

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 20 – NO. 6

also serving *Erving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell*

\$1

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

DECEMBER 16, 2021

Gill Businesses Ride the Waves



NINA ROSSI PHOTO

Upinnigil Farm has built additions to its store during the pandemic.

By JERRI HIGGINS

Gill, Massachusetts, whose population now numbers 1,551 according to the 2020 census, is home to upwards of 40 businesses. Several of those are situated along Route 2, and at least one more hopes to open in the next year.

COVID-19 swept the world in earnest by February 2020, and March and April saw shelter-in-place orders in most states. For the first time in most of our lives, the world basically shut down, and with it any sense of life or business as usual. Borders, cities, towns, schools, and millions of jobs not deemed “essential” were all shuttered, and by late April, unemployment rose to 14.7% percent nationwide, a level not experienced since the Great Depression.

No one had any idea when normalcy would return, or if it could. Businesses stalled, lurched, and stumbled on, and some shut down permanently; forgivable loans and other stimulus funds helped keep others afloat. When the shutdown orders were lifted, they found they had to adapt to ever-changing rules and restrictions. Many who survived the pandemic’s first winter closed for good amid employee and supply shortages during its second summer.

Through all this, communities persevered, often with ingenious and moving displays of kindness, support, and care – and Gill was no exception. We reached out to a number of businesses to ask how COVID-19 has affected them

The good news is that businesses are, well, busy, and several could not respond by press time. Those who did were gen-

erous with their time. From farm to restaurant to manufacturing, to building and excavation, the challenges of conducting business in a pandemic were similar.

Disaster Management

“It depends on how long you want to look at this thing,” laughed Clifford Hatch, who runs **Upinnigil Farm** with his daughter, Sorrel, and several other crew members. “The first reaction was to kind of throw up our hands and say, ‘What are we going to do? Are we going to close?’ And then we realized it would be much better to remain open.”

Hatch said many customers felt more comfortable coming to a smaller place during the “mad panic” of the first months. To accommodate them, the farm added an addition to the store, and a porch to shelter them from rain. “We became a refuge for people who just wanted to get out of the house,” Hatch said, “or get their kids out of the house. They just wanted to get a snack in a little different surrounding.... People just needed some joy.”

This led to more changes, “not necessarily just trying to sell people stuff, but to give them a place to escape where they felt safe,” Hatch continued. “It has been just a matter of helping people through this whole thing, and doing what needs to be done. And then keeping everything in supply – which we are just constantly running out of.”

“The phone just went dead for a few weeks, and we had nothing,” said Joe Emond, co-owner of **Town Line Auto Repair** on the French King Highway, who faced a similar “what now” question
see GILL page A5

NEGOTIATIONS UNDERWAY



MIKE JACKSON PHOTO

Last Friday’s “It’s A Wonderful Night In Turners Falls” celebration kicked off at Spinner Park with the arrival by school bus of Santa. A trumpet-tuba duo played seasonal hits as a long line of youngsters presented their demands.

WENDELL SELECTBOARD

School Well Cost Weighed; Coordinator Offer Made

By JOSH HEINEMANN

The Wendell selectboard faced two pressing issues over the last week: finding a town coordinator, and PFAS in the water at Swift River School. The board interviewed one candidate at its regular meeting last Wednesday, December 8, met again the next day to interview three others, and then returned on Tuesday to discuss the contamination issue with officials from New Salem and the school district. All three meetings were held via Zoom.

At the end of Tuesday’s meeting, the board voted to offer the town coordinator position to Glenn Johnson-Mussad of Greenfield. Reached for comment Wednesday, Johnson-Mussad confirmed he had received the offer. As of press time, negotiations were still underway. Doug Tanner has been filling in as acting coordinator.

Swift River principal Kelly Sullivan has asked for speed in dealing with PFAS, a class of toxic per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances discovered in the Swift River well, because supplying the students with bottled water is expensive. The state Department of Environmental Protection insists the district have at least a plan in place by the end of the school year.

Tanner, Wendell’s finance committee chair as well as acting coordinator, said he wants the towns to proceed with due financial diligence.

New Salem selectboard members and their town coordinator had come to the Wendell board’s September 29 meeting with a proposal to put a filter in the water system at a cost of \$40,000, and an additional regular cost of \$5,000 to replace the containers as they fill with PFAS. Tanner said he thought that price was high, and pointed out that
see WENDELL page A7

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Officials Eye Railroad Salvage, First Street Lot for Housing

By JEFF SINGLETON

At Monday’s Montague selectboard meeting, town planner Walter Ramsey presented plans to revamp the town’s zoning regulations and begin a process to create new housing in two locations, the former Railroad Salvage property and two lots on First Street near town hall. The envisioned apartment complexes could contain a total of 88 units.

The meeting also included the town’s annual tax classification hearing, organized by the assessors’ office, and a discussion of the town’s response to the continued spike in COVID-19 cases.

The highlight of the meeting was

Ramsey’s proposal to create a “smart growth zoning overlay district” in downtown Turners Falls, in accordance with Chapter 40R of Massachusetts General Law. While this might not seem to be a compelling “highlight” at first glance, the verbiage in the previous sentence masks two very compelling issues for the town: what to do with the property between the power canal and the Connecticut River which formerly housed the Railroad Salvage building, and how to increase the amount of affordable housing in Montague.

Massachusetts towns are required by law to have a “subsidized housing inventory” consisting of at
see MONTAGUE page A4

Longtime Montague Center Auto Shop Changes Hands



NINA ROSSI PHOTO

After 36 years on Station Street, Montague Garage owner Tony Martino is retiring.

By JEFF SINGLETON

MONTAGUE CENTER – History often pokes its way through mundane reality at unexpected times, and in unexpected places.

At the Montague selectboard meeting on Monday, a man from New Hampshire named Gregory Precourt came before the board to request a license to park two cars outside of a building on Station Street in Montague Center.

Selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz, who probably knows Montague as well as anyone, asked if this was “what I call the former bus garage?”

Precourt said the location was a “repair facility” that he suggested had been there for around 34 to 36 years and was owned by “Tony.” After a bit more discussion, including addressing concerns that parked cars might leak onto the town-owned park next door, the board approved the license.

“So you are the new owner of the Montague Garage?” asked this Reporter. Precourt responded in the affirmative, and added that after cleaning up and using the space for storage, “I intend to keep the same business that Tony had.”

“Tony,” it turns out, is Tony Martino, who once worked diligently to repair the electric system of my Ford Escort, whose horn had gone off when I tried to fill my tank at Ralph Rau’s gas station. The building that houses his car repair shop
see GARAGE page A8

State Tests Seek Pollution Source in North Leverett

By SARAH ROBERTSON

LEVERETT – The town of Leverett continues to work with residents and the state Department of Environmental Protection (Mass-DEP) to zero in on the source of PFAS contamination in groundwater, after some of the highest levels detected in private wells in Massachusetts were discovered this fall in North Leverett.

“The update right now is that the Bureau of Waste Site Cleanup, within the DEP, has contacted about thirty other houses in the general area and offered to test their well water,” board of health chair Michael Fair told the Reporter. “That will help define the area of the plume.”

MassDEP has tested 38 private wells in Leverett so far, finding at

least five above the state’s drinking water safety standard. Tests have shown elevated levels of PFAS near the town transfer station and old landfill, but substantially higher levels among a cluster of homes along North Leverett Road, where the Sawmill River passes by the Baptist church.

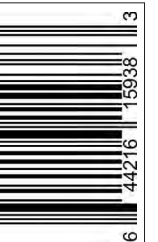
In October 2020, a new state law established a “safe” drinking water standard for PFAS at 20 parts per trillion (ppt), measuring the sum of six of the different chemical variants. One Leverett well contained 456 ppt, and at least two others were above the “imminent hazard” level of 90 ppt, requiring immediate action.

“We want people to know that any health effects caused by PFAS require a long period of accumulation in body tissues that takes place
see TESTS page A3

Forecast: Outdoor Water, Liquid Now, Will Turn Solid This Weekend

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The Montague Reporter

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Toward the Edge

As the Biden presidency enters its twelfth month, the Democratic Party appears to be on thin ice. The pandemic stretches on, and the president's main plan to deliver for Americans, a bundle of generationally historic investments known as Build Back Better, has been successfully sabotaged by a handful of backbenchers from his own party. If the bill passes, it will by all indications have been greatly deflated along the way.

The 2022 midterm races have already begun, and a demoralized electorate is likely to mean the party loses its rare chance to operate with the strength of the White House and both chambers of Congress. Without a big win to point to, its case will rest heavily on anti-Republican sentiment.

And while this week gave us an entertaining glimpse of a GOP in disarray – the public release of text messages from Fox News hosts and his own son last January 6 begging Trump's chief of staff to ask him to ask rioters to back off the Capitol – the Democratic Party coalition appears just as much at risk of falling apart completely.

The battle over student loan debt cancelation is a clear case in point. During last year's primaries, Biden joined his rivals in making promises to nullify a decent chunk of this particular form of debt that clogs our economy – a minimum of \$10,000 per debtor, he said, again and again. He repeated this promise during the general election, and again after he won. Since April he has possessed a memorandum confirming his legal authority to make it happen by executive action.

Instead, Biden put this proposal in the Build Back Better bill, and then traded it away in October. His position is now that he will sign such a bill if it is delivered by Congress – a Congress effectively con-

trolled by the same backbenchers who bargained it out of the bill!

Biden, of course, never supported this policy. Throughout his career he has been a key ally of the specific interests that stand to lose by it. He was a key player in making student debt exempt from bankruptcy law in the first place.

More interesting is the fact that this bait-and-switch is happening in the clear light of day. It's a sign that a group that has been the most important base of the Democratic Party for a generation – the Northern suburban professional-managerial class – is imploding more quickly, and that its loss of economic power is developing into a political loss as well.

This was the social group that pulled the party back together in the 1980s and 1990s after its traditional base, unionized blue-collar workers, was battered into submission by Reaganism. These growing ranks of white-collar liberals were able to cement alliances with two contradictory wings: racialized and otherwise marginalized working-class voters, and financial, corporate, and high-technology donors.

This was the coalition that delivered Clinton and Obama, but by the time it delivered Biden, those white-collar liberals were getting exhausted. The automation revolution they oversaw had come to eat their own jobs – or rather, the jobs of their children.

Student debt is largely, after all, the result of failed bets on the safe expansion of the professional sector. And there is no reason to expect those who have been left holding it will continue doing the ideological work, this time for free, of convincing more oppressed people to come join the party of Wall Street. The entire Democratic Party coalition is unraveling. Nothing holds it together – except fear of another Trump.

Bars Verified

Thank you for Trouble Mandeson's column last week, "Notes From the Heartfelt Café." I was inspired to try the biscotti recipe. I made adaptations using ingredients I had on hand and to accommodate gluten-free needs. They came out pretty darn good.

Much thanks to all who put out a delightful, engaging, and informative paper each week!

Suzette Snow-Cobb
Turners Falls



SNOW-COBB PHOTO



Donna and Dick Tozloski help Father Stan Aksamit assemble the nativity scene at Our Lady of Peace church in Turners Falls one recent morning.

Letters to the Editors

Board of Health's Absence Felt

I've been watching the Montague Selectboard meetings over the last several weeks, and I've noticed there does not seem to be a strong representation from the Board of Health. This week there wasn't a single Board of Health representative at the selectboard meeting.

There seems to be a "bouncyball" effect: "Well, we'll let the Board of Health make a decision on a townwide mask mandate," but if the Board of Health aren't there

to put their voice in and to share a conversation, then it's back to the selectboard.

This is an ongoing issue. Greenfield has a mask mandate, and several other local towns are doing the same. According to the town website, this Wednesday's Board of Health meeting was canceled, and the next one is not until January. I'm very concerned about the lack of representation by the Board of Health at these selectboard

meetings, when COVID is such a pressing issue.

There is a mask order for town buildings, but I spend more time at the grocery store. My own doctor has told me to wear a mask. It's every man for himself at this point, because we aren't getting guidance from the Board of Health.

Betty Tegel
Turners Falls

OP/ED

Beyond the Carbon Obsession

By KATE LINDROOS CONLIN

BUCKLAND – Families have raised their children here for at least fifteen thousand years, able to survive through conscientious and observant manipulation of the natural world around them. The modern carbon-centric dialogue concerning our forests separates the woods from our daily lives, however, drawing an arbitrary line between what is natural and what is human. Ironically, in defining our open spaces as sacred, as places of quiet refuge and recreation, we lose the true sacredness of living which is connection to that which we consume.

In equating "resources" with exploitation, Bart Bouricius, in his December 9 op-ed (page A2, "Beyond Resource-Based Habitat Management," demonstrates just how far our modern world has fallen from grace. To assume cutting a tree is evil without acknowledging the many ways in which wood consumption shapes one's own life is cognitive dissonance at its finest.

I'd like to ask Mr. Bouricius if he knows where the floor joists and wall studs in his home come from.

I digress. Habitat management carried out and promoted by our state biologists and ecologists is critical restorative work and is not "resource based," as Mr. Bouricius claims. Do resources come out of this work as byproduct? Yes, sometimes. But other times they do not. This is dictated by the species and natural communities being served.

It is important to protect ecosystems and store carbon and it is possible to do both. Truths such as this seem so clear to me. Yet I see a loud, local, and homogeneous faction – who all use myriad forest products – deny this in favor of carbon-capture mania and the idea that anyone who cuts a tree, for whatever reason, is automatically corrupt, even trained scientists restoring degraded ecosystems.

It's quite absurd. Again and again, the same few people use the same few words.

There is a veneer of progressive, liberal policy and approach

happening here, but underneath that veneer is pure conspiracy and anti-intellectualism. I urge you to consider why some necessary, renewable, and local resources are maligned and others are lauded. In this consideration is true connection to the natural world. In this is our only chance at honest, sustained, and equitable stewardship and survival.

The evils of our world can often seem too big to fail, too big to solve. Because of this, it is easy for ideas concerning salvation to reach the status of mirage – such as the idea that if only we "left our forests alone" we could "save" them and us in the process.

This reminds me of a Heather Christle poem called "Pursuits," which begins: "It is not that you want / to be the one to make prints / in the untrampled snow / It is that you want / to be in the snow / without having touched it."

Kate Lindroos Conlin lives in Buckland and independently manages societyforforeststewardship.org.

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Compiled by NINA ROSSI

Here's a reminder about **spreading holiday cheer** to those who provide us with services, such as your *Montague Reporter* and other newspaper delivery persons, the people who pick up your trash and recycling, the mail carrier, and so forth. Tips are a thoughtful way to show your appreciation during the holidays!

Jess Marsh Wisseman of **Hired Hands Signs** is holding an open studio this Friday, December 17 from 4 to 8 p.m. at 34 Third Street in Turners Falls. Marsh's beautiful hand-painted signs can be found at several local businesses, and her business was featured in our paper on May 20, 2021. Visitors must be masked and vaccinated.

Friday night specials in Turners Falls continue tomorrow, December 17, with discounts at FAB, Buckingham Rabbits Vintage, Nova Motorcycles, Breakdown Records, Swanson's Fabrics, and Pioneer Valley Brewery, as well as a show at the Shea Theater. See all the details at riverculture.org, or their ad on page A5.

The **Pioneer Valley Symphony** hosts their annual holiday concert, bringing together the PVS Orchestra, Chorus, and Youth Orchestra with a "Holiday Pops" concert on Saturday, December 18 at 4 p.m.

The show will feature new works from composer Clifton "Jerry" Noble, Jr. honoring American holiday celebrations of all kinds, a holiday pop songs review, and classic seasonal favorites.

Enjoy the music in either of two ways: via stream on a smartTV or other Internet-connected device, or via Zoom for a community watch party and a post-concert talkback. Tickets and more information can be found at pvsoc.org/tickets.

There're two **popup holiday markets this weekend** in Turners Falls, in addition to the regular brick-and-mortar shops downtown. Check out the craft vendors at the Shea Theater lobby market from 12 to 6 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, as well as the Yule Bazaar at the Great Falls Market on Avenue A.

The Yule Bazaar is hosted by Sage Green Botanicals and features herbal-inspired crafters, artisans, and creators who live in the area. The event description says "Casey Morgan Rose will be serving up an inspiring and uplifting array of tasty herbal beverages as a full elixir bar, and Great Falls Harvest will be serving up small and delicious food throughout the event. Musical offerings both days with James Bird Portal + Marie."

The bazaar is open between 12 and 5 p.m. both days.

You can still buy our **2020 Special Wrapping Paper Issue** to

wrap gifts in for this year! We have a limited quantity left, and they are for clearance sale at \$1 per set. Buy them online and at the Shea popup. Business manager Annie Levine and I both have tables there and will have wrapping paper, this Saturday and Sunday from 12 to 6 p.m.

(For those of you who have asked, we do not have a 2021 edition, but plans are already underway for a second edition next year!)

In Northfield, the **Brewery at Four Star Farms** is holding its first holiday market on December 18 and 19, with local crafters selling their wares in the taproom from noon to 5 p.m. both days, and music from Pete & Steve on Saturday at 5 p.m. and Moon Hollow on Sunday at 3 p.m. The Deadhorse Hill food truck will be there both days from noon to closing time. I've heard from numerous folks lately about how nice this new venue is.

Also in Northfield, the Deerfield Valley Art Association members' gallery at 105 Main Street is worth a look-see, from noon to 5 p.m. Saturday and noon to 4 p.m. on Sunday.

There are multiple occasions to reinforce the Santa Claus myth, if that's your tradition. Excite the jingle-bell neurons in an impressionable youngster by bringing them to Ciesluk Farmstand to **greet Santa Claus as he arrives on his model H tractor**. Take a picture and get a goodie bag this Saturday, December 18 between 1 and 3 p.m. at Ciesluk Farms, Route 10 in Deerfield.

I'm assuming cats would not buy into this, but all your **furry pets are invited to meet Santa** for a photo op at the Pioneer Valley Brewery on Third Street in Turners Falls this Sunday, December 19 from 1 to 3 p.m. Professional pho-

tographer Chad Champoux will be there taking photographs for a \$5 donation. Photos will be available for purchase online later that day, and a free 4" by 6" or equivalent will be included with each order.

All proceeds go to the Franklin County Regional Dog Shelter, who will also be at the brewery with information about their services.

Red Fire North in Montague Center is hosting a **Holiday Art Open House** on Sunday, December 19 from 2 to 6 p.m. Items made by local artists and a raffle for a piece of original art by Mona Shiber. Details online at www.redfirenorth.com.

Save this one in case you're looking for a change of scenery in January: the **Clark Art Institute** in Williamstown has announced it will offer free admission to its museum all month. Visitors can also borrow snowshoes, for free, to explore the miles of trails on the museum's campus. See clarkart.edu for more.

Santa will be doing a "Five Village drive-by" next Wednesday, December 22 thanks to the Turners Falls Fire Department who will be driving him around the town of Montague on one of their big red fire trucks.

The tour starts at 6 p.m. at Unity Park, then down Avenue A to Montague City. Santa then heads up Turnpike Road at 6:10 and arrives in Millers Falls at 6:20 to circle around Franklin, Newton, and Bridge streets, then to Rutters Park in Lake Pleasant at 6:35 and Montague Center at 6:45.

If the weather is bad, the drive-by will be held December 23.

Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

TESTS from page A3

over years, as far as we know now," Fair said. "It's too soon to panic, but it's important to find out what kind of condition your well is in. And there are effective remediations."

PFAS, or per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances, are a class of thousands of man-made chemicals used in a wide range of commercial and industrial products from food packaging to makeup, firefighting foam, and nonstick pans. The exact health impacts associated with these "forever chemicals" are unknown, but scientists say they don't break down easily in the natural environment and tend to accumulate in living tissue.

In some situations, locating the source of the PFAS contamination could determine the entity responsible for remediation costs, a MassDEP spokesperson told the *Reporter*.

Regional Industries

Earlier this year, environmental advocates published a spreadsheet compiled by the federal Environmental Protection Agency showing more than 120,000 facilities nationwide believed to be using, handling, or storing PFAS. There are 2,686 facilities listed in Massachusetts, in industries including waste management, manufacturing, petroleum, and paper. In Franklin County 59 sites are listed.

Facilities in this newspaper's coverage area that have or use PFAS onsite include the Erving Paper Mills, landfills in Montague, Wendell, Erving, and Gill, and NEX Performance Films in Turners Falls.

Others in the county include the Northeast Biodiesel Company, Bete Fog Nozzle, and SWM International (formerly Argotec) in Greenfield; the Barnhardt Manufacturing Company in Colrain; the Rodney Hunt Company in Orange; Pelican Products and Pro Pel in South Deerfield; and Bayer Material Science in Whately.

Some sites are listed as "inactive," including

the Strathmore and Southworth paper mills in Turners Falls and the International Paper mill in Erving.

MassDEP's free well testing program is just starting in Erving. Residents were encouraged to apply for the free PFAS tests in a December 3 post on the town website, and some may have already received postcards in the mail from MassDEP offering the tests.

"The Town-owned public water supply wells have been tested for PFAS earlier this year, and the results have all been below the actionable level set by MassDEP," Erving town administrator Bryan Smith told the *Reporter*. "The Town is cooperating with MassDEP and the PFAS testing program for private wells."

Erving town officials did not respond to the *Reporter's* question of whether there were any areas of particular concern in town that could be targets for state testing.

In Wendell, MassDEP met with the board of health and outlined areas of particular concern on a map before sending test invitations. The town is addressing high PFAS levels found at the Swift River School, just across the border in New Salem (see article, page A1).

Gill did not qualify for the free well water testing program, apparently failing to meet a threshold set by the state that 60% of households must rely on private wells. The town's Riverside neighborhood uses drinking water piped from Greenfield; town administrator Ray Purington estimated "around 110 residential and commercial connections" in the water district. The Northfield Mount Hermon School also provides its own water.

"While I'm generally aware of PFAS, it hasn't been a topic the Selectboard has taken up," Purington told the *Reporter*.

An Expensive Science

The only PFAS-handling facility listed in Leverett is the old landfill on East Leverett Road,

a long-established source of groundwater pollution that was addressed recently by connecting some nearby homes to Amherst's municipal water supply.

While some wells in the landfill's vicinity were found to contain near or above 20 ppt of PFAS, the board of health advised that the activated-carbon filters previously installed to handle other pollutants would have helped to mitigate the PFAS too.

However, the source of the contamination in North Leverett is still unknown, and some residents are frustrated with the limited number of free tests being offered. One Richardson Road resident, Judy Raphael, shared that none of her neighbors have had their wells tested, and that she has sent two applications to MassDEP for the free tests, but has not received a response.

Testing a water sample for PFAS can cost up to \$400 or more, depending on the results and the complexity of the sample. One group of Leverett citizens is banding together to get a group discount on PFAS tests from an independent laboratory.

"Those data points will be private, so the owners may or may not choose to divulge those to DEP, but we're hoping most will because we really need to find the scope of this issue," Fair said.

Resident Lise Coppinger said she contacted Pace Analytical Laboratory, and reported that the average cost of a test when conducted as a group could be between \$215 and \$250 per test. She said her group plans to knock on doors in the North Leverett area to find out who is receiving free MassDEP tests, and offer their group discount to those who aren't.

"They're cooperating with us, so we're going to facilitate collecting those so we have even more data points in the area," Fair said. "They will be knocking on doors to identify the people who may not be involved with the websites or email. We'll end up covering the whole valley there in that area."

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MONTAGUE from page A1

least 10% of their total residential units. As of last December, according to the state Department of Housing and Community Development, Montague's inventory is at 9.6%.

Ramsey's slideshow began with the statement that the zoning change was proposed by the planning board to encourage new housing "at a variety of price points in the downtown Turners Falls area." He explained that smart growth districts are created under Chapter 40R in "areas of concentrated development" to include "affordable housing" and "other types of housing."

Ramsey said the overlay was, however, an "optional set of zoning rules" which would not replace existing zoning. Therefore, a developer could choose which set of rules would apply. The overlay district, he said, would require 20% of housing units to be "affordable," and would provide "incentive payments to the town for adopting the bylaw and for each housing unit that is developed."

The town would receive an "up front payment" of approximately \$75,000 for adopting the bylaw, and then \$3,000 for each unit developed. The bylaw would also give the town the ability to establish "design guidelines" that would give it more control over "the character of

development at these sites."

He said adopting the bylaw would encourage the town to apply for a variety of state grants, and developers to apply for "tax incentives."

Ramsey said the proposal was designed to encourage "mixed development," with market-rate housing as a significant part of the mix. He warned that a developer could currently construct "100% affordable housing" with "virtually no input from the town." The proposed bylaw would cap the amount of affordable housing in the overlay at 50%, although that could be increased through a public process.

Ramsey went on to say that "affordability" was defined under state law as "less than 80% of area median income." According to a chart in the presentation, the maximum affordable rent for a one-person household in this area would be \$1,179 per month. For a family of five, the maximum rent would be \$1,683.

A map showed the two proposed overlay districts. The first encompasses the old Railroad Salvage property, rebranded as the "Griswold Mill site," which the town does not currently control but is in land court. Ramsey said that any development would require the approval of town meeting for sale to a developer, and estimated "ground-

breaking" could take place between four and six years from now.

The overlay district on First Street, across from town hall, combines a town parking lot and a privately-owned parcel to the south. Ramsey showed a picture of row housing on this land from the 1890s that was "virtually identical" to the Cutlery Block on Third Street. "We looked at that as a kind of model for reusing this area," he said.

Development of these two parcels would also require approval from town meeting, and groundbreaking could begin in one to three years.

Ramsey estimated that the Griswold development could construct up to 76 units of housing, and the First Street project up to 12 units of "row housing."

"The town would not construct the housing," Ramsey told the Reporter. "The municipal properties within the overlay district would be transferred through a public disposition process to a private non-profit or a private sector developer. This means the town would have control over the selection of developer, and the developer would know the town's expectations for the site."

Selectboard member Chris Boutwell said he thought the proposal was "pretty much self-explanatory."

Board member Matt Lord asked

whether, despite the 20% cap on affordable units, the town would get credit for all the units constructed as "affordable."

"I forgot to mention that," said Ramsey, confirming that it would. "That's a huge incentive to the town."

State law (MGL Ch. 40B) grants that if 25% of a development is housing at 80% of the area median income, or 20% of it is at 50% of the median, the entire project is counted toward the town's subsidized housing inventory.

A number of public participants in the meeting raised questions about the future of the process and the role of local residents concerned about affordable housing. Ramsey said the town had "limited" options through zoning, but could exercise more control during the "disposition process."

Ramsey was also present at a meeting Tuesday evening of an *ad hoc* local group created to advocate for affordable housing. Meetings of the Montague Housing Coalition are currently open to the public, but have not been recorded, and the coalition's facilitators, a Boston-based non-profit called the Citizens' Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA), have requested that the meetings not be covered in the local press.

BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Joy Ride; Tax Split; Used Cars; Fancy Dirt; Wreaths

By JEFF SINGLETON

At its December 13 meeting, the Montague selectboard heard a report on the latest COVID metrics, given by town administrator Steve Ellis in the absence of public health director Daniel Wasiuk or any member of the elected health board.

Ellis said the number of new cases in Montague was "similar to what is was a week ago," with 32 cases during the week preceding December 11 and 67 during the two weeks before that date.

Ellis also noted that the town of Greenfield had imposed a mask mandate within the past week, but the selectboard declined to expand Montague's mandate beyond town buildings with a strong recommendation for mask use in privately-owned public spaces. Several members of the audience argued that the town should follow Greenfield in imposing a mandate, but to no avail. There was a good deal of criticism of the state for not providing stronger leadership on masking.

The board was asked whether the health department had distributed new signage about the mask recommendation to private businesses. Administrative assistant Wendy Bogusz said the signage had been "sent out last week," but said she did not know if the health department was ensuring that the signs were being posted.

RiverCulture director Suzanne LoManto came before the board to request the use of public property for a second event featuring "Santa," who had just appeared the previous Friday at the "It's a Wonderful Night" celebration in downtown Turners Falls. LoManto said Santa had such a good time that "he and his friends at the Turners Falls Fire Department want to take out one of the trucks and do a five-village tour." (See *Local Briefs*, page A3, for the route.) The rain date for the event will be December 23.

Tax Rates

Light-hearted banter about Santa gave way to the annual tax classification hearing, where the board, on the advice of the assessing department, determines the tax rate necessary to fund the current fiscal year's budget, and whether the town should continue with a so-called "split tax rate."

The split rate, which involves higher rates for commercial, industrial and personal property (CIP) than residential property, has been in place for decades but requires an annual vote.

The tax rates must also take into account changes in overall property values, with higher average valuations, as has generally been the case, producing lower rates but a higher actual tax bill.

Finally, the rate calculations assume that total tax revenue stays below the "levy limit" mandated by the state law Proposition 2.5.

In the end the board, on the recommendation of director of assessing Karen Tonelli, voted to continue the shift of some of the tax burden from residential property to CIP by an index number of "1.3". This will lead to a reduction in the residential tax rate to \$16.76 per \$1,000 of property valuation, but, given the increase in average assessments, would increase the median household's tax bill from \$3,772 to \$3,941.

The CIP rate will climb to \$25.83.

Montague Center

The board approved a request by Gregory Precourt, who is purchasing the Montague Garage on Station Street, to park two "used cars" outside the building for sale. (See *article*, page A1.) Ellis asked if that would leave enough space so that parking for the garage would not leak over into the town park next door. "At the present time," Precourt assured him, "I do not foresee any excessive amount of vehicles being parked there."

Coincidentally, parks and recreation director John Dobosz presented the board with an "update" on potential improvements at that very park. A village committee for the project has been meeting for over a year, and a preliminary design was created by the Conway School of Landscape Design. However, funding for any large-scale project remains "uncertain," Dobosz said.

Dobosz said that with the assistance of Montague Center resident Chris Pinardi, his department had been able to "refurbish" the infield of the park's ball field, hiring Baltazar Contractors to do the work. He said the company "skimmed the infield and installed some clay, which is a much higher quality than your typical dirt."

He said Pinardi had also raised approximately \$9,000 for the project, of which half was used for the fill. The park committee plans to host a public meeting this winter, Dobosz said, "depending on the COVID situation."

Farren Care

The meeting began with several questions about the board's failure to place the historical commission on its agenda, as requested the previous week.

The commission had passed a resolution endorsing the selectboard's efforts to get "clarifying information" on the status of the historic portion of the former Farren hospital building in Montague City. Its letter noted that although the Farren

is not listed on the town's official historic register, "the building does have value in the eyes of many of the residents of Montague."

Selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz said the board had received the letter. "I just saw it as a note from them that we will bring it up at a future meeting, and it came late in the week," he said.

Kuklewicz said that Ellis had contacted the Farren's owner, Trinity Senior Communities of New England, and "as soon as we hear more, we will put the Farren back on the agenda."

Other Business

The board approved a request from airport director Bryan Camden to use a town truck to distribute wreaths for the annual "Wreaths Across America" program, which places the Christmas decorations on the headstones of veterans. Camden said he would no longer have to drive to Maine to pick up the wreaths, since the airport is now a distribution point.

The selectboard appointed Taelour Cornett as part-time assistant at the Millers Falls library and Al Averill as an associate member of the conservation commission.

At the request of public works superintendent Tom Bergeron, the board executed a "third-party inspection report" on the town transfer station to the Department of Environmental Protection. Bergeron said that all "corrective action," including improvements in the transfer station signage, had been implemented the previous year.

At the request of town planner Walter Ramsey, the board authorized a \$33,000 state grant to begin an update of the town's "comprehensive plan."

Ramsey also announced two grants totaling \$155,000 to conduct a "reuse assessment" of the Strathmore factory complex, and acknowledged the receipt of an offer from Judd Wire to purchase their parking lot, which they currently lease from the town. The board authorized the expenditure of \$1,000 from the "unexpected engineering account" to prepare a municipal stormwater easement over the parcel that contains the lot.

Ellis announced that the town had received a \$7,100 grant award from the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Agency, Montague's primary insurer, to hire a roofing firm to evaluate the roofs of nine town buildings. He also announced that the Franklin Regional Transit Authority had closed a funding gap for constructing a planned maintenance facility on Sandy Lane, and that work could begin this winter.

The next selectboard's next meeting is scheduled for December 20.

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GILL from page A1

during the first weeks of the emergency shutdown.

"It's just the two of us," said Emond, of his business partner David Tyler. "I said 'well, I guess I'll go home.' I would go back every day and there would be no messages, so we just closed."

Emond said that the shop slowly started getting business again after a couple of weeks, "and it has not stopped since."

For some businesses, the pandemic has meant cutbacks. "There were months that we had nothing rolling," said **Travel Kuz** co-owner Pamela Reipold. "As much as it really was horrible economically, and we were wondering if we were going to survive this, we had the gift of idle time. That is something we never have – we were always playing catch-up."

"We are short-staffed like everybody else," she said. "It is not just my company, it is every transportation company across the country – public transit, trucking companies – it is everywhere. But our buses have to roll regardless – and now every member of our team is driving a bus. Mechanics and office staff are out in a bus, because we all have the licenses. If you call here and nobody answers the phone, it is because we are all on a bus."

Shock Waves

Carolyn Asbury, part of the management team at **Renaissance Builders**, said that one of the first challenges was how to operate safely. While some employees were initially laid off, and others worked remotely, "it was a shorter time than we would have thought," she said.

The company constructed plexiglass barriers in its office. "Mine had a shower curtain also, so I had to get a rubber duck – that is still my companion," Asbury said with a chuckle. "We tried to do as much as possible outside." Workers who had previously been able to "come and go freely" to pick up tools were asked to request them for a handoff outside the building.

Video calls with clients, Asbury said, had "an upside and a downside" for a company accustomed to discussing projects on site.

The company believed that business would start declining at first, Asbury said, "but that is not at all what happened – business picked up, and kind of went through the roof." Customers new and old, commercial and residential, felt it was a good time to do renovations.

Doug Edson, owner of **Renaissance Excavating**, also saw an uptick in home improvement requests, including water and septic system upgrades and installations. "People were cooped up at home, and they were not spending money on recreation or vacations, [so] they started looking at projects they have been thinking about doing for the last 20 years," he said. "That was one of the silver linings in all of this."

"No one actually knew what was



Already having outdoor seating helped the Gill Tavern, said owner Walker Widner.

essential or non-essential until the state came up with a framework," Edson said of the pandemic's chaotic first weeks, but the business was deemed essential to public health and infrastructure.

The next hurdle was adapting to federal, state, and local protocol, and locating personal protective equipment. "It was a big learning curve," he said. "If someone called in with a fever or sore throat, we had to tell all our workforce, and there were a few times where we had to stop what we were doing until we found out the results."

Many businesses we spoke with expressed the challenges of quarantines and employee shortages, particularly during the first year, when testing was hard to come by. There has been a shortage of PVC piping, and fuel prices are up. "It has become a juggling act," Edson told us.

Michele Jurado, co-owner with Spencer Peterman of **Peterman's Boards and Bowls**, said the company laid off its 21 employees for several months, and that quarantines and time off for COVID testing has continued to interrupt production.

"At first I thought, 'well, we will have a few months to relax,'" Jurado said. "I do not know why I was thinking that, because all these orders started to come in online, and it was just Spencer and I." While retail and wholesale customers were mostly "very understanding," the company struggled to fill orders.

After the shutdown was lifted, Jurado said, "it took a while for our employees to come back. Even today, it has been a struggle getting employees back working full-time."

"Spencer and I decided that we were going to start new hires out at \$15, and we gave our employees good raises, too," she said. "I do feel bad for the food service sector that cannot find enough employees to keep operating, even when they raise wages."

"This is where I think we should allow more immigrants into our country," Jurado, herself a child of immigrant parents, added. "A lot of regular Americans do not want to do that work, so bring in other people who will."

"Restaurants, and the whole hospitality industry, has been one of the hardest hit, nationwide and worldwide," said Walker Widner, owner of the **Gill Tavern**, who said he felt very fortunate to have a dedicated crew. "Everyone came back... We were all kind of waiting to get back at it. We are all a big family, and I had a ton of support from them."

The Tavern had been open five days a week prior to the pandemic, but dropped to four when it reopened, serving takeout meals until vaccinations became available. Local sourcing of ingredients, Widner said, became a boon amid slow supply chains.

"I am happy to report that this last summer we had one of our best summers on record," Widner said. "We were fortunate to have a lot of outdoor dining, even before vaccinations came out. People tended to migrate towards those options."

Widner said he had hoped to open five days a week this summer, but could not find the extra staff. The Tavern remains open four days a week for the time being.

Learning to Surf

As the pandemic approaches its third year, business owners continue to adjust to a new normal.

Travel Kuz co-owner Reipold credited her staff, as well as the company's school bus business, for their support. "We have the best possible people here at this company," she said, "and our school districts have been great to us – they supported us through the pandemic when we shut down."

Still, Travel Kuz's revenues are "down about 25%," while expenses



Travel Kuz co-owner Pamela Reipold encourages more people to try bus driving.

es are what they were pre-pandemic. "We make our money with our bus, and those really beautiful luxury motor coaches are just sitting in our parking lot," she said. "We do a lot of international tourism in spring, summer, and fall, and we have gone two years without it – and they are already starting to cancel for springtime."

Despite these challenges, Reipold is upbeat about the company's future. "We really learned to be resourceful and quick on our feet," she said. "That has been really fun, to watch people grow and assume new roles and take on new responsibilities."

Reipold said she suspects some people think driving a bus is too hard, and wants to dispel that worry. "I invite anybody to come in. I will put you in a bus and we can drive

around the parking lot, and you can see it is not so tough."

She described a call from a Turners Falls firefighter telling her that he was available if she needed drivers. "I was like, 'Heck yeah!' If all the firefighters would give me one day a week, we would be great," she laughed.

As new waves of cases continue, the long-term staffing shortage is compounded by short-term absences. "If people are out because of COVID-19, then the job they were on is delayed, and that means that whatever they were scheduled to do in the future is delayed," said Asbury of Renaissance Builders.

This is amplified by material and tool shortages, and the same problems affect the company's subcontractors, "which becomes difficult to keep explaining to our poor customers, who by and large have been very understanding, but not always."

"You have all that, but then you have all the normal living that you would have anyway," Asbury continued. "When you add that to all of the delays caused by COVID-19, and material shortages, it becomes a difficult situation. So, we have tried to just go with the flow of this. We are making a concerted and deliberate effort to not fight the situation."

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Aquí se habla español

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



Nuestros jóvenes y el medioambiente....

Las personas de edad madura en nuestras charlas de café o sobremesa tenemos una cierta tendencia a quejarnos de los jóvenes y del futuro que nos espera. Para contradecir esta opinión, traigo hoy a esta página en castellano, unos artículos escritos por estudiantes de español de Northfield Mount Hermon que han estado elaborando sus proyectos acerca del cambio climático y la crisis del medioambiente en su clase de español IV con la profesora Carmen Ramírez. Esta es solamente la primera parte, ya que debido al espacio no podemos publicar todos en una única edición y continuaremos el próximo año. Lean y disfruten pensando que hay esperanza de futuro. – *Victoria Maillo de Aguilera, ed.*

Problema medioambiental con las comunidades indígenas en el Amazonas

Por LANA MESSINGER

Como una estudiante que asiste a la escuela de Northfield Mount Hermon, que tiene agua limpia, habitaciones con calor y, recursos sin restricciones, no tengo dificultades. Entonces, como una persona que quiere proponer y descubrir soluciones, me gusta enfocar en problemas medioambientales que incluyen a las poblaciones minoritarias. En otras palabras, creo que es muy importante ayudar a las poblaciones indígenas o las comunidades socioeconómicas humildes.

En este artículo, intentaré discutir un problema indígena en Sudamérica que es un problema que va en aumento debido al calentamiento global.

En el continente sudamericano, existe el bosque pluvial más grande

del mundo, y donde muchas poblaciones de pueblos indígenas viven: El Amazonas. Por muchas décadas, grupos diferentes han vivido en los mil millones del bosque con sus propias culturas y formas de vivir. Han coexistido en paz, silencio y contacto limitado. Pero, en años nuevos, debido a la población creciente mundial, el Amazonas fue un lugar rico en tierra y recursos para otros países para hacer dinero.

El bosque y sus personas enfrentan daño por deforestación, fragmentación del bosque, y la escasez de agua, con todos los problemas en conexión con el cambio climático. Los árboles se derretirán por las operaciones, más carbón se libera a la atmósfera y también con temperaturas más altas, hay sequías que resecan la tierra y crean fuegos.

Los recursos naturales van a ag-

otarse por negocios avaros y posteriormente causan daño a los grupos indígenas. Estos problemas están relacionados con todos los grupos y animales en Amazonas forzando a estos grupos a reubicarse, abandonando sus casas originarias.

El tema que me frustra es el hecho de que la gente del Amazonas no tenga parte en este cambio climático, pero son las personas que tienen que sufrir las consecuencias. Eso es una receta para el mundo, pero un problema grande para los indígenas.

Si pudiera tener todos los recursos y dinero en el mundo, me enfocaría en ayudar a las poblaciones y proyectar su país natal. Hay que estar atento a este problema porque se ocupa de las vidas humanas y los recursos naturales esenciales que todas las personas dependen para vivir. Las vidas humanas no son una broma.

Calentamiento global y arrecifes de coral

Por GAVIN RUSSELL

Debido al calentamiento global, muchos ecosistemas están agonizando en el mundo. Las emisiones de carbono están elevando la temperatura global debemos, por ello detener el calentamiento global ahora. Los arrecifes de coral del mundo se ven perjudicados así mismo por el calentamiento global. El calentamiento global daña los arrecifes de coral al calentar el océano, elevar el nivel del mar, crear tormentas más fuertes, alterar las corrientes oceánicas, cambiar las precipitaciones y reducir los niveles de pH en el mar.

Como la temperatura global está subiendo, los arrecifes de coral se están blanqueando y los arrecifes ya no son hermosos. Además, los arrecifes de coral están recibiendo muchas más enfermedades.

El océano es como una enorme esponja que absorbe mucho dióxido

de carbono de la humanidad. Por esto, la atmósfera no se calienta tan rápido, pero el océano está muy contaminado y los arrecifes de coral están en peligro. Los científicos estiman que, durante los próximos 20 años, aproximadamente del 70 al 90% de todos los arrecifes de coral desaparecerán.

La protección de los arrecifes de coral es muy importante ya que los arrecifes de coral protegen la costa y la salud de los océanos, proporcionan empleo y estos ecosistemas son importantes para los pueblos indígenas de todo el mundo.

Podemos ayudar a mantener los arrecifes de coral conduciendo menos, reciclando, usando menos agua, imprimiendo menos y reduciendo nuestra huella de carbono.

Es fundamental ayudar a nuestro planeta y nuestros arrecifes de coral y poner fin al calentamiento global lo antes posible.

El problema del agua sucia

Por HENRY VIETOR

En mi pueblo de Scituate, MA, tenemos muchos problemas con nuestra agua. En este momento las tuberías están abasteciendo a los residentes de agua sucia. El pueblo sabe que este asunto existe, pero cuando las soluciones para el problema se presentan en una junta, parece que no sea un tema para los residentes porque ellos eligen construir un nuevo centro para la tercera edad y no aumentan la infraestructura de agua en el pueblo.

La razón para esta elección es que la mitad de los residentes del pueblo solo viven en Scituate en verano, y no representa un problema.

Los residentes que viven en el pueblo durante todo el año necesitan mejor agua porque todos los residentes necesitan comprar cerca de un filtro de agua por mes. Es muy caro para los residentes. Las personas que solo viven en Scituate en el verano no tienen en cuenta este asunto porque ellos solo necesitan comprar un poco, ya ellos solo están en la ciudad por un mes. La gente que va a Scituate en verano es rica y el costo de los filtros no es un problema.

También Scituate va a tener problemas con el calentamiento global en el futuro porque el pueblo está cerca del océano. Las tormentas han estado dañando a Scituate mucho en años recientes y muchas casas cerca del océano están destruidas. Las mismas personas que viven en el pueblo solo en verano son las personas que tienen casas muy cerca del océano. Ellos eligen medidas temporales para terminar el daño de sus casas que están construyendo en zonas de riada. Estas medidas dañan el medio ambiente de la ciudad porque los hábitats de los animales están destruyendo montículos de roca en las playas del pueblo que dañan las playas y necesitan muchos recursos para mantenerse.

Scituate necesita ayudar a sus residentes que viven en Scituate durante el todo del año y no solo ayudar las personas que únicamente van al pueblo durante el verano.

La invasión de nuestros océanos

Por ROHAN DHINGRA

El impacto del cambio climático tiene graves problemas para el mundo en el futuro. Muchas personas en el presente, sin embargo, no creen en el cambio climático porque muchas redes sociales dicen muchas mentiras y dan mala información.

Un problema muy grande es la contaminación de nuestros océanos. Hay mucha basura en todas las esquinas de nuestros océanos, ¡es una lástima! También, la pesca excesiva en los océanos. Necesita disminuir esta pesca excesiva porque tiene un efecto muy, muy malo en los ecosistemas. ¡Por ejemplo, el mayor porcentaje de la basura en el océano son: ¡las redes de pesca!

Además, los ecosistemas no tienen las poblaciones normales cuando hay pesca excesiva en el medio ambiente.

Adicionalmente, esta basura va a dañar nuestros océanos porque mucha de la basura son plásticos. ¿Qué significa esto? Los plásticos no son degradables, ¡y se quedarán en los océanos durante millones de años!

¿Cuáles son las consecuencias de

toda la basura? Pues, este desperdicio es una amenaza muy peligrosa en el mundo. Los animales pueden estar atrapados o posiblemente morir en el desperdicio. Por ejemplo, muchas tortugas quedan atrapadas en muchos desperdicios plásticos y no sobreviven. También, cuando hay un derrame de petróleo, muchos animales marinos morirían por los químicos peligrosos que están en el petróleo.

Finalmente, el desperdicio en los océanos causa que la temperatura media se eleve y como resultado, puede contribuir al derretimiento de las regiones árticas y los glaciares valiosos.

En conclusión, ¡toda la gente debe sentir una obligación de ayudar en la limpieza de nuestros océanos muy importantes!

• El cuerpo adornado: Arte y legado de la antigua América.

Desde el 4 de diciembre hasta el 27 de febrero el D'Amour Museum of Fine Arts en Springfield. Esta exposición bilingüe explora los adornos artísticos de las culturas precolombinas de Colombia, Costa Rica, Perú, Panamá y México y su influencia en artistas posteriores. Si quieren más información pueden contactar con Karen Fisk en su email: kfisk@springfieldmuseums.org

• **Center for New Americans y ayudas para los refugiados de Afganistán.** CNA es una de las organizaciones que participa en la acogida de familias de refugiados llegados desde Afganistán a Franklin County y Hampshire County. CNA les ofrece clases gra-



tuitas de inglés, formación y apoyo legal. Las donaciones en estos casos son muy importantes y necesarias. Si ustedes quieren contribuir con ayudas o voluntariado, por favor, póngase en contacto con Laurie Millman en su correo electrónico: laurie@cnam.org.

• **Food Bank of Massachusetts** sigue ofreciendo alimentos gratis cada tercer miércoles de mes en el parking del Senior Center en Turners Falls cuya dirección es 62 5th Street. Por favor, asegúrense de traer sus propias bolsas, así como mascarillas. Este programa se realiza en alianza con FCCMP y Montague COA. Si tienen preguntas, contacten con *The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts* en el teléfono (413) 247-9738.

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WENDELL from page A1

the cost of container replacement would only go up.

Another possibility mentioned at that meeting was to drill a new well behind the school. If the PFAS are in the groundwater, a new well would solve nothing. Board members asked nearby residents to test their wells.

On Tuesday the Wendell board discussed the contamination with Sullivan, the New Salem selectboard, New Salem board of health chair Jennifer Potee, Wendell board of health chair Barbara Craddock, Union 28 superintendent Jennifer Culkeen, and Union 28 finance director Bruce Turner, along with interested citizens.

The PFAS source is unknown, at least partly because the chemicals are found in so many common applications including cleaning products, firefighting foam, non-stick cookware, stain resistant fabrics, water-

proof clothing, and food wrappers. There are over 9,000 PFAS, and they do not break down. The state limit is 20 parts per trillion (ppt), while the federal limit is 70 ppt.

Sullivan said that in January, when few students were in school and water use was low, the PFAS level tested at 39 ppt. In the summer, the level was 36 ppt, but in September, with students in school and using more water, the result was 57 ppt.

Wendell selectboard chair Dan Keller said he and town facilities engineer Jim Slavas agreed that a new well is the most straightforward solution. The fact that sodium in the school's water dropped when New Salem stopped using salt in the parking lot and traffic circle seems to imply that surface water is mixing with well water.

New Salem selectboard member Wayne Hachey said one place that could occur is where the well cas-

ing enters the boiler room, and could be sealed easily. The casing may be damaged, or may stop where it meets ledge. No record of the well's construction and history has been found.

Potee recommended consulting Chris Stoddard, a civil engineer from Athol, to look at options and explore sites for a new well. Others agreed. Wendell selectboard member Laurie DiDonato, Hachey, and Potee agreed to work with Stoddard. They were authorized to make decisions, develop options, and keep the other town and school officials informed.

Regular Meeting

The board started its regular meeting last Wednesday, December 8 an hour early to interview the first candidate for the coordinator position.

Leverett police will continue to patrol in Wendell, as the towns have agreed, with one half-hour

trip through town per shift, and are working to start publishing a police log. Chief Scott Minckler has allowed one officer to take a cruiser home and commute through Wendell to work in Leverett.

The department is getting close to 40 calls per month in Wendell, and has issued 32 licenses to carry for Wendell residents, compared with 26 for Leverett residents. It is possible that Wendell had a backlog of applications.

Selectboard member Gillian Budine suggested a second community forum on policing.

Voters at the December 1 town meeting rejected the article that would have taken \$30,000 from stabilization to clean up the property at 131 Lockes Village Road. Charlie Kaniecki, who worked with the town and the property owner and who spoke about hoarding at the town meeting, asked to see all bids for property cleanup.

The next step is out of selectboard control, a January 20 court date at which the owner may face contempt charges. DiDonato suggested that the selectboard, Kaniecki, and Craddock could talk with a court representative before then.

Board members voted to accept donations for a new open space plan, and sign a contract with FR-COG to create one. Open space committee member Ray DiDonato

informed the board that the town has a right of first refusal on Chapter 61 properties that come up for sale, and now may pass that right on to a third party.

Tentatively starting in January, Good Neighbors board member Nancy Graton proposed offering prepared meals to residents of Wendell and New Salem. Good Neighbors is comfortable now with offering takeout meals, and if the pandemic allows, might change to meals at the town hall.

Providing those will tie up the kitchen, and use propane that also is used by the building's backup generator. The furnace is oil-fired but needs electricity to run, and the town considers its town hall a possible warming center during long, widespread interruptions in electric service. The board decided to allow the kitchen committee to have input on Good Neighbors' proposal.

The board accepted Tom Chaisson's proposal to repair and paint the senior center ramp for just under \$1,000, and a proposal to paint the office building cupola for \$640. That work may wait until spring.

Tanner said the town coordinator will need a new computer. The one he has been using runs on Windows 7.

Mike Jackson contributed additional reporting.



NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Assessor Training, Memorial Plaque, Various Permits, and a New Ballot Box

By KEITH WATERS

The Erving selectboard meeting looked good again in the new space, the senior/community center, and on YouTube. The online streaming worked fine and the meeting is available to watch after the event. (Thanks to BNCTV for their help.)

COVID is still here. Numbers are up. Monitoring is ongoing. The town is waiting to hear whether it will receive test kits from the state.

The board heard about a national opioid settlement, related to a case against Johnson & Johnson and related distributors that Massachusetts has signed onto. Towns can sign on to the state agreement to get a share of it. It was not clear quite what it was, or how much money it could mean, but the selectboard decided it could not hurt the town to sign on.

In related sad news, the board further discussed the placement of a plaque honoring family survivors and first responders related to suicides at the French King Bridge. The details have not been settled or fully agreed on yet, but what assistant town planner Mariah Kurtz could tell the board is that bridge-side barriers would go up before any plaque goes up, and the town believes MassDOT will pay for the installation.

A Time of Renewal

Every five years, Erving Paper must apply for a permit for the industrial pretreatment of its wastewater. March 2022 is one of those five-year marks, and given that applications must be received three months in advance, the application from the paper company's subsidiary ERSECO came right on time.

The major difference between the new permit and previous ones is that the company will now be required to test for PFAS. The selectboard conferred with water and wastewater superintendent Peter Sanders, who approved. The permit was granted.

The end of the year is time to renew licenses, specifically liquor and business licenses. The selectboard had 15 business and six li-

quor licenses up for renewal, which accounted for all existing from last year. All but one were approved unconditionally.

The liquor license renewal for the Crooked Tap was questioned by an attendee. She pointed out that the Crooked Tap was neither open for business nor currently for sale, and questioned why it should get a license. The board took note of the question and decided to issue a one-month license, through January 2022, to give parties involved time to clear the question up.

Fin Com Joint Meeting

The selectboard was joined by the finance committee for a joint meeting for a portion of the evening. The fin com has to deal with budget changes related to FY'23.

Town administrator Brian Smith suggested a grant-matching fund. He explained there are now a bunch of grants which the town could get only if it had funds set aside to match a portion of the grant, usually between 10% and 20%. He threw out \$10,000 as a possible amount.

Fin com member Daniel Hammock said he liked the idea. There was discussion among the two boards whether \$10,000 would be enough. The fin com will look into it and recommend an amount.

Erving's principal assessor, Jacquelyn Boyden, plans to retire in December 2024. She has been thinking about that and who could replace her, and the lack of normally qualified candidates. She suggested hiring a trainee for the year of 2024. Boyden acknowledged that a year seemed like a long time, but said there were many tasks that only happened at certain times of year, and that this was not a full-time position. The selectboard did not object to the idea.

Town clerk Richard Newton mentioned that there are three elections coming up this next year, where often there is only one. He said this would be a little taxing on the town's ballot box, which is from 1996. Newton said parts for the ballot box, which is not actually a physical box but is a computerized ballot-counting box, are

hard to find. The town has already approved money for a new box, but will have to vote on which one after vendors submit their offers, expected in January.

Newton also mentioned that the software he has to deal with for cemetery and dog licenses is at this point not workable, and that he has returned to doing the accounting of these licenses on paper by hand. He would like to look into a replacement for that software.

Town treasurer Jennifer Eichorn and town accountant Deborah Mero also agreed that software upgrades would be beneficial to the town.

Other than that, the town's finances seem relatively stable. Daniel Hammock thanked the selectboard for the way they put the meeting together, and said it was a "pleasure to participate in an orderly process."

Other Business

Highway department foreman Glenn McCrory, in charge of dealing with applicants for the open building and grounds maintenance position, has selected one of the four applicants. The selectboard approved his choice.

The search for a library director has been deemed a failure, and it was decided to appoint a screening committee to continue the search.

One of the town's police officers is going to resign as of Christmas to take a job closer to family near Boxborough.

Ameresco, a giant solar electric company with investments in Erving, wants more money if the town gets more money related to solar energy. Ameresco says its costs have been higher than they expected. The company seems confident that more money is available for the town, and has offered to pay up front for a consultant to look into it. They recommended Beacon Integrated Solutions, a consultant they know the town has done business with before.

Three cemetery deeds were issued to the Costello family of North Street.

There was no update about the Church Street bridge lane closure.

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

Here's the way it was on December 15, 2011: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

A Dream Come True For Erving Seniors

There is something heartwarming about a community coming together to celebrate seniors. True, the invitation said: "Ribbon Cutting for the New Senior Center," so technically the two hundred or so Erving residents, young and old, who showed up on 1 Care Drive on Sunday were there to celebrate the successful completion, on time and under budget, of a new \$2.2 million building project.

But they were really there to celebrate the senior citizens of Erving, who had pushed for a new senior center for ten years, and finally were able to take their seats in the expansive new dining room and enjoy the fruits of their long labor.

Promising to keep the outdoor part of the ceremony brief, town administrator Tom Sharp called on senior center director Polly Kiely to come forward with a pair of scissors to cut the green ribbon.

Green was the appropriate color for a ribbon cutting on a building designed to save the town money on energy, while not scrimping on space for senior activities, like a 1750 square foot multi-purpose room (which can be divided to form a classroom and smaller dining area for congregate meals), a 455 square foot arts and crafts classroom, and a 600 square foot

games and exercise room.

After Kiely cut the ribbon, the crowd trooped indoors, walking through rooms lit by solar-powered skylights, and entered the spacious dining room, as more than one person exclaimed, "This is so big!"

Erving Delays Action on Adult Entertainment Bylaw

After a long discussion over a proposed adult entertainment bylaw and how it might affect the town and local businesses, Erving decided to suspend the December 12 special town meeting until January 9, 2012 in order to gather more information about the proposal.

The bylaw put forward by the planning board specifies that adult entertainment establishments (adult bookstores, adult motion picture theaters, adult paraphernalia stores, adult video stores, or establishments displaying live nudity) will be allowed in the central village zoning district under special permit and after site plan review.

Under the proposed bylaw, adult entertainment facilities in this zone would not be able to locate within specified distances from certain land uses, such as residentially zoned districts, churches, public parks, daycare centers, senior centers, or other entertainment establishments. Existing adult entertainment establishments are allowed to continue in the same location, but are required to apply for a special permit within 90 days of adoption of the bylaw.



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GARAGE from page A1

was once a gas station and a Chevrolet dealership, dating back to 1921, according to an old article saved by Martino from the now-defunct *Greenfield Town Crier*.

According to that same article, which appears to be from the late 1980s, Martino bought the garage from Ralph Fronckus, who bought it from Everett Martin, who bought it from the Chevrolet dealership's "founder," Isaac Newton.*

The next day we went to the garage to visit Martino, who at first seems like a bit of an anomaly in Montague Center. An occasionally tough-speaking New Yorker of Italian descent, he is a fan of the New York Yankees, and not of the COVID mask I was wearing. After some good-natured jousting about the virtues of masks – I took off the mask, and we kept a very respectable social distance from each other – I asked how it was that he ended up in Montague Center.

Tony said he had been living and working in Dobbs Ferry, New York, located north of the city in Westchester County. His future wife-to-be originally came from North Amherst, but was attending graduate school at Columbia University. Martino had started his own repair shop, but at some point in the 1980s, all the tools were stolen and the couple decided to decamp to the Amherst area.

Martino first owned and operated a different garage in North Amherst, but purchased the Montague Garage in 1986. He now lives in a "log home" on eight acres of land in Sunderland.

For his part, Gregory Precourt, who is purchasing the garage, hails from Walpole, New Hampshire, a town of just over 3,600 just across the Connecticut River from Westminster, Vermont,

population just under 3,200.

Precourt told us that he was a mechanically-oriented kid growing up. "If you broke it, you fixed it," he said, adding that "as a kid" he repaired a "right-hand-drive Subaru."

So not surprisingly, Precourt worked at a Subaru dealership in Keene, New Hampshire for about eight years, but he eventually became tired of the "politics" of it all and went into business on his own. He became a franchise owner for several companies that sell repair equipment to garages, including Snap-on Incorporated.

You may have seen those snappy, but not terribly inspiring, "Snap-on" vans parked at garages and even dealerships in the area. Precourt filled me in: Snap-on has its own history that dates back to the 1920s. The company was started in Milwaukee by a man named Joe Johnson, who may have invent-

ed what we today call a socket wrench. Other products, catalogs, updated branding, and eventually an "on-the-road" distribution system that emphasizes franchising followed over the years. The company's headquarters are now located in Kenosha, Wisconsin.

Be that as it may, Precourt said he will be keeping his franchises, but plans to slowly invest in the Montague garage, initially using it primarily for storage and sales but moving into the repair business. He also seemed to respect the garage's history, suggesting that he might do a "retro theme with the building."

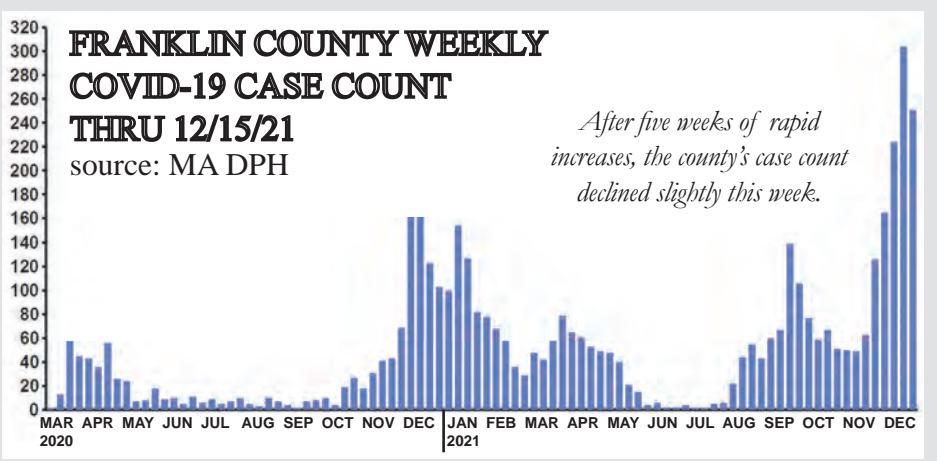
Meanwhile Martino, in his late 70s, seems ready for an active retirement. "I've got things to do," he told this *Reporter*. "You're dead for a long time, so I've got to keep doing things."

He said we could quote him on that.

** Ed. note: Documents in the registry of deeds indicate Martin bought the property in 1944 from John and Winnie Dunnell, who had acquired it in 1924 from an Alfred S. Clark. The 1941 Turners Falls High School yearbook contains an ad from the Montague Garage, Isaac W. Newton, Proprietor, so the Crier was on the right track.*



Photographer and historian Ed Gregory, our chief General Pierce Bridge correspondent, gave us another update Tuesday: "Deck paving machinery compacts, levels, and smoothes concrete fed to the deck via the segmented boom of the massive Baystate Concrete Pumping vehicle, which in turn is fed by the concrete mixing vehicle of the Chicopee Concrete Service Co.," he writes. "This line of trucks and machines will produce a new surface for the old bridge. The initial re-decking is on the east, or Montague City, end of the bridge. The first 60 feet will be completed today."



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NINA ROSSI PHOTO

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DECEMBER 16, 2021

Above: The land by the canal-side bike path in Turners Falls, warm and wet on a Sunday morning in mid-December.

QUILTS

A Notable Quilt Show

By PEGGY HART

SPRINGFIELD – Art for the Soul Gallery in Springfield is hosting an exhibit of Ed Johnetta Miller’s exuberant art quilts through March 30. The exhibit is curated by Jonathan Bruce.

Ed Johnetta Miller is a Hartford, Connecticut-based author, fiber artist, teacher, and independent curator. Her work can be seen in public collections such as the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian Museum of Art, the Contemporary Quilt Museum, the Wadsworth Atheneum, and many installations in public institutions in the US and abroad.

There are about 35 pieces in this show, most of them newly created. They draw the viewer in first with the imagery, but on looking more



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Ed Johnetta Miller is a master textile designer and quilter based in Hartford, CT.

closely, with the detail of the fabrics Miller has chosen to create the image. Miller mingles pedigree West African prints, Japanese prints, molas, resist dyed indigo fabrics with more typical quilters fabric.

I spotted a *pa ndau*, a small

Hmong embroidery, in “Spirit of the Cloth” – a reflection of Miller’s connection to other sewing culture traditions, but also using the *pa ndau* in its correct cultural context, as a protection or blessing. Her

see **QUILTS** page B2

TELEVISION

Does New Doc Get Back to the Truth?

By W. KAIZEN

AMHERST – Did you ever want to watch eight hours of the Beatles goofing off in the studio? Until I

finished *Get Back*, the new documentary that shows them rehearsing songs for *Abbey Road* and *Let it Be*, I wasn’t sure if I did.

Get Back was assembled by Lord

of the Rings director Peter Jackson from footage originally shot by Michael Lindsay-Hogg for the 1970 documentary *Let it Be*. Both films show the Beatles attempting to recapture the magic of their previous albums, and both culminate in the band’s last live performance on the roof of Apple Studio.

Released shortly after the Beatles broke up, Lindsay-Hogg’s film took a critical drubbing and the album didn’t fare much better. Critics of the movie said it failed to capture the Beatles’ personalities. They also disliked how the film looked.

When the Beatles decided to change the scope of the project midway through, from a television program to a feature film, it was too

see **GET BACK** page B4



PHOTO COURTESY DISNEY

Peter Jackson’s studio enhanced color, audio, and length using raw footage.

INSTALLATIONS

Wood’s Frost: A Time Not Quite Apart

By CHARLOTTE MURTISHAW

GREENFIELD – I liked “Farm: First Frost,” the new installation by Samantha Wood at Looky Here, but I didn’t expect it to worm its way into my head quite so relentlessly. Soon I found myself thinking about it anytime I felt idle – in line at the store, stuck in traffic, in the not-quite-waking hours.

In a 15-minute audio track presented alongside a slideshow of photos and video taken on local farmland, an unspecified cast of disembodied voices orbit the idea of rest, prodding and picking at it until the apparent simplicity falls apart.

Begun by Wood in September 2020, under the looming shadow of the end of summer and the coming presidential election, the piece finds her in tense negotiation. see **WOOD** page B3

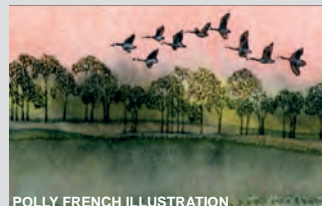


HANNAH BROOKMAN PHOTO

An artist’s reception was held last Friday at Looky Here for Samantha Wood’s multimedia installation Farm: First Frost.

WEST ALONG THE RIVER

DECEMBER STATE OF MIND



POLLY FRENCH ILLUSTRATION

By DAVID BRULE

THE FLAT, ERVINGSIDE – It’s been a quiet month of December down here on the Flat, on the edge of the west-flowing river. I had been hoping for more early winter weather and signs of snows to come. But keeping the weather company when it is so mild-mannered makes for some ho-hum watching.

Back on December 8 I had some hope that I wouldn’t be disappointed. A gray morning dawned, with the sky down, close to the earth. December loomed over the house and under the ancient 150-year old oaks bordering our river terrace. It was beginning to feel like old times, like Decembers past that some of us remember.

On my early morning walk, I stood under the grandfather oak Wolf Tree towering over maple saplings that stretch skinny limbs to the lowering sky. It sure felt like it may snow, expectations were rising. In fact, the first random flakes did drift down, but just a tease for this December-born child waiting below.

As familiar as my first memories, that day light snow promised to spread slowly over the remains of the fading season and fading year. That’s all right with those of us who have chosen to live here where the weather actually changes.

The woodlands and river’s edge scenery provides only drab and austere tones, but it has been a good year for the wild winterberry belt of bushes set back a few feet from the pebbly shore of our river. Red berries add accent and glow among bare birch branches, good enough inspiration for any Christmas card artist. Robins and bluebirds will feast here one day and move on, only to come back in the coming weeks for winter foraging.

Brother Black Bear, our clan totem from Huron ancestors, has lain low these past weeks. There are lots of shotgunners out there, buck fever in their heads and by the way, loaded for bear too. Wise and cunning, the largest being in these parts, he’ll be back rambling through the woods here to gobble down some of those winterberries first chance he gets.

In among the old trees, on a gray day like this, I’m not alone. The tiniest of the birds inhabiting the river’s edge, the elusive and sassy winter wren, scuttles through the blown-down, tipped-over roots of an oak, scolding me and disappearing as quick as a wink. You have to be fast to catch a glimpse of this winter spirit. With luck there’ll be a hermit thrush in there somewhere

too, turning up on a quick visit here, plucking the red fruit of the barberry or holly-like winterberry.

Either way, I’ll time travel and daydream on this gray December day, cold in among the tree trunks, here where they know me, here where I can never be lost.

In fact, the real snow happened the way I had hoped, last evening. Nikolai, our Siberian, was the first to know. He came in from his sentinel duty at dusk where he keeps an eye out for evening bears, skunks, and opossums. He pushed open the back door (without bothering to close it behind him) and looked up at us with a significant steady stare, expecting us to notice something different about him.

He was wearing on his back what we have always called the dog’s weather report. His coat glistened with sparkling snow flakes, an accumulation of the first snow of the year on his thick outer husky coat. A quick shake after a moment’s admiration by all in the household, and snow droplets were flying all over the kitchen.

Soon it was swirling and twisting under the downward glow of the street lights, slowly coating the surface in front of the house, drifting down and heightening the Christmas-colored lights in the decorated Bosnian pine in the front yard.

Past midnight it continued coming down, reflected snowlight brightening the upstairs bedroom as would a full moon. Watching it swirling past the window, we could catch sight of the rushing white water over river rocks and boulders, sparkling faintly through the bare birch and scrub oaks on the river shore. The rumble of snowplows, as familiar as ever, reached the upstairs rooms, flashing yellow lights of the plow flickering on the ceiling. The DPW guys are out, pushing snow around, mounding it up on our dead-end street, and putting in overtime, putting in the hours for a Christmas bonus.

This rejoicing in the familiar snowscape will of course be short-lived. Snow is destined to melt, and for some, given the coming next three months of the stuff, it gets old.

But for a brief moment, those of us who love the winter can be young again, mindless of the cold. We like the change of seasons, the newness of snow, the whiteness that covers all. It does cover up the faults and guilt of unfinished autumn chores out in the yard. It drapes the wheelbarrow, the splitting block and towering white pine

see **WEST ALONG** page B6

Pet of the Week



C. CARMODY COLLAGE

“POSSUM”

Are you looking for a smart, adorable, and interactive pet? Well, look no further than Possum (pictured at top). Possum (pictured at top) has been in foster care, and his foster says his favorite things include Cheerios and head pets. There's nothing better than breakfast with your rat buddy, is there?

While he hasn't been a fan of being picked up, he's starting to get more used to it. Possum (pictured at top) would do well with someone who will be patient with

him. He can be shy, independent, or just lazing around thinking rat thoughts. The adoption fee for one rat is \$12, and every additional adopted at the same time has a discounted adoption fee of \$8.

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.

QUILTS from page B1

work ranges from lighthearted, as in “Rooster Spirit Animal,” a cheerful collage of bright colors and prints, to sober black-and-white political commentary.

On the right as you come into the gallery there are three pieces, “Eyes are the Window to the Soul,” forming an intimate gathering of three faces. Perhaps friends come to visit with each other, as many people were doing at the well-attended reception on November 28. Many of the people attending represented luminaries from the quilt community in Hartford, people that Miller was delighted to steer me to. It was a heartening recognition of her role as a beloved community leader. She shares her love of quilting and self-expressive design by teaching adult and youth classes.

Miller's first work as a fiber artist was handweaving, which she pursued for 25 years. I met her in that context back in the 1990s, when I visited a weaving workshop where she was the director. I am a weaver myself and was interested in the workshop as an example of an income-generating textile project.

Even then, Miller was making quilts. She was nudged towards quilting by Carol Mazroomi, founder of the Women of Color Quilters Network, who encouraged Miller to enter a quilt in a show in the late 1980s.

Miller describes her work as being like a “riff, in jazz,” referring to her improvisational way of constructing her quilts. She works with cloth like paper collage, rather than using traditional patchwork patterns. The result is a quilt that functions more like a painting, in that



MILLER PHOTO



HART PHOTO

Above: Part of the “Spirit of the Cloth” quilt, showing the inclusion of Hmong pa ndau embroidery. Below: This lighthearted and colorful quilt, “Rooster Spirit Animal,” shows Miller's playful side.

the juxtaposition of the prints and colors create a texture that looks very different close up. The finished pieces are machine-quilted, which is somewhat distracting, but serves the practical function of holding the layers together and also tying the work to the folk tradition.

Art For the Soul Gallery is located in Tower Square, 1500 Main Street, on the second floor. Gallery hours are Tuesdays through Fridays, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturdays 12 to 4 p.m. The show will be up through the end of March.



Senior Center Activities DECEMBER 20 THROUGH 24

WENDELL

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

GILL and MONTAGUE

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

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

Monday 12/20

10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
1 p.m. Knitting & Needlecrafts Circle
Tuesday 12/21

10 a.m. Knitting Circle

1:30 p.m. Carols & Cookies

3 p.m. Tai Chi

Wednesday 12/22

10:15 a.m. Aerobics

11 a.m. Chair Exercise

1 p.m. Bingo

4 p.m. Mat Yoga

Thursday 12/23

10 a.m. Chair Yoga

1 p.m. Cards & Games

Friday 12/24

10:15 a.m. Aerobics (Canceled)

11 a.m. Chair Exercise (Canceled)

ERVING

Erving Senior Center is open 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Mondays through Fridays. Open for cards, coffee, and billiards. Exercise classes will be limited to 15 people per class.

No lunch will be served. We will continue with Brown Bag the first Thursday of each month. For any questions or concerns, please call Paula at (413) 423-3649. Mask required if not vaccinated. Proper handwashing and social distancing are still required.

Monday 12/20

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

10 a.m. Tai Ji Quan

Tuesday 12/21

9 a.m. Good for YOU

10 a.m. Line Dancing

Wednesday 12/22

9 a.m. Strength & Conditioning

10 a.m. Tai Ji Quan

12:30 p.m. Bingo

Thursday 12/23

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

10 a.m. Stretch & Balance

Friday 12/24

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.



MARY AZARIAN WOODBLOCK PRINT

By LESLIE BROWN

FLORIDA – We share here below some of our experiences as “seniors” traveling from our home base in Turners Falls to northern Florida for a month in order to leave New England weather behind. We usually spend three or four days on the trip as there may be sights we would like to take in along the way.

When you are traveling you are often roped in by advertisements touting senior meals or rooms.

The trouble is that few providers of senior meals or housing understand that we poor seniors may lack the means to pay for inflated prices. Indeed, these prices are often inflated as they see us gray hairs coming.

We stopped for a light lunch and a break in the driving and ordered the senior BLT. Now, you would expect a BLT as in a sandwich with bacon, lettuce, and tomato on toast. In this particular case the sandwich appeared *sans* bacon, since these misguided persons assumed all seniors lack teeth. Well, it is true that this senior BLT was consumed in record time, as there was no bacon to chew. Or maybe it was simply that they ran out of bacon by three in the afternoon. In any case it left

us hungry for an early dinner – and hopefully not a senior meal.

After driving a few more miles than we would have chosen, we found a motel with a restaurant attached. It seemed like a good idea for a stop, as they advertised a fish menu which would ordinarily have suited us well. We booked a room, cleaned up a bit, and went down to dinner.

We ordered a glass of white wine apiece and began to relax, chatting about the next day's route and looking at the menu. Baked stuffed scrod sounded good, and it promised a salad as well. We ordered a second glass of wine apiece and ordered our dinner.

Alas, the fish was quite greasy, and the salad veggies were limp. Happily, the second glass made the meal bearable, if not enticing.

That night our senior room provided stifling temperatures even for us, poor seniors who are never warm enough. We struggled to open a window so that we could breathe. By the middle of the night we were groping for another blanket or two as we were unable to close the window.

While we enjoy the coziness of a double bed, when traveling you can always assume that you are tired and not feeling cuddly. You want a bed you can sprawl in, regardless of another person's comfort. Two double beds are the ideal option.

I am also guilty of traveling with my own foam pillow. I dislike feather pillows and I am most comfortable with my current book of choice, plenty of pillows to lean on,

and quiet reading time. If I have my ear plugs along, so much the better, as this means my partner can watch television or read as he chooses also.

We woke up quite early, but with good spirits just the same. At the end of this day we would arrive at our residence for the next month and walk the beach, and eat real fish at an ocean restaurant. It would make the trip worthwhile.

We usually spend three or four days on the road until we reach our rental in northern Florida.

We had stayed in a very comfortable place for three years, and would have returned there again except that the owners chose to raise the rates. Thus we spent some time before we headed home last year locating a new place to rent.

So, once we arrive after our leisurely trip, we will walk to the beach so we can enjoy north Florida's more balmy weather. No doubt we will make new friends to stay in touch with until next year, but we will miss the folks we got to know at our first stop.

I did make one call to a couple we enjoyed last year, and learned the woman had died of the COVID virus the previous winter. That was it. I had no wish to check in on others we had enjoyed meeting the prior winter, and decided we would take our chances with a new crop of travelers. I made no calls to other folks from our previous winter's trip. I didn't want to hear this year's news.

Life is life, but I wasn't sure I could handle it just then.

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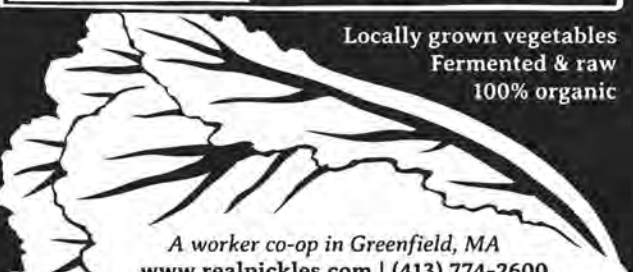
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SCENE REPORT

Greenfield's Jingle Fest

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – I decided to review the first day of Greenfield's Jingle Fest. It's similar to an event that happens in Turners Falls. It's similar in that both have live music, Santa showing up, and a Christmas movie as well.

The Greenfield event also has a Holiday Pop Up Market, which I have previously enjoyed. The movie was shown at the Garden Cinema, and Santa showed up to it on a fire truck. Also, if you wanted, you could see a play called *Bright Half-Life* at Hawks & Reed.

I found I enjoyed the Pop Up Market event again. The crowd for this was a nice big one.

It's an event that features art and artists. A couple of them I found to be very cool. One was a metal sculptor who had some really creative pieces. Another had some very good sketches for sale, of things from Star Wars and the Muppet characters. These sketches, I mean, were very good – if you saw them, you would say the same thing and instantly recognize them as being what I said.

I got both of those individuals' info to contact later in connection with doing profiles on them because of how much I liked their artwork.

The LAVA Center had their usual setup of craft and art at the same time, which they normally have on Saturdays, as part of Jingle Fest. Only this time, a woman in a white, red, and green dress with the kind of glasses you would expect Mrs. Claus to



Santa was at the movie theater.

wear was working at a make-your-own craft table with a couple of kids.

Another thing that was going on was that someone had put illumination bags up and down the streets to go with the lighted trees out there. Also, someone dressed as Santa and another as an elf showed up on a fire truck to take pictures with kids at the Greenfield Garden Cinema where *A Charlie Brown Christmas* was playing.

It was a nice event to combine with the movie, and a fair amount of kids showed up to see Santa. As kids do with Santa, they told him what they wanted for Christmas. Santa and his elf also offered books for the kids to have as gifts. Later, Mrs. Claus read Christmas stories to kids at the LAVA Center.

This event, as a whole, was a nice way to go about celebrating the holidays.

WOOD from page B1

"I felt like the world was ending, and I had to be practical about it," says Wood, the main voice in the recording. "I've been spending more time on the farm."

And also: "I wish I knew the world better."

Whether Wood's attraction to the farm is rooted in the chance to retreat from the world or to close the distance is unclear, but maybe it just is. In a less nuanced work, a farm might be an ironic setting for meditations on rest. But rather than melting into dopey pastoralism, Wood's portrait holds focus, drawing out the under-examined and difficult-to-define nature of rest alongside her images: fields sleeping under frost, clustered sheep, bright fruit dropped too soon, the ethereal cotton of seed pods caught in the stage between old death and new life.

Rest is a break from a certain kind of productivity, but obliquely generative. It is not leisure. It is an active process, Wood

and her chorus contend, like the loaded pause of a rest in a measure of music, or an arrow mid-flight. Sleep is sometimes, but not always, rest – who hasn't had a dream of constant running, and woken up with their heart racing?

A dark mirror to rest is the sensation of waiting, a dead dread which slows towards climax. Waiting can look like rest, but diverges from its virtues; to be bad at waiting is to fight the liminal period, to try to hurry something which shouldn't be hurried – like the cycles of nature.

Wood wisely doesn't mention it by name – perhaps because it has seeped into everything, like groundwater; we are soggy and saturated with it – but the timing of the project also lines it up with the pre-vaccine pandemic, which brought fitful stops and starts to the rhythms of daily social and political life on a previously unthinkable scale.

In "Farm," Wood is concerned with natural rhythms: a frost which arrives too ear-

ly, unseasonable weather. A beautiful day can now be a reminder that something is wrong.

In this, along with distinct perspectives on rest – voices identify themselves as female, as Jewish, as a mother – the value of rest surfaces, as well as its endangerment. In its fearful questioning of life, "Farm" adopts a post-humanist perspective, losing the human to focus on the resiliency of microorganisms and lambs. "Life is a constant churn," one voice notes. "Mushrooms, microbes, mycelium... life will continue."

I've never read Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *The Visible and the Invisible*, but I have seen a meme which quotes it: "The body is a thing among things." I'm also reminded of poet-thinker Anne Boyer: "Rome fell, but it wasn't the fall of the world, not even close to it, and all the drones could fall out of the sky today, or gather in it until they occlude the sun itself, and that wouldn't mean time or the universe was over."

Is it wrong to be soothed by the thought humanity is just a thing among things on earth? Existentialist noodling isn't really a good look, especially in the pages of a local paper, but call it body-positive: It's okay to just be a thing.

In a landscape specifically enlivened and given meaning by life cycles, "Farm: First Frost" feels like a big breath, a pause – which, as our narrators remind us, is not nothing. And even as her scope fluctuates Wood allows politics to flicker into frame, occasional interruptions disturbing the deceptive serenity of the farm. A phone rings; a voter registration ad plays. Is that a sheep with a red hammer and sickle on its back? The world is calling.

"Farm: Early Frost" by Samantha Wood is on view now through December 30 at *Looky Here*, 28 Chapman Street, Greenfield. Open Sundays 12 to 3 p.m. and by appointment.



"Someday Wishing Sheep," a photograph from Samantha Wood's installation at *Looky Here*.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Wild Turkeys; Icy Conditions; Neighbor Altercations; Glued Door; Drug Suspicion; Hunting On Posted Land

Monday, 12/6

9:08 a.m. Caller states that she is trying to pick her kids up from her sister's house, but the sister will not let her. They are arguing loudly outside in the street. Situation mediated.

10:35 a.m. Walk-in advising that there are some wild turkeys on his property on Montague Street and they will not move out of the way for him. They appear to be fearless. Caller given number for animal control.

12:44 p.m. DPW requesting an officer meet them at an abandoned campsite near the railroad tracks while they clean it up. Officer requesting Erving PD check address for involved female. Officer checking another address in Millers Falls for involved female. Report taken.

5:54 p.m. Caller states that a deer was hit by a car and is lying on the side of Ferry Road unable to move but still alive. Area searched; deer no longer there.

8:30 p.m. Caller from Davis Street states that metal and wood are blowing around the school yard hitting the school and maybe even cars. Caller is concerned that it could be a hazard to anyone who is out. Everything appears fine at this time.

8:48 p.m. Caller from Keith Apartments states that someone has been trying to get in her door twice now; she is bedridden and unable to get up. Nobody found in area.

9:41 p.m. Officer driving to detail had limb fall on windshield at South and Federal streets. Tree removed; road open; very minor damage to cruiser.

Tuesday, 12/7

6:50 p.m. 911 caller states there was a plane or something up in the sky that was flying very low and had two big lights on it. Caller states it looked very large. Heading in direction of Wendell. Referred to an officer.

7:06 p.m. Caller states he just saw a male punch out the rear window of a vehicle on Fourth Street described as a red PT Cruiser; male then headed up Fourth Street crossing Avenue A. Investigated.

9:21 p.m. 911 caller states she was on J Street and a female just came and punched her car, breaking a window and the driver's side mirror. Caller states a male at the location was also assaulted. Received call from female that original caller stated had done the damage. Second caller states she went to that location with permission

from her ex-boyfriend to get some things; upon arrival, the male and other female started attacking her. One witness found to have an active warrant. A 43-year-old Northampton man was arrested on a straight warrant; in addition, a summons was issued to [information redacted] for malicious destruction of property worth more than \$1,200.

11:48 p.m. Frantic 911 caller from Turnpike Road reporting someone is in his house causing a big issue and is attacking the caller and others there. Caller disconnected phone line as officers were dispatched. Upon calling back, caller stated the involved male left in a vehicle headed toward the police station without its lights on. Officer located vehicle and advises all involved parties have been Mirandized at this time. A 36-year-old Holyoke man was arrested and charged with assault and battery on a family member and malicious destruction of property worth less than \$1,200; in addition, a summons was issued to [information redacted] for assault and battery with a dangerous weapon.

Wednesday, 12/8

3:49 a.m. Caller reports vehicle driving on the wrong side of the road near Scotty's Convenience Store. Officer advises he is familiar with the involved vehicle; newspaper service. No further action required.

7:57 a.m. Caller from Avenue A would like it on record that somebody glued her door shut last night and when she went to leave this morning she had to kick the door to get it to open. Caller states a female in a neighboring apartment threatened her as she was kicking the door.

8:18 a.m. 911 report of a vehicle accident on the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge; fluids leaking; unknown injuries. Officer requesting MassDOT be advised that the bridge needs to be sanded. Summons issued for failure to use care starting, turning, backing, etc., and unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle.

10:28 a.m. Report from Grove Street of a male walking around with what appears to be a rifle. No issue; just a BB gun.

Thursday, 12/9

6:12 a.m. Callers report that the hill by Scotty's is very icy. DPW advised; they state they are on their way out now.

7:39 a.m. School resource officer requesting that the DPW come to Industrial Boulevard and treat the road and the entrance to the road due to icy conditions.

3:50 p.m. Caller from

Fourth Street requesting officer to respond to neighbor's apartment due to their being loud; states the noise is making the dishes in her cabinet rattle. Officer advises that there was loud music playing with bass; he asked the female resident to turn it down, and she did. Female party called to report that the original caller has been harassing her and calling the police and DCF on her; states that she is seeking a harassment prevention order.

6:29 p.m. 911 caller reporting that she observed a male party leaving FL Roberts driving a vehicle; she fears that he might be impaired and feels that he shouldn't be driving. Officer advises vehicle is parked on Fourth Street and no one is around it.

Friday, 12/10

3:25 p.m. Caller from Fourth Street reporting that a person who lives nearby appears to be involved in drug activity with a fancy white car. The car is not there currently. Referred to an officer.

4:10 p.m. Caller from Old Greenfield Road concerned about hearing gunfire; there is a truck that has been parked on the side of the road for a while, most likely hunting nearby. Second call reporting same vehicle; caller stated that the hunters are now out of the woods and have killed a deer on posted property. The property owner is not allowing them to access and would like an officer to respond. Officer advises that after speaking with the involved parties, the hunters are able to keep the animal; they will be harvesting the animal off of the private property, and they are not welcome back.

Saturday, 12/11

4:13 p.m. Caller reporting seeing five or six kids beating up another kid on Montague City Road. Caller states that someone came outside and the kids dispersed. Unable to locate.

Sunday, 12/12

12:12 a.m. Caller from Twelfth Street would like it on record that some people from the next street over were in the alley doing something in their car using the light from her garage. When the caller turned on the other spotlight, the vehicle sped off. Caller believes it may have been drug-related. Referred to an officer.

12:35 a.m. Caller states that a car was following him; he parked at Cumberland Farms, and when he went to leave the store, the car followed him; when he parked back at the store, that vehicle parked again as well. Not as reported.

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GET BACK from page B1

late to switch from the 16mm film stock Lindsay-Hogg was already using to the 35mm stock necessary for a theatrical release. To show the film in theaters, the original footage was cropped and blown up, leading to exaggerated grain and washed-out colors.

In subsequent years, both the album and the movie *Let it Be* became stains on the Beatles' legacy, especially as far as the band was concerned. The film particularly galled because it purportedly showed them at their lowest point and the remaining Beatles have long prevented its reissue. To the contrary, Lindsay-Hogg and other participants

in the film claim that the recording sessions and concert were almost entirely good-natured, and that the retrospective pallor of the Beatles' demise cast a shadow over what was really a decent film. (Nobody was happy with the album.)

With the blessing of Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr, Jackson culled through hours of Lindsay-Hogg's footage. One of *Get Back's* big selling points has been Jackson's restoration of the original footage to a new, and purportedly more truthful, sheen. In press junkets Jackson, McCartney, and Starr have all been touting how *Get Back* restores the truth surrounding the recording sessions and concert.

As previously told in histories of the Beatles, the general outline of the story behind the sessions is something like the following:

- After two previous albums and an EP that were heavily dependent on post-production studio wizardry, the Beatles wanted to record music together in a live setting and release it in a media blitz that would restore them to the forefront of the pop music scene. In January 1969 they rented a month's time in a film studio to rehearse and record new material that they would debut on a television special shot at the end of the month in a location to be determined. A documentary film crew

captured their recording sessions for a behind-the-scenes look at their process to be included on the TV show. An accompanying album, tentatively titled *Get Back*, would be released of the songs.

- Things quickly went awry.

Although they needed a dozen-plus songs for the project, only McCartney came with a significant number to contribute. There was in-fighting, particularly between McCartney and George Harrison. They couldn't decide on where to film the special. They were miserable, or so the story goes, the seeds of their break-up sown thanks to a host of problems including growing egos, new girlfriends, and management issues. And the film *Let it Be* – or so the story also goes – captured the Beatles at this, their lowest point.

When executives in the Beatles' camp saw Jackson's *They Shall Not Grow Old*, in which he took film footage from World War I and made it look like it had been shot recently, they saw an opportunity for similarly remaking *Let it Be*. When they handed the footage over, Jackson was uncertain about what he would find. He was more than pleasantly surprised that the footage showed the Beatles as strong friends and solid creative partners.

Jackson took the original footage, submitting it to the same digital scrubbing used in his previous film. This has given the image a digital sheen suitable for HDTV and turned the audio into a multi-channel mix suitable for surround sound.

Lindsay-Hogg had lights with colored gels projecting purple, green, and red spotlights behind the band as they practiced. After getting the Jackson treatment, these colors vividly shine, as do the rosy skin tones of the band members.

Although subtler, Jackson's audio restoration is even more remarkable. Using "demixing" techniques like those developed by the NSA for making spy recordings audible, Jackson was able to separate out each instrument and voice into its own track, creating individual "stems" out of the original mono recordings. Jackson used these stems to remix the music in *Get Back*, allowing individual instrumental performances to stand out more clearly.

It also allowed him to make audible previously hidden conversations between band members. When originally recorded by Lindsay-Hogg, the Beatles would turn up their amplifiers so that their private conversations couldn't be heard. Now they can be.

Lindsay-Hogg went so far as to bug a flower pot in the dining hall where the Beatles ate lunch. Although the original tapes were inaudible, Jackson was able to decode even these, allowing us to listen in on some very revealing conversations. In a behind-the-scenes featurette on *Get Back*, Jackson says that he's used such techniques to give the viewer a "raw, honest Beatles" that more truthfully captures their relationships.

Jackson's digital sleuthing reveals the drama behind the conflict between McCartney and Harrison, which the original film only hinted at. Harrison temporarily quit the band during the filming although the circumstances surrounding this have been shrouded in mystery. At the time, British tabloids erroneously reported that he and Lennon had come to blows.

Get Back clearly shows the rea-

sons for the conflict. We watch as Harrison storms out over McCartney's attempt to control Harrison's playing. Even more remarkably, we hear restored audio footage of a conversation between McCartney and Lennon, recorded in the dining hall after Harrison has left, where they fully admit to bullying Harrison and plot how to get him to return. When Harrison finally does return, he and Lennon laugh about the tabloid account, and mime a mock fistfight for the camera.

Such playful interactions are characteristic of the majority of *Get Back*. For most of the film we see the Beatles thoroughly enjoying their time together. As they're composing, they laugh, pull faces for the camera, make jokes, and sing old songs in silly voices. Starr farts, and comments on it. It's clear that their bond remains strong, even on days when someone is hung over or sick of playing the same song for the twentieth time. It is amazing to see how unseriously they took their songwriting process.

This excess of playfulness is due, at least in part, to Jackson's editing. We hardly, if ever, see the Beatles play a complete song in the studio until the final concert, which they certainly did. Instead, we spend hours watching them play bits of evolving songs. While this is fascinating up to a point, because so much is repetitive, it doesn't justify eight hours of screen time.

Lindsay-Hogg was far more succinct. *Let it Be* is carried along by full performances of Beatles' songs in a far more satisfying way than *Get Back*. The graininess of its images has a warmth that speaks directly of the filmmaking of its day. Although it may look dated, its look is appropriate for the year it was made and it evokes 1970 better than *Get Back's* purportedly more accurate depictions. For the most part, *Let it Be* is no dourer than *Get Back*, although it includes less of the band's boisterous studio play.

What both films show is that in January 1969, the Beatles weren't miserable. They were readily capable of joy in the practice of collaborative artistic creation.

The star of both movies is the Beatles' music. McCartney and Lennon were masters of the earworm until the end. Their personas, while fascinating, are ultimately beside the point. It's been days since I finished watching *Get Back* and I still can't get "I've Got a Feeling" or "Don't Let Me Down" out of my head.

And the biggest truth that Jackson's restoration revealed to me is that *Let it Be* is a great film and deserves to be re-released. While the fun that the Beatles are having in *Get Back* is enjoyable to watch and it's nice to know more about their relationship, Jackson could have taken a few lessons from Lindsay-Hogg in how not to produce an overstuffed blockbuster.

People magazine has reported that *Let it Be* will be reissued as part of the campaign surrounding *Get Back*. For now, copies of the last officially released version, on VHS tape from the '80s, go for about \$200 on eBay. If it becomes less difficult to obtain, those who want a more focused take on the late Beatles should seek it out.

Until then, *Get Back* will be great for holiday binge watching on those new 4K ultra-HD TVs for which it was intended – if you can find one during this supply-chain challenged Christmas season.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG**Lost Dog Found; Storm Wreaks Havoc; 911 Hangups****Monday, 11/1**

7:37 a.m. Conducted a welfare check on a woman asleep in a vehicle on the French King Bridge. Party is all set, just a little tired.

11:34 a.m. Caller advises she was driving in her Toyota Prius on Barney Hale Road, where a road work crew was working on the gravel section. She almost went off the road, and thinks that the road needs to be closed, or something needs to be changed.

1:50 p.m. Responded to report of larceny on West Gill Road.

3:27 p.m. Responded to report of soliciting on the sidewalk at the Mill on the French King Highway.

3:59 p.m. 911 hangup from Ward Way. No sounds of distress, and no response to silent call procedures.

6:30 p.m. Missing dog reported on Center Road. Millie, a white shepherd/border collie mix with a light brown spot around one eye, took off.

6:59 p.m. Canine returned.

Tuesday, 11/2

4:26 a.m. Caller from Riverview Drive requesting an officer to help gain entry into his vehicle.

3:54 p.m. Intermediated a verbal argument between two parties on the French King Highway.

Wednesday, 11/3

1:35 p.m. Checked the French King Bridge for a possible suicidal subject.

6:30 p.m. Suspicious vehicle reported on the French King Highway.

Friday, 11/5

10:20 a.m. Caller from Boyle Road reports a coyote in the back field. Not a hazard at this time. Coyote went back into woods.

12:52 p.m. Assisted MassDOT with quick sign change on the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge.

Sunday, 11/7

3:23 p.m. Disabled motor vehicle at Main and West Gill roads. Pushed into Fisher Express and waiting for tow.

8:59 p.m. Fire alarm went off on the first floor on Dickerson Road. Assisted the FD.

Tuesday, 11/9

12:58 p.m. 911 open line on Gaida Drive. Confirmed misdial.

2:43 p.m. Served paper-

work on Main Road.

Wednesday, 11/10

10:36 a.m. Disabled motor vehicle reported on the French King Highway. Assisted with transport for gas to the Mill.

11:04 a.m. Another disabled motor vehicle reported on the French King Highway. Confirmed Art's Tire was *en route*.

11:24 p.m. Caller advises he just closed the store on the French King Highway, and a white van has been outside for 5 or 6 hours.

Thursday, 11/11

2:08 a.m. Assisted a citizen on Mountain Road. Report of overdue motorist.

9:09 a.m. Found a dangerously parked trailer in the travel lane on Mountain Road. Advised they need to move ASAP.

Friday, 11/12

11:37 a.m. Healthcare worker on scene on Boyle Road requested assistance. Unable to arouse resident for services. Contact made prior to arrival. No issues.

12:43 p.m. Safety hazard reported on the French King Highway. Passable, only breakdown lane obstructed. Report of a tree down in the area.

12:47 p.m. Tree reported down on Franklin Road.

12:48 p.m. Tree down on Main and Lyons Hill roads.

12:56 p.m. Flooding reported on the French King Highway.

1:01 p.m. Tree and wires reported down on Center Road.

1:10 p.m. Tree blocking junction of Franklin and West Gill roads. No lines involved. Highway department removed tree.

2:09 p.m. Call into highway department for tree on wires at Camp and Pisgah Mountain roads.

4:07 p.m. Assisted Bernardston PD with three-car accident on Turners Falls Road. Believed to be no personal injuries. No fluids or smoke. SUV, station wagon, and sedan.

4:35 p.m. Report of a disabled vehicle on the French King Highway. Trailer truck with a machine and auger on it. Parties made their own arrangements.

5 p.m. Medical emergency on Boyle Road.

6:41 p.m. PD reports receiving 911 hangups from

Franklin Road. Toddler playing with an iPhone.

Sunday, 11/14

11:54 a.m. River Road caller looking to file a report for a stolen license plate.

Monday, 11/15

7:41 a.m. Caller from the French King Highway reported she was attempting to pass a slow-moving vehicle that sped up, forcing her to pull back. Vehicle is now in Greenfield, heading toward Stop and Shop.

Tuesday, 11/16

8:38 a.m. Caller reported a suspicious vehicle at Bascom and Hoe Shop roads. Male occupant possibly sleeping. Gone on arrival.

4 p.m. 911 hangup on Mount Hermon Road. NMH security advises they are all set.

5:03 p.m. Caller from French King Highway advises she is currently at Green River Powersports. While she was at the lights, another car struck her mirror and continued on.

6:58 p.m. Montague PD took a 911 cell call. Prefix-only phone, with no one on the line, and no signs of distress. The phone was mapping Oak Street, but looked like it was moving.

Wednesday, 11/17

10:46 a.m. State boat ramp closed for the season.

Friday, 11/19

11:40 a.m. Caller requests a call about the police response to incident on Green Hill Road.

5:21 p.m. Caller from French King Highway reports a pickup truck with a bunch of stuff in the back driving erratically. Vehicle pulled into the parking area before the Bridge. Unknown registration.

Saturday, 11/20

10:08 a.m. Medical emergency on Boyle Road.

Sunday, 11/21

1:02 p.m. Caller from Boyle Road states they have a deceased rodent in a cage.

3:04 p.m. Assisted Bernardston PD with a fire on Martindale Road.

Monday, 11/22

8:15 a.m. Caller reports she found what appears to be drugs in a vehicle.

Tuesday, 11/23

5:20 a.m. Tree reported blocking West Gill and Center roads. No lines involved. Highway supervisor has the information.

6:36 a.m. Caller reported black smoke coming from the chimney at the school.

11:58 a.m. 911 call from Conference Road. Caller advised he was trying to restart his phone.

12:59 p.m. Caller from Main Road advises someone stole his debit card.

Wednesday, 11/24

2:21 p.m. Caller from the French King Highway reported a vehicle obstructing handicapped spaces.

Friday, 11/26

7:10 a.m. Caller from Walnut Street advises he had people on his property last night around 10 p.m..

7:40 a.m. Welfare check on Bascom Road. Party pulled over to rest; no signs of impairment.

2:02 p.m. Fire alarm on Memorial Grove Road.

2:32 p.m. Disabled motor vehicle reported at Walnut Street and Riverview Drive. They advised all set.

3:25 p.m. Dispatch took a 911 cell call from South Cross Road. Child heard in the background. Confirmed accidental call by child. All is well.

3:29 p.m. 911 hangup from Dickerson Road. Commotion heard in the background, but caller disconnected. Determined to be small children playing with phone.

Saturday, 11/27

8:53 a.m. Caller from River Road reported a loose dog.

Sunday, 11/28

7:14 a.m. Caller from West Gill Road advises his minivan broke down.

Monday, 11/29

5:09 p.m. Caller from the French King Bridge advising a red vehicle is parked at the rest area on the Erving side of the Bridge.

5:34 p.m. Assisted Erving PD on Old State Road.

Tuesday, 11/30

12:16 p.m. 911 cell caller from the French King Highway reports no emergency. Traveling Route 2 eastbound from the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge.

12:22 p.m. Conducted a welfare check on the French King Bridge. Lone person in car for extended period of time. All okay.

2:49 p.m. Fire alarm went off on Memorial Grove Road in the kitchen zone.

3:41 p.m. Served paperwork on Main Road.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *The Sweetback Sisters' 13th Annual Country Christmas Singalong Spectacular*. \$. Kids' show, 5 p.m.; adults, 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Psychedelic Thurs with DJ MentalDrift*. 6 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Lez Zeppelin*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Pearl Street, Northampton: *Piebald, Her Head's On Fire*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Experimental Santa; Baby, Baby; DJ Heartballoon*. \$. 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17

Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *Christmas Costume*

Party with DJ Seantastic. 7 p.m. Parlor Room, Northampton: *Heather Maloney*. \$. 7:30 p.m. 10 Forward, Greenfield: *Bad Behavior Presents: Leather*. Strict dress code. \$. 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Seven Mile Line*. \$. 8 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *The Scrooges*, Xmas-themed Stooges cover band, with *Power Trousers*. \$. 9 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Masala Jazz*. 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18

Mount Toby Friends Meeting-house, Leverett: *John Sheldon*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield:

Pete Bernhard, Morganeve Swain (Brown Bird, The Huntress and Holder of Hands). \$. 7:30 p.m.; *DJ Lucas, 22BB, Weird Dane, Kala*. \$. 10 p.m.

Bombyx Center, Florence: *Yemen Blues, Midwood*. \$. 8 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Clock Serum, Biproduct, Thanatropics, Death Spiral, DJ Heartballoon*. \$. 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Allysen Callery, Post Moves, Frozen Corn*. 9:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Nellie McKay*. \$. 7 p.m.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 20

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Open mic*. 8:30 p.m.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 21

Bishop's Lounge, Northampton: *Sun Parade, Fake Sisters, Ruby Lou, Chris Marlon Jennings*. Solstice celebration. \$. 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 23

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Michael Graffius, Adelaide Fay*. \$. 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 30

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Bella's Bartok, Folkfaces, Moon Hollow*. \$. 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Rubblebucket, Carinae*. \$. 9 p.m.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31

First Night Northampton: *NRBQ, The Niels, Fancy Trash, The Leafies You Gave Me, Beau*

Sasser Trio, The Equalites, The Fawns, Cloudbelly, Pamela Means, ReBelle, Lonesome Brothers, Wildcat O'Halloran Band, Ray Mason, Carrie Ferguson, Tracey Grammer, and many more at many venues. Starts at noon. \$. See firstnight-northampton.org for details.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Pussyvision, Feminine Aggression, Father Hotep, Donnyfromtheposter, Gami, DJ Tall Girl*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Bella's Bartok, Ditrani Bros, Slow Pony*. \$. 8 p.m.

Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: *Deer Tick, Katy Kirby*. \$. 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Rubblebucket, Home Body*. \$. 9 p.m.



JOEL PAXTON ILLUSTRATION

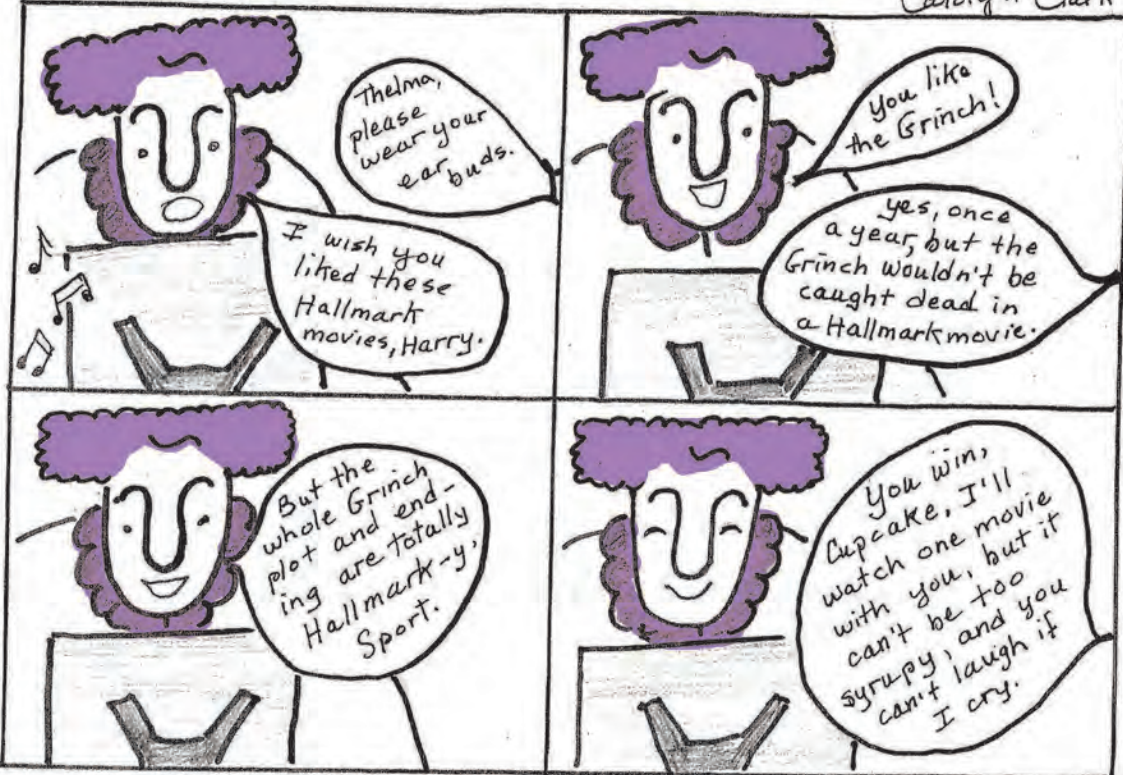
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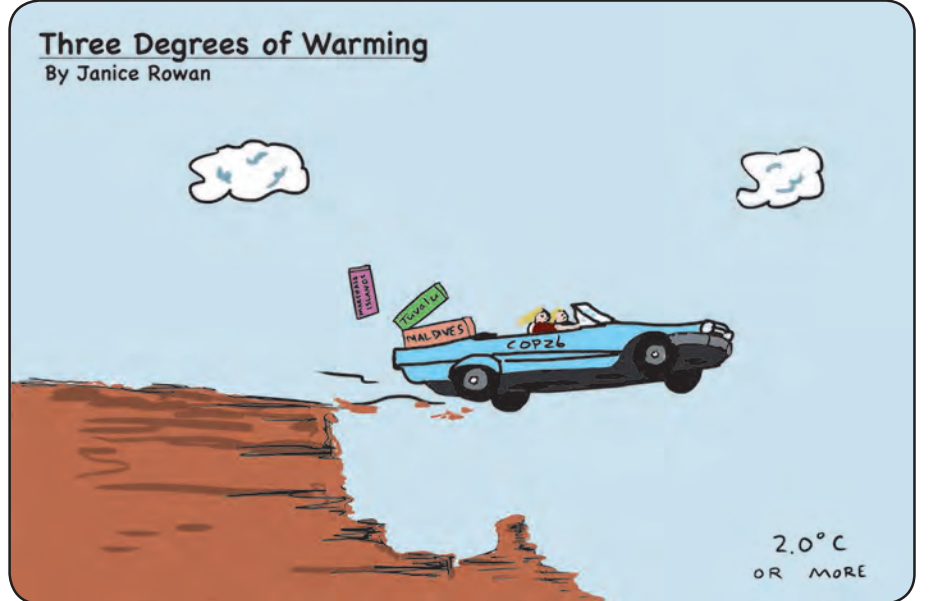
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WEST ALONG from page B1 alike in the same regal ermine.

December white will fade to January blue, cold and shrill, but in the short time of the first snow's artistry, it is welcome.

True to form, a warm mid-December has drawn us back into the bright, even mild days as in early November, the first snow of last week is already only a fond memory. Alas, all those unfinished chores I was glad to have covered up, are once again revealed. Guess I'll put away the snow shovel again, take out the rake, maybe plant the scilla bulbs I once again neglected to plant on time in October!

Skis and snowshoes will have to lie idle, and we all will spend anxious days waiting and hoping for the fabled, elusive White Christmas.



Winter wren, Troglodytes hiemalis.

OUT OF THE PARK DECEMBER 2021

By JON DOBOSZ

UNITY PARK – Hello and Happy Holidays, everyone! It is that wonderful time of year to spend with family and friends, and to reflect on what is most important in our lives. Our winter season has started, and seems to be bouncing along quite well, with our youth basketball program and Bluefish swim team underway.

Typically, this time of year we are also planning our annual **Sawmill River 10k** which is held on New Year's Day, but have decided to postpone the event later in 2022. Please keep an eye open for further announcements.

As we enter the winter season, personal health and self-care should be at the top of everyone's list – especially nowadays. One great way to stay active is to get in the pool! Our **Open Swim Program** at the Turners Falls High School pool will be starting up soon, and will be held on Tuesday and Friday evenings from January 4 through March 11. Family Swim is held from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., with Adult Lap Swim from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.

We have COVID rules that must be adhered to during the program. For additional information and admission rates, please visit our web-

site or give us a call.

We will also be having our **American Red Cross Babysitting Course** on Tuesday, February 1 and Wednesday, February 2. Those participating will obtain the knowledge and resources to become great babysitters! This is a fun and interactive course that teaches students first aid and safety skills, as well as helpful tips on how to prevent and respond to emergencies. The course is open to youths ages 11 to 15, and fees are \$40 for Montague residents and \$45 for non-residents. Please note that this is one course that spans two evenings.

That's about it from here. Be sure to get outside, breathe in the crisp air, and get some exercise. It is critical to meet winter head-on by keeping your mind and body active, so don't hibernate!

If you wish to get additional information on any of our programs and services, check out our webpage montagueparksrec.com.

All of us here at MPRD wish you the brightest of holidays and a healthy New Year. We appreciate your continued support, and we will talk to you in 2022!

Jon Dobosz, CPRP, is the parks and recreation director for the town of Montague.



Montague Community Television News

What About Your Frieendends

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

TURNERS FALLS – Catch up with your friends on the Montague selectboard by finding our recording of their most recent meeting on our website. There you will also find recordings of the Montague finance committee meeting and the Gill selectboard meeting. And for a holiday treat, check out our video of the Fain Fair Brass Christmas in Monson, Massachusetts.

Don't forget, all community members are wel-

come to submit their videos to be aired on Channel 17, as well as featured on the MCTV Vimeo page.

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

Something going on you think others would like to see? If you get in touch, we can show you how easy it is to use a camera and capture the moment. Contact us at (413) 863-9200 or infomontaguetelevision@gmail.com.

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