally stand taller than my 5'5".

There's also the slow conquering of the grass by wildflowers. Milkweed grew from two plants to 20 this year, joining the front lawn party scene where asters, Queen Anne's lace, daisy fleabane, wild sunflower, black-eyed Susan, plantain, clover, and dandelion are already boogying down.

While we put a lot of focus on edible plantings here at the Apple Corps, we have also recently tried to focus on flowers, for pollinator food yes, but mostly just for beauty and fun. We turned our pollinator bed at the Unity Park Community Garden into a U-Pick bed full of flowers for cutting, killing two birds with one stone.

I took home some of that wish for beauty when planning my own garden in the spring, and decided I would plant a section of the lawn as a flower garden. I planted marigolds, calendula, nasturtium, marshmallow, and bachelors button by seed, and bought starts of strawflower, gomphrena, alyssum, and cosmos from local farms.

I planted the seeds in containers and the starts into a part of the lawn I had reclaimed last year, all visible through the window over the kitchen sink. I had so many blooms I started making bouquets in my empty seltzer cans, giving some away to friends, some through the Apple Corps' free table, and even selling a few once the regular flower vendor at the Great Falls Farmers Market was done for the season.

Even now, as I write this in the middle of November, the calendula flowers are fresh and bright and seem to be absorbing all of our remaining sunlight to beam back up to us on cloudy and dark days.

I didn't want too big of a vegetable garden, fearing a repeat of last year's overtaken beds, but I couldn't help planting some of my veggie favorites, including cabbages, corn, and beans. While I harvested the cab-



Baby cabbages emerge from a cut stem left in the ground after harvest.

bage a little too late for at least one big one, the slugs were good enough to let me have enough to make a gallon of sauerkraut. The corn did not grow very tall, but we still got about a dozen ears to eat fresh before the rains messed with the rest of them.

I planted beans around the corn patch, hoping the corn would grow higher and become a proper trellis. The beans didn't mind the stunted corn and ended up winding their way through the short stalks anyway. Even in an imperfect environment, I still was able to harvest a few cups of dried beans which, after taking out the best-looking ones to save for next year, will become a delicious addition to a winter meal.

Not very many new plant friends joined the

garden party this year, but the rookie MVP of the season was without a doubt red shiso. I had tried one shiso leaf offered by a coworker at an old workplace, loved it instantly, and then never saw it again... until this spring. I was thinking of buying seeds when I saw a friend of a friend advertising shiso starts on Instagram, and I jumped.

The shiso plants grew three feet tall, with large, wide, reddish-purple leaves. Their flavor is strong like basil leaves, but taste to me more like curry or sesame. I cooked some with sugar and water to make a syrup, which I took to the next level by pouring it over sliced peaches from the farmers market. I would highly recommend filing this tip away for next summer! I also turned the leaves

into a savory fried chip snack by frying each leaf on its own and sprinkling with salt. They tasted like an herbal seaweed snack!

While each year I have managed to grow some food, some herbs, and some flowers, I always wonder if I should have grown more, or if I should have been more efficient in my planting. I look around, and sometimes it's hard to focus on all the plants and harvests when the long grass is creeping where you don't want it to creep. I will not pretend to you that I am only proud of my garden's messiness. Sometimes I do feel self-critical, wondering if I should be doing more to make it neater, to make it have a cleaner aesthetic. Doubts creep in when I write columns like these, wondering if I am just paying a lot of lip service to the joy of a messy garden in order to justify some kind of laziness.

I can't help but squash the doubts when nature, who's driving the bus whether we hopped on it or not, makes the most beautiful moments out of the mess. Last week I found a forest of tiny mustard greens growing in a bed where I had let a plant bolt during the summer. I had felt bad about not replacing the mustard plants with another crop, like I wasn't being as efficient as I should be. But now there's a thriving community of verdant greens, in mid-November, that I can snack on while the days grow dark and cold. It's these images that help keep the self-criticism at bay.

I am practicing what I preach, but sometimes I look around and can't see anything like it, and wonder if my creativity is more of a delusion. I understand the difficulty in sharing the messy parts of one's life, especially in our highly-curated world of social media, but I crave representation of imperfection. While I wait for the droves of photos of beloved messy gardens to flow in, I humbly submit this column as my addition to the oeuvre.

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




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