

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 20 – NO. 9

also serving Erving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

\$1

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

JANUARY 13, 2022

Farren Owner Will Not Share Its 'Proprietary' Building Study

By MIKE JACKSON

MONTAGUE CITY – Residents disappointed in Farren Care Center owner Trinity Health of New England's decision to demolish the former hospital and long-term care center may have been reinforced in their disappointment on Monday after the non-profit rebuffed a request from Montague officials to partner with the town on a reuse study of the building, or to share an internal assessment of its condition.

"With regard to the building assessments, they are proprietary to Trinity Health and will [sic] not be sharing them," Trinity regional operations director Eric Dana wrote in an email to town administrator Steve Ellis last Friday. "Our team's processes have been thorough and in keeping with industry standards for assessment, and given the condition of the building, we agree that demolition is the best option."

Ellis put the email on Monday's selectboard agenda, and had it posted to the town website. The document chain shows that he had been

see **FARREN** page A8

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD Legislation For Remote Town Meetings Has Expired

By JEFF SINGLETON

Montague has been planning to hold a remote special town meeting on March 3, but as the town's selectboard was preparing Monday to open the warrant for the event, town administrator Steve Ellis told them that the state emergency legislation regulations allowing town meetings to be held remotely expired on December 15. Ellis said town officials, in collaboration with state representative Natalie Blais and senator Joanne Comerford, are scrambling to get either updated legislation or a dispensation for the town.

The legislature and Governor Charlie Baker extended a variety of "legislative and gubernatorial enactments" to address the COVID-19 pandemic after the official state "emergency" ended in June 2021, according to a chronology provided by KP Law, the town attorney. These included relaxed rules for outdoor dining, modifications of the open meeting law to allow local boards and committees to meet virtually, and allowing representative town meetings to operate virtually, and with reduced quorums.

The problem, according to Ellis, is that while most of these provisions were extended until April 1, 2022, the relaxed rules for representative town meetings – which were

see **MONTAGUE** page A7

MAKING THE MOST OF IT



Last Friday was a snow day! It wasn't deep, but it was slippery, and sledders wasted no time getting over to Unity Park.

THE BIG PICTURE

The Growing Needs of Our Eldest Quarter

By MIKE JACKSON

TURNERS FALLS – Roberta Potter wears two hats, as she puts it, as the director of the Gill-Montague Council on Aging and the manager of the senior center on Fifth Street. I've always noticed her as one of the people in town working quietly but tirelessly to solve problems.

This week two articles we'd expected to publish disappeared on deadline day, and I had space to fill – the worst fear of a small-town newspaper editor in the depths of January. I'd been meaning to interview Roberta for a long time, so I called her up. She agreed immediately to help when I told her the problem....

MR: How's it going over at the senior center?

RP: Well, we're busy! The senior center is open from 9 to at least 2, Monday through Friday. We have all of our normal programming going: exercise classes, a couple of social groups, card playing, a small group of Bingo people. What we are not doing, because of COVID, is having meals – in fact right now, because of the mask mandate, we're not even keeping our usual coffee pot and snacks going.

And I am not arranging any programming looking into the future. We quite frequently coordinate with LifePath for healthy living programs, and we're not doing that, both because of the current mask mandate and also because the future is so uncertain. I think once we can get back outdoors things will be a lot better.



Running the Fifth Street senior center is only one part of Council on Aging director Roberta Potter's day-to-day job.

MR: What's the history in the pandemic so far? It was closed entirely, then reopened with masks?

RP: We closed completely in February 2020, and we reopened this past June by reservation only, just for

see **BIG PICTURE** page A6

Con Com in Final Stretch of Pond Process

By SARAH ROBERTSON

LEVERETT – The Leverett conservation commission concluded a public hearing on a proposed management plan for Leverett Pond Monday night, bringing to a close several months of information-gathering. The



Ice skating last winter on Leverett Pond.

commission is expected to deliberate and vote on the proposal by February 7.

The proposal, known as a Notice of Intent (NOI), was filed by the Friends of Leverett Pond (FLP), a local non-profit that has managed the pond for decades. The FLP proposes to continue using chemical herbicides and mechanical harvesting, and add an annual winter drawdown of the pond's water, as its primary means of managing aquatic weeds.

While FLP members argue that excessive milfoil growth is causing low dissolved oxygen levels that could harm the pond's fish population, its application this year has drawn opposition from some residents. At Monday's meeting opponents challenged the group's motivations for clearing vegetation in the pond.

"[I]t is not clear with what authority FLP has to manage the pond and hire pesticide companies to operate on it," said Virginia Goodale, reading aloud a letter at Monday's meeting signed by a number of Leverett residents. "The goals of homeowners are perhaps

see **LEVERETT** page A5

Nova Wins Nod For 'Gearheads And Tinkerers' Plan for Garage

By JEFF SINGLETON

TURNERS FALLS – The Montague capital improvements committee (CIC) recommended on Wednesday that Nova Real Estate, LLC, owned by Peter Chilton and Sayre Anthony, be awarded the right to purchase the former town highway garage at 500 Avenue A.

Chilton and Anthony are not only co-owners of the motorcycle repair company on Second Street, but also lease space there to a number of artisans – which Chilton called "gearheads, creators, woodworkers and tinkers" in his application – and plan to extend that business model to Avenue A, "with a slant toward more industrial processes."

The CIC recommendation will now go before the Montague selectboard for a final decision on the contract award. The town has offered to sell the building for \$75,000 to the developer with the best response to a request for proposals.

At Wednesday's meeting, the CIC reviewed evaluations by its five members of four qualified finalists, whose proposals had been discussed by the committee the previous week.

The finalists, in addition to Nova, were David LaRue, who owns a building on Third Street occupied by Pioneer Valley Brewery; Dr. So-hail Waein, owner of New England Wound Care (or NEWCare); and

see **GARAGE** page A5

ERVING SELECTBOARD

Town to Ask IP Developers To Clean Up The Riverfront

By KEITH WATERS

Monday's Erving selectboard meeting began, once again, with talk about COVID. The town has again instated a mask mandate in town buildings, and it is expected that the board of health will instate one in public places at their meeting later this week.

It was acknowledged that the numbers are likely the worst they have been throughout the pandemic, with 29 new cases reported this week in Erving. In the previous three weeks, the number of new cases in the town were 11, 13, and 23.

Brian Smith, the town administrator, said the town is trying to secure more tests and PPE, but that supplies are low. The senior/community center has been the location of the town's distribution for these supplies.

The discussion was brief and rather disinterested. It seems that though this is still a troubling and unpredictable global pandemic, we are all tired of this.

We can keep moving, so we do.

The Church Street lane closure: how is it working? All right, according to the selectboard. The snow we have had so far has not been enough to cause trouble with any of the temporary traffic directions in place. More significant amounts of

see **ERVING** page A4

It's Astounding... Time Is Fleeting... Madness Takes Its Toll

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| Illustration: Filling In.....A2 | Vax Clinic at the Brick House.....A8 | Montague Police Log.....B3 |
| Letters: Two Farren Ideas.....A2 | The First and Largest of Three Cats.....B1 | Grades and Stages.....B4 |
| Local Briefs.....A3 | Incorporating Fungus.....B1 | How Not To Get S.A.D.....B5 |
| Op/Ed: Who Determines Spending?.....A3 | The Montague City Rambler.....B1 | Our Monthly Children's Page.....B6 |
| Wendell Selectboard Notes.....A4 | Valley View: Those Poor Trout.....B1 | Arts & Entertainment Calendar.....B7 |
| 10 Years Ago This Week.....A7 | Just Like Buddy Holly.....B2 | Three Comics and a Puzzle.....B7 |
| Gill-Montague School Committee Notes.....A7 | M/M/M: Across the Pond.....B2 | That High Lonesome Sound (Electric).....B8 |



The Montague Reporter

"The Voice of the Villages"

Editorial Group

Mike Jackson, *Managing Editor*
 Nina Rossi, *Features Editor*
 Chris Sawyer-Lauçanno, *Poetry Page*
 Victoria Maillo, *Spanish Page*
 Beverly Ketch, *Children's Page*
 Gloria Kegeles, *Editorial Assistant*

Production Group

Annie Levine, *Business Manager*
 Lyn Clark, *Distribution Manager*
 Charlotte Kohlmann, *Layout Assistant*
 Jae Southerland, *Layout Assistant*
 Christopher Carmody, *Layout Assistant*
 Sarah Brown-Anson, *Podcast Producer*
Technical Administration
 About Face Computing

Founded by

Arthur Evans Harry Brandt David Detmold
 August 2002

Transmission

On Tuesday, Massachusetts legislators had an opportunity to discuss the state's pandemic response with governor Charlie Baker, as he came before the Joint Committee on COVID-19 and Emergency Preparedness and Management.

Our state senator Jo Comerford co-chairs that committee, and her questions for Baker focused on school safety. We found the exchange, which became heated, interesting enough to publish in full, as a snapshot of the public health discussion during the current surge.

Comerford: On a number of occasions recently, both you and your administration said that the KN95 masks distributed to schools had been tested by MIT. And I know that you're aware of this. And then on January 5, DESE released a statement that there were KN95 masks distributed to schools that were not tested, and according to guidelines, were less than about 50% effective.

And so I have several questions here. In DESE's response, it noted that the "use of KN95 masks is voluntary, and that staff should be aware that their choice of masks is ultimately a personal decision."

You're probably aware that some well-resourced districts have taken the distribution of high-quality masks on themselves, like Amherst-Pelham in my area.

And so my question for you, Governor, is: Why doesn't the state set public health standard guidelines for the quality of masks used in schools, given the transmissibility of Omicron and the proven efficacy of high quality masks, and then back up that guidance with sufficient resources, and/or a next shipment of those kinds of high-quality, high-performing masks?

Baker: Okay, so a couple things. One, we sent out 6 million KN95 masks like 10 days ago or so. And it was brought to our attention that some of them may have not been part of the group of KN95s that got tested. And we checked on that, and that was true. And we put out the data for the ones that had been tested. We've now begun the process of testing the other ones, and the preliminary results are very positive with respect to the efficacy and safety of those masks.

We have been distributing KN95 masks to communities around the Commonwealth, for all kinds of reasons and purposes, since May of

2020 – millions of masks, to supplement masks that were available for first responders, police officers, firefighters, teachers, DPW workers, office workers, frontline people who are dealing with customers – and have been very aggressive about distributing masks all the way through the course of the pandemic. And when someone said there was an issue, we looked into it, and we responded. And we sent the other ones out to get tested as well.

But I have to say that every respected public health voice in America says that schools, for the most part, are low-transmission operations; that school is not only safe, especially for kids, it's healthy; and the kids need to be in school; and the kids need not just the learning that comes from being in school, but the socialization that comes from it as well.

The vast majority of the adults in our K through 12 school systems in Massachusetts are vaccinated. The vaccines, along with KN95 masks or other masks that are deemed appropriate by schools, provide a significant amount of protection, and that's been proven over the course now of two years. Keep in mind that our parochial and private schools have been open all the way through '21, and all the way through the fall of '21 and into '22, with very little COVID. That's just a fact!

Comerford: Governor, I just want to interrupt here, because in fact what I was asking was: Why doesn't the state set standard guidelines for the highest-quality masks that districts should provide? Public health-informed guidelines? Since we know that Omicron is so transmissible, since we know we need a high-quality mask, since we know there's glaring gaps, especially for our youngest kids, why are we not just issuing those guidelines? Do you have a response to that?

Baker: My goal all along has been to make it possible to support communities with respect to their goals and their initiatives around all of this. But the idea that schools aren't safe is just not based on any data. It's just not. And I'm not going to let people perpetuate this idea that schools aren't safe, because they are – and it's been proven, not just in Massachusetts, but in the US and around the world, for the better part of a year and a half.

Comerford: Governor, I understand – you're not going to answer this question. I would just like to say that on behalf of the Senate, I think public health guidelines, and issuing a standard, quality mask, is a good idea. And then following those up by distributing them. Because in my area, the wealthier districts are getting those higher-quality masks. And that's all I'll say.

Baker: There's about a billion dollars in ESSER money that the cities and towns in Massachusetts haven't spent. We've made clear to them on numerous occasions that we will help them, in whatever way we can, to make sure that they put those dollars to work in ways that are consistent with federal guidelines. What you're discussing right now is a perfect example of where communities can put those ESSER

dollars to work, and that would be considered a federally appropriate place to spend their dollars. And it's something that we've helped many districts do; we'd be happy to help others do it as well...

There are resources available here, there are local boards of health who make many decisions on behalf of these kinds of issues for local communities, and honestly I sort of look at the amount of money that's still available there and I really would like to see communities put a lot of that to work.

Comerford: I understand, Governor. But I believe it's the state's responsibility to set the guidelines to keep our people safe. I'm not saying that the state has to do all the work, but I think it's the state's job to set the bar. We have the experts, we have the resources. We should take the burden on our shoulders, and we should execute on behalf of our municipal officials....

Comerford: Governor, I want to continue on schools. In my estimation, our schools are facing an immediate and pretty urgent crisis with regard to health and safety concerns, staffing shortages, burnout, and learning disruption, due to COVID-related absenteeism across the board. That's students, faculty, and staff.... Do you believe that we could have curtailed the spread that we're seeing now, the post-winter break spread, if we had rapid tested all students along with faculty and staff before they returned from winter break? And I want to know, is that in the works now for the February break with the rapid test that you've just announced?

Baker: So, two things. One is I think you guys know this we have one of the biggest testing programs for kids and faculty and staff in the United States through our pool-testing program, and our test-to-stay

program. And we have continued to do that, and one of the reasons we wanted to find rapid tests and make them available to teachers before they came back after the break was to deal with exactly the question you're asking about.

And what was particularly interesting about the pool testing that we did after the break was, the positivity rate went down with each day after the break. Which speaks once again to the fact that there's more transmission going on outside of school than there is going on inside of school.

Comerford: Do you agree that we should test before we get back from February break?

Baker: If we've learned anything about testing, especially with respect to rapid tests – and I've been a big proponent of rapid tests for a very long period of time – the fact that we only have a handful of companies that are authorized to produce rapid tests in the US, when the rest of the world has hundreds, has been a giant headache for everybody who's trying to make more testing capability available generally.

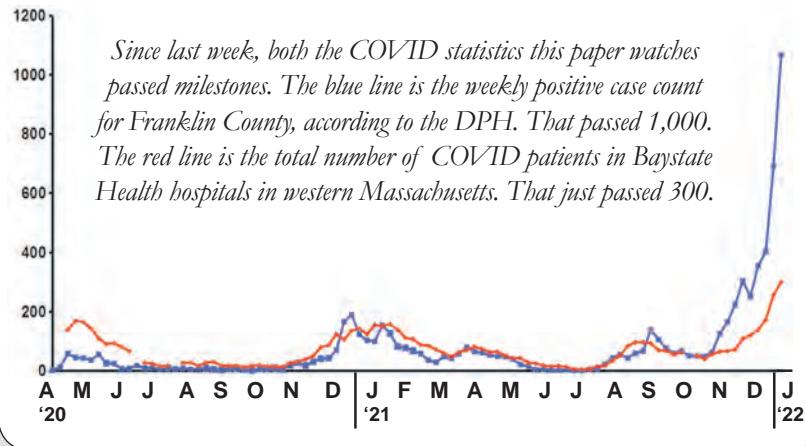
We did secure this contract; there are supply chain concerns, okay. Hopefully it'll all work out exactly the way it's supposed to, which is we'll receive regular shipments almost every day for the next three months, which will make it possible for us to replenish supplies for schools, to create and support programming in childcare, and to continue to sort of support our cities and towns once we get those two issues solved and dealt with.

What I would say to you is the February vacation is absolutely a consideration for us.... I will certainly make sure to discuss the question you're raising, and get you guys an answer on this one before the kids and the staff go off on February vacation.



"We're in the sand and gravel business up here," says Wendell's acting town coordinator, Doug Tanner. "I think we've got more road per capita than any other town in the state – 60 miles of roads, 40 of them unpaved." When he's not crunching the numbers for gravel at the town offices as the financial coordinator and finance committee chair, Tanner plays violin and chromatic harmonica with The Catalytics – COVID permitting.

BOTH LINES GO UP



Published weekly on Thursdays.
 Every other week in July and August.
 No paper fourth week of November,
 or the Thursday closest to 12/25.

PHONE: (413) 863-8666
 Please note new email addresses:
 editor@montaguereporter.org
 features@montaguereporter.org
 ads@montaguereporter.org
 bills@montaguereporter.org
 circulation@montaguereporter.org
 events@montaguereporter.org
 poetry@montaguereporter.org
 subscriptions@montaguereporter.org

Send address changes to:
The Montague Reporter
 177 Avenue A
 Turners Falls, MA 01376

Advertising and copy deadline is
MONDAY at NOON.

This newspaper shall not be liable for errors in advertisements, but will print without charge that part of the advertisement in which an error occurred. The publishers reserve the right to refuse advertising for any reason and to alter copy or graphics to conform to standards of the newspaper, such as they are.

Annual Subscription Rate:
 \$30 for walking subscriptions;
 \$40 for driving route subscriptions;
 \$70 for mailed subscriptions.
 Call us or contact
 subscriptions@montaguereporter.org
 with any questions.

WE WELCOME YOUR LETTERS!
 ORIGINAL CONTENT ONLY, PLEASE LIMIT 4 PER YEAR

Montague Reporter
 177 Avenue A
 Turners Falls, MA 01376

editor@montaguereporter.org

Sign Me Up!

\$20 { 8 months (31 issues) for our walking routes
 6 months (23 issues) for our driving routes
 3 months (13 issues) for mailed subscriptions

The Montague Reporter
 177 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA 01376

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Town: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Email (optional): _____



LOCAL BRIEFS

Compiled by NINA ROSSI

Here's an idea to get creativity flowing during these especially shut-in days of pandemic winter: the Radical Agreement Project of Amherst is hosting free, online **improv comedy sessions** every weekday at 4 p.m. If you want to get in the habit of flexing your humor during half-hour sessions, be in touch with Terry Withers at terry@radicalagreement.com.

Another idea is online **Zentangle workshops** with John Nordell. Nordell describes Zentangle as "a way of creating beautiful images from repetitive patterns. It is fun and relaxing. Almost anyone can use it to create beautiful images. It increases focus and creativity, provides artistic satisfaction along with an increased sense of personal well-being."

Try it out this Thursday, January 13 at 6:30 p.m., Friday, January 14 at 4:30 p.m., or Saturday, January 15 at 9:30 a.m. All that is needed is a pencil, a pen, and a blank piece of paper about 3.5" square, cardstock being best. No drawing experience is necessary.

To learn more, see examples, and sign up for the workshops, see www.createlookenjoy.com. (There is a small fee, but each workshop has a few free tickets available.)

The MassHire Franklin Hampshire Career Center has 20 slots available for the year-round **youth employment** program for ages 16 to 21. YouthWorks is a state-fund-

ed program that helps teens get the skills and experience needed to find and keep jobs. Participants will receive paid, short-term placements at worksites in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

They are also looking for three peer leaders, ages 18 to 21, and if your business or organization is interested in hosting a youth worker this spring, now is the time to sign up as well. Contact Career Center youth services counselor Anitra Ford at anitraford@masshirefhcareers.org.

Actors of all ages and abilities are invited to audition for upcoming play readings at the LAVA Center at 324 Main Street in Greenfield. This is an opportunity to be seen and heard by representatives from the LAVA Center as well as Silverthorne Theater Company and the Theater Initiative of Temple Israel. The auditions will be on two Sundays, January 16 and 23, noon to 4 p.m.

Actors will read from play scenes in groups of six or fewer. You must be masked and have proof of vaccination to participate. For information and links to sign up for a slot, email robby@localaccess.org.

Join FirstLight's Northfield Mountain staff and other nighttime adventurers on Monday, January 17, from 5:30 until 7:30 p.m. for a **snowshoe hike under the Wolf Moon**. Natural history and moon lore will be shared during this two-mile hike.

All levels of experience are welcome; participants must be 18 years or older and comfortable hiking over

moderate terrain. Masks are needed for group gathering, and snowshoes are available to rent for \$16.

Pre-registration at www.bookeo.com/northfield is required. If there is not enough snow for snowshoeing, there will still be a hike.

The owners of **Greenfield Garden Cinemas** sent us notice that they are replacing their entire concession stand after National Popcorn Day on Wednesday, January 19. "It will be our last National Popcorn Day with this Gold Medal Pop-O-Gold Popper that dates back to the Goldstein days," Angela and Isaac Mass explained.

The theater has contracted to demolish the entire concession area and rebuild it from scratch at the end of February. The new area, designed by the Proctor Company, will include a state-of-the-art Gold Medal Grand Medallion popcorn machine.

The Garden offers six flavors of popcorn and lets customers put their own "butter" on to taste – some moviegoers even add candy to their popcorn. Isaac Mass says staff are especially excited to have two new popcorn warmers to replace the large one that died during the early days of the pandemic.

Longtime *Montague Reporter* editorial assistant and newspaper carrier **Gloria Kegeles** of Wendell is showing her work this month at Gallery A3 in Amherst in an exhibit entitled "At the Precipice." This collection of photographs centers around what Kegeles calls "discombobulation during major crises."

The collection is showing through January 29. Showing with her is painter John Krifka, with an exhibit called "Back and Forth."

The Gallery has limited hours this winter, from 3 to 7 p.m. Fridays through Sundays, but an artist talk will be held on Zoom on Thurs-

day, January 20 at 7:30 p.m. Go to the gallery website to register, www.gallerya3.com.

The Montague Libraries have announced a series of **workshops on genealogy**. "Introduction to Genealogy" starts at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, January 25 with Carol Ansel sharing the ABC's of learning where the records are and how to find and use them. This is a Zoom presentation.

Tune in again on Tuesday, February 15 for "Tracing Your Immigrant Ancestors" with Al Fiace. Learn how to find out about your ancestors' journeys to America. To register for these programs, call (413) 863-3214.

Get Down With Your Hometown, an online music festival, is coming back this year with an incredible lineup of musicians on Friday and Saturday, January 28 and 29. This livestream represents a collaboration between the Shea Theater, the Institute for the Musical Arts in Goshen, and the North Star alternative school, and together they have pulled together eight hours of music and entertainment.

This is a free festival, with donations encouraged. Get Down With Your Hometown will run from 6 to 10 p.m. each night with masters of ceremony "Monte" Belmonte, Kelsey Flynn, and Pam Victor presenting nationally-known and western Massachusetts-based musicians and bands, many of them including members with affiliations to the IMA or North Star.

Performers include Lake Street Dive, Rhiannon Giddens, June Millington, Martin Sexton, Naia Kete, Sarah Jarosz, and many more. Check out the full lineup at www.getdownhometown.com.

Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

ELDERLY CAREGIVER NEEDED IN LEVERETT

Looking for a dedicated and reliable professional caregiver up to 20 hours per week for my elderly father. Duties to include: making meals, support personal hygiene, light housekeeping, providing company and overall support. References and proof of COVID vaccinations and booster required and willing to follow COVID safety precautions. Hours can vary. Hourly rate plus bonuses. Please call or text Jenny at (413) 687-5667.

WENDELL COUNTRY STORE

"It's just a stone's throw from reality."
Groceries - Videos - Home Baked Goods
Beer - Wine - Liquor
MON - SAT 7-9. SUNDAY 8-8
978-544-8646
Lockes Village Rd.
1/2 mile south of Wendell Center

GREENFIELD FARMERS COOPERATIVE EXCHANGE
Locally Owned Since 1918

269 High Street - Greenfield
(413) 773-9639

Local Farmer-Owned

Products for the home, farm, pets, yard & garden

If you Feed it - Seed it - Weed it We GOT it!

www.greenfieldfarmerscoop.com

NANCY L. DOLE BOOKS & EPHEMERA

20 State Street, Bucklandside
Shelburne Falls
413-625-9850
ndole@crocker.com

OPEN AGAIN 3 days a week
Tues, Weds, Thurs - 11 to 6

THE LADY KILLIGREW:

Awesome Beer
Amazing Food

Awesome, Amazing Employees!

440 Greenfield Rd, Montague MA
7 Days / 8am - 11pm (at least)
(413)367-9666



OP ED

Who Decides What the Town "Needs"?

By MIKE NAUGHTON

MILLERS FALLS – I thank John Hanold for his recent explanation of "excess taxing capacity" (January 6, 2022, page A3), and I look forward to hearing more from him – and perhaps other members of the finance committee – about matters that come under their purview.

One statement in his piece perhaps deserves a little more attention. When he says that the finance committee expects "that the recommended budget will continue to meet Montague's needs," I think it's important to note that whether a given spending plan does or does not "meet Montague's needs" is a judgment call, and in my opinion, that fact points to the need to have a finance committee in the first place.

The finance committee is established by Montague's bylaws, which state that it "shall meet and investigate the cost of maintenance and expenditures of the different departments of the Town and recommend in detail the amounts to be appropriated for each department for the ensuing year." Further, it "shall also consider articles in Town warrants requiring the appropriation of mon-

ey and make a written report to the meetings considering such articles."

What, exactly, those things mean in practice has been debated over the years, and the debate is likely to continue, because the committee continually works to find the right balance between two different poles.

On the one hand, it's generally agreed that the committee should not try to manage the various departments – that's the job of the department heads, working with elected officials. On the other hand, it's hard for a committee member to recommend funding something that they think is a bad idea. After all, if the committee's only job is to certify that there's enough money to fund requested appropriations, that could be done just as well by the town accountant.

In the past – say, 20 years ago – there was often not enough expected revenue to fund requested budgets, and the finance committee spent sometimes considerable time trying to decide what could be eliminated (or postponed) to make things balance. The question of whether the town might do things differently was eclipsed by the question of whether the town *could* even keep

doing what it was doing.

More recently, healthy new growth and free cash have made it possible for Montague to fund departmental requests with money to spare, leading to the current decision to carry excess capacity. But that has served to bring the finance committee's role more clearly to the forefront: if there is "extra" money, should it be spent, and if so how? More generally, is the current mix of spending optimal? Should some departments be allocated more money, and others less?

Those are all judgment calls, and that's where the finance committee has an important role.

In my opinion, the committee should not simply assume that department heads should be given whatever they ask for, nor that elected officials have always come up with the ideal spending plan. While respecting their powers, responsibilities, and expertise, it should also be asking whether there might be better choices. In doing so, its members should try to be mindful of what's best for the town. After all, citizens don't exist to fund town government; town government exists to provide

the goods and services desired by the citizens.

And Montague citizens don't all agree on what's best. That's why it's good that the finance committee is as big as it is, and that it has a fairly diverse membership. But no matter how diverse and committed the members are, it's hard for them to know what the rest of us think unless we tell them.

The current chair, Jen Audley, has been trying hard to figure out ways for the committee to receive public input, and it could help her out if the rest of us paid attention and offered feedback. It's challenging – there's rarely a reporter at finance committee meetings, so you have to watch the meetings yourself to find out what's going on. But the upside is that we have a finance committee that is interested in learning what we want and in shaping the town's spending accordingly.

Of course, these are just my own opinions. I look forward to hearing from others in the coming weeks!

Mike Naughton is a Precinct 2 town meeting member, and a former member of the Montague finance committee. He lives in Millers Falls.

PLACE YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE (12 WEEK MINIMUM) CALL 863-8666!

Rau's Auto
COMPLETE AUTO REPAIR

(413) 367-2475

531 Turners Falls Rd. Montague

24 hour emergency towing
Best service licensed Mechanics

Overwhelmed by stuff? Try Franklin County's Most Convenient

IN-TOWN SELF STORAGE

UPPER END OF WELLS STREET, GREENFIELD

413-883-7323

Easy in-town location
Secure 24-hour access

VARIETY OF SIZES
THE BEST PRICES

OFFICE AT 50 CHAPMAN STREET, GREENFIELD, MA

Contractors, Flea Marketers, Tradeshow Vendors and Artists encouraged to inquire

Brian R. San Soucie
LOCKSMITH - CRL

863-2471
28 Montague St
Turners Falls, MA


certified - bonded - insured

Trusted for over 25 years, installing all types of locks & entry devices for business & homes

- Dead Bolts
- Household Lock Sets
- Master Keys & Re-keys
- Safe Combinations Changed

RECYCLE

PAPER
Week of January 17
in Montague



more info? call: 863-2054

PZ

Partridge-Zschau Insurance

Protect Your Future

Since 1891

25 Millers Falls Road
Turners Falls, MA 01376
tel: 413-863-4331
www.pzinc.com

**spelling
grammar
punctuation**



TroubleMandesonCopyEditing@gmail.com

Copyediting
Proofreading
Document Review

ESL and academics welcome

(413) 668-6997

WE HEAT FRANKLIN COUNTY

- System 2000 (Energy Kinetics)
- Thermo Pride
- Weil-McLain
- Other Major Brands
- Expert Burner Service



(413) 773-3622

Formerly Jay K's - bigger & better!

Connecticut River Liquor & Wine



Open Mon-Thurs 10am-10pm
Fri & Sat 10am - 11pm • Sun Noon-8pm

123 Avenue A • Turners Falls
863-5066

ERVING from page A1

snow may be a problem; we will cross that bridge when we get to it.

The main topic of the January 10 meeting was the draft of the request for proposals (RFP) for redevelopment of the town-owned International Paper Mill property. Discussion of this took the majority of the meeting, pausing halfway through for a joint meeting with the finance committee to discuss the FY'23 budget, the upcoming special town meeting (STM), and the possibility of borrowing money for the new force sewer main on Arch Street.

Finance Committee

Paying for the sewer main up front would empty the town's coffers – not a good situation to be in. Selectboard member Scott Bastarache stated he is in favor of borrowing money to do the project, as there are multiple other projects in the running that will need to be paid for, and the town is going to have to borrow money at some point. The rest of the board agreed.

There is a plan for borrowing the money in a 15-year loan, with the option of making a balloon payment at eight years to substantially reduce the amount of interest paid. Bastarache recommended earmarking some money in each annual town budget up to that eight-year mark for that payment. The board agreed.

The cost of debt service, one of the aspects of our lives, was acknowledged and considered.

Operating budget requests from departments for the 2023 financial year contained no major surprises.

The board of health has an additional cost in required mosquito control, which the town tried to get out of but the state insisted on. Nobody wants Eastern Equine Encephalitis. The additional cost is just \$5,000 per year.

The senior center anticipates some additional costs related to phone and internet service. People in the USA pay among the highest costs for phone and internet in the developed world, and Erving is no exception. The senior center is also trying to hire a cook, and having a hard time. It is

a part-time position during the day. They raised the offered pay rate from \$17 to \$19 an hour, but have had no applicants.

The recreation commission has spent their extra time during COVID, allowed for by the cancellation of most group activities, spiffing up the town parks. That is going well: the Park Street and Church Street parks are done, and Zelinsky Park is coming up. The basketball program was able to get in action again this last summer, and that reportedly went well. The commission is running under budget.

There was a minor change in the articles of the warrant for the upcoming special town meeting, expected to be held in March, related to the accounting software for the cemetery which had become unusable. Another \$10,000, which will also cover some additional gravestone maintenance, was added to that article. The selectboard is waiting for a decision by the planning board before finalizing the warrant.

International Paper Mill

The IP Mill is a very large building complex, sitting on about 46 acres of land along the Millers River; it has been vacant for years and is now owned by the town, which wants to see it returned to the tax rolls. The selectboard is planning to subdivide the lot and retain about 40 acres of land that is considered not really developable, and give the approximately six acres with the building complex on it to the right developer. The board has favored a mixed-use development with some combination of residential, commercial, and industrial use.

There was a lot of discussion about the RFP's "rubric," the guide that lists the specific criteria the town will use for scoring proposals. Developers can use the rubric to design a project they think the town will like; the better it is written, the easier it will be for the town to get what it wants.

Erving wants, and in fact might need, some portion of any residential units to be affordable. Discussion turned to how much this should be – 35%, 40%? Would it be best if it was 100% affordable housing? No decision was made.

Assistant town planner Mariah Kurtz, who

wrote the draft of the RFP, found some nice wording in a recent RFP issued by Montague that said something to the effect of "low-employment commercial concerns such as self-storage or warehouses will not be preferred." Everyone appreciated that she had found that, and wanted similar language included.

The town also wants the riverfront by the property to be cleaned up. Selectboard member William Bembury noted that there has been significant illegal trash dumping on the site, which will need to be dealt with given the town's plan to put its retained acreage into a conservation tax status. The board agreed that the cleanup cost must be discussed, and that the RFP should require the developer to clean the riverfront adjacent to the building complex. A higher grade would be given to grander cleanup projects, perhaps including a river walk or benches.

The timeline to completion was also discussed. Kurtz included some ballpark dates, and the board agreed to consider them. Brian Smith pointed out that the town can change the timeline when it enters into a land development agreement with the chosen developer.

Kurtz said she will work on a second draft, and discussion will continue at a later date.

Other Business

Ameresco, a sort of giant money company involved in the energy sector, has offered to pay consulting company Beacon Integrated Solutions to study ways the town could save money on its energy costs. The board agreed to take them up on the offer, as it would not take any money out of the town's pocket.

The board then approved some zoning amendments to send to the planning committee, agreed to retain the town's current fuel vendors for FY'23, and approved an agreement with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments to send a police trainee to Bridge Academy, before entering an executive session to discuss negotiations with the New England Police Benevolent Association.

The next selectboard meeting is scheduled for January 24.



NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Test Kits; New Guy; Lots of WRATS

By **JOSH HEINEMANN**

At their January 5 meeting, the Wendell selectboard endorsed a recommendation from the town board of health to mandate mask wearing in town-owned public buildings.

Board member Gillian Budine said she had met with board of health chair Barbara Craddock to discuss ways the town can get more COVID testing kits. The market is tight, with other towns also trying to buy kits. Vendors are a more expensive source, but manufacturers sell only in larger amounts, some only by the pallet load; it may be possible to share a purchase with New Salem.

Budine said Union 28 schools have testing kits for staff, but should maybe also make them available for students. A webinar was held January 6 on the best ordering and usage practices. Selectboard member Laurie DiDonato said American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) money should be allowed to pay for the kits.

Acting coordinator and finance committee chair Doug Tanner said that out of 270 kits available at that Sunday's Good Neighbors food distribution, only 80 remained afterwards, and they were gone by Monday evening. He suggested that demand for test kits could drop once the holiday spike in COVID cases passes.

Selectboard chair Dan Keller offered to discuss the town's response to the spike in cases with Craddock before the next meeting. For the

next few weeks, the selectboard agreed to meet weekly.

New Coordinator

Glenn Johnson-Mussad was not yet working as Wendell's town coordinator, but he attended the January 5 Zoom meeting until another commitment called him away. He is scheduled to start work January 24.

Johnson-Mussad is working to become a notary, and the town is ready to pay the small fee involved. He also asked for a notebook so he can work remotely. Tanner said a desktop computer in the office is a better idea, but then allowed that buying both would be a reasonable choice. (The library also needs a newer computer.) Keller said he can't imagine that ARPA or CARES money will not pay for those.

Vacation time in Johnson-Mussad's contract is based on the fiscal year, not the calendar year. His 28 scheduled hours per week will earn him a prorated 5½ hours off for each holiday, and that time off must be taken during the pay period of the holiday.

Fire Department

Fire chief Joe Cuneo is two years away from retirement, and captain Asa DeRoode's retirement is not long after that. Cuneo is both Wendell's and New Salem's fire chief, but he has a separate agreement with each town.

There is a push toward regionalization, with volunteer firefighters hard to find and retain, and

demands on fire chiefs constantly increasing. The selectboard's consensus was to establish a fire department planning committee consisting of one selectboard member, DeRoode, and interested citizens.

Wood Bank

Open space committee chair Dan Leahy sent board members an email, then came to the January 5 meeting to say he preferred moving the wood bank to the WRATS property rather than to the Phelps schoolhouse lot. He explained that the Phelps lot is not centrally located, is uneven and rocky, and is wet, with vernal pools.

Leahy said the wood bank has three separate operations: first, cut trees and limbs are brought to the site; then they are processed into usable cordwood, and stored for seasoning; and third, the firewood is distributed. All of those steps would happen more easily at the WRATS property behind the transfer and recycling area, he said, than at the Phelps lot.

Budine asked for a wood bank procedure, a written description of how the wood will be processed and distributed, and how the town will avoid liability for the potentially hazardous work to be done by volunteers.

Old Landfill

Before Wendell had a transfer station, it had a landfill, where the WRATS now sits. The landfill was covered but not capped, and now

MassDEP is insisting that Wendell has to finish the process and cap the landfill – not necessarily instantly, but on an established schedule.

The town will need to clear the brush and trees behind the WRATS, make test pits to see what is buried and how deep, and then build a road around the old landfill and install monitoring wells down gradient from it. After that, the town can put a cap on top of the landfill to prevent soluble chemicals from leaching into the groundwater, any more than they have leached already. The entire process will cost an estimated \$75,000.

The landfill's extent is uncertain. Tanner said he thought it spans from the front of the WRATS to the back of the level ground behind the WRATS.

Keller said the first priority for the WRATS is capping the landfill, and suggested that highway commission chair Phil Delorey may know its extent.

Other Business

Board members agreed to sign an amicus brief to support a suit against the state regulation that limits input by affected towns on the installation of large-scale solar arrays within their borders.

CodeRED, the town's reverse-911 system, is now in place. The town website has a form for households to enroll, deciding what notifications they want and how they want to get them. The next step is training for the people who will send out notifications.

PLACE YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE (12 WEEK MINIMUM) CALL 863-8666!

Renaissance Excavating, Inc.




COMPLETE SITE WORK

Septic & Drainage Systems | Sand, Gravel & Loam

Main Road, Gill
Douglas Edson 413.863.4462
renexc@gmail.com cell 413.834.2201

INFO@RENBUILD.NET
413-863-8316



RENAISSANCE BUILDERS

WWW.RENBUILD.NET • PO BOX 272, TURNERS FALLS, MA 01376

Downsizing? Need cash?
The Doctor pays
\$\$\$ top dollar \$\$\$
for vinyl records.
All genres, all types.
New or used.
Sell to a music lover.



413-489-7733
www.drvinylphd.com
thedoctor@drvinylphd.com

GARAGE from page A1

Chris Couture, who owns a number of properties on Avenue A near the former highway garage.

The evaluations were based on criteria such as business experience, financial capacity, the viability of the reuse plan, and the impact on the local economy and neighborhood. Members ranked the four applications as “not advantageous,” “advantageous,” or “highly advantageous” under each criterion. In addition, several of the applicants were asked specific follow-up questions about their proposals.

As town administrator Steve Ellis posted a chart showing the committee’s evaluations, it became clear that the choice would be between two finalists, Nova and NEWCare. Both received high favorability ratings due to their strong reuse proposals, and commitments from prospective tenants.

In both cases, however, the major concern of CIC members was that the developers were starting other projects – Chilton an expansion of his business on Second Street, and Waien the construction of a building on 38 Avenue A, currently the site of an old Cumberland Farms. So the committee asked both about the “sequencing” of these projects.

Chilton said that he saw no reason why his reuse proposal would be impacted by Nova’s existing

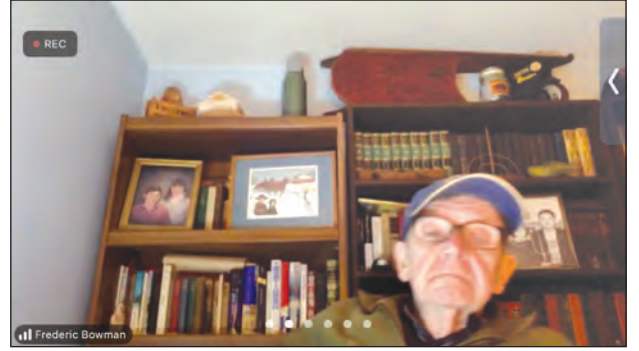
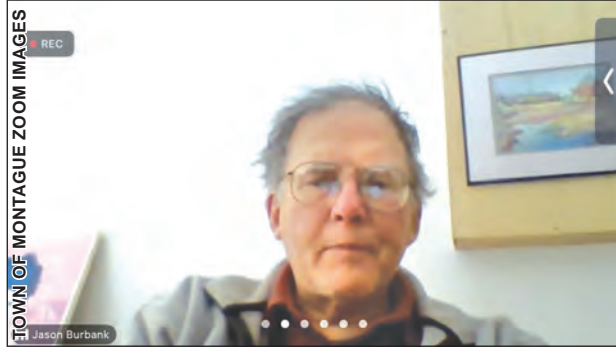
project, which is only in the “planning stage.” He also said that the 500 Avenue A project would not be contingent on immediately finding a tenant for a proposed car repair shop, a concern expressed by some CIC members.

“[I]f we acquire 500 Avenue A, we will immediately prioritize it for funds and resources to make it operational and aesthetically improved, as it is a smaller project in scope than our new construction building,” Chilton wrote.

Dr. Waein, who proposed a two-phase process where the highway building would first house employees of New England Wound Care and later be transformed into an indoor farming operation to grow microgreens and herbs, said that the 38 Avenue A project would have no impact on his proposal. “We plan to begin moving forward with construction of that building in the spring,” he wrote.

Ellis, who is on the CIC, was highly favorable to both proposals but called the NEWCare project “more expensive.” Town planner Walter Ramsey said he doubted that Waien could begin construction at the old Cumby’s site in the spring because he had not yet applied for permits.

CIC chair Greg Garrison said that after hearing Chilton’s response to the committee’s questions he would change his rating of Nova’s



Montague’s capital improvements committee (clockwise from top left: chair Greg Garrison; Steve Ellis; Frederic Bowman; and Jason Burbank) voted unanimously to recommend Nova Real Estate LLC for the sale of the former public works headquarters.

qualifications from “advantageous” to “highly advantageous.”

At the previous week’s meeting several CIC members expressed familiarity with the names of some of the prospective tenants in Chilton’s project, and were impressed that he had received support letters from both Greenfield Savings Bank and the state development agency MassDevelopment.

After a short discussion, the CIC unanimously endorsed the Nova

proposal by a vote of 4 to 0. Garrison, Ellis, Frederic Bowman, and Jason Burbank were on the Zoom call, while one member, John Martineau, was not in attendance.

“The community has a pretty strong emphasis and focus on building mixed-use, light industrial commercial opportunities out,” Ellis said. “Small businesses that have been interested in locating here have been frustrated in their ability to find that space.”

At the end of the meeting Ramsey was asked why the CIC, which usually evaluates capital projects for town meeting, was judging project bid proposals. Ramsey explained that because 500 Avenue is “surplus property,” it could fall under the purview of the capital committee. He pointed to the former Montague Center School as a building that was declared “surplus property” and bid out for development through the CIC.



LEVERETT from page A1

understandable, but they do not necessarily mesh with protecting the environment and wetlands.”

“It is our hope the Conservation Commission will recognize the value in approving all aspects of the management plan including winter drawdown, a non-herbicide alternative weed management practice that currently is employed on many lakes with milfoil infestation in Massachusetts,” FLP president Tom Hankinson told the Reporter.

“We are confident the combination of tools included in the lake management NOI will provide good and ongoing control of this aggressive invasive aquatic weed.”

Evidence of Impairment

Con com member Jono Neiger presented a letter at the meeting outlining his personal criticism of the plan, citing a “clear conflict of interest between the desire for clear, open water in front of homes and the larger pond ecology.” Both Hankinson and FLP vice president Mitch Mulholland live on Leverett Pond.

“The proposal is primarily to keep landowner waterfronts clear of vegetation and improve recreational use of the pond,” Neiger wrote. “The effect of the management activities ongoing and proposed may be affecting the dissolved oxygen and fish communities negatively. Further monitoring is needed to assess this.”

“We’ve been asking for data on the condition of the fishery, and all the data we have shows the fishery is in good condition,” Neiger added at the meeting. “There needs to be evidence of impairment.”

“We have also been actively managing milfoil for the last 20 years,” Hankinson said. “We believe – and I think that the evidence is pretty strong in support of this – that it has been that active management that has supported a strong fishery.”

Last year, the FLP hired SWCA Environmental Consultants to perform a habitat assessment and consult with the group through the application process. SWCA’s analysis last summer indicated that the fishery is “robust,” and milfoil covered about 2.7 acres of the 102-acre pond.

Mulholland said on Monday that milfoil can now be found in about 25.5 acres of the pond, and poses a growing threat to its

biodiversity. SWCA representative Mickey Marcus, who attended the hearing, urged the con com to close the public hearing, take a vote, and establish conditions for the plan’s approval.

“I provided a draft set of order of conditions. I meant for those to make your lives easier. You’re going to decide what is or is not approved in your deliberations,” Marcus said. “The FLP has tried to be responsive to everyone’s comments.”

Last fall, while the NOI was already under review, the FLP submitted a second proposal to the con com, a Request for a Determination of Applicability (RDA) requesting permission for volunteers to remove milfoil by hand. If the commission approves the NOI, Marcus said, the group will withdraw the RDA; if it votes it down, the RDA will remain an alternative plan.

Neiger said he believed the NOI does not currently meet the legal standards for approval, because the FLP has not provided sufficient evidence of the invasive species problem, or its detriment to the fishery.

“I don’t believe the fisheries are degraded – our pond seems to be better than all the others,” con com member Ralph Tiner said. “I would like to see the focus moved to the invasive species issue, and have the fishery taken off the board.”

Floating Islands

The FLP has used herbicides on the pond since 1994. ProcellaCOR, the new herbicide of choice used to kill milfoil, is generally used once every three years, Mulholland told the Reporter; each application can cost between \$3,000 and \$6,000. In recent years the FLP has hired Solitude Lake Management to apply the chemicals, as well as to hydro-rake weeds from sections of the pond, which Mulholland said costs another \$4,000 annually.

The ten or more residents who signed the letter Goodale read on Monday said they would rather see other techniques used to control the weeds, such as hand-pulling or benthic barriers.

“[T]hese methods never seem to be used, and instead chemicals are sprayed,” Goodale read. “This is done without a proper dialogue with those who are opposed to these methods, and rather than having an open discussion, there is a defensiveness that has

hardened, resulting in very destructive methods of milfoil control being proposed.”

The NOI also proposes an annual drawdown of the pond’s water, a technique that would affect both a larger area and a larger number of species than hand-pulling. In 2019, the FLP paid for the replacement of the dam at the pond’s north end, installing a gate that would allow for a drawdown. SWCA consultant Naomi Valentine shared during Monday’s hearing that approximately 31% of the pond’s surface area would be impacted.

“Funds being raised for the installation of a dam to allow for winter drawdowns was done in a misleading way,” Goodale read. “People were told the old dam was failing, but not informed about the intention to take down the water level of the pond.”

Neiger said he believed that for the drawdown to be considered a part of this NOI, further studies on the impacts to the pond’s ecology and neighboring wells would be necessary.

As the hearing drew to a close, long-simmering tensions over the lengthy process erupted into open argument.

“Herbicides have been used over decades in Leverett Pond to control milfoil but also, intentionally or as collateral damage, to kill native aquatic vegetation,” Neiger read from his prepared notes.

When Neiger drew a connection between the herbicide use and floating “islands” of organic matter on the pond, he was shouted down by board of health member Mary Ryan.

“You’re being emotional, and you’re not a scientist!” Ryan said. “I would say he should be removed for not being a proper scientist on the conservation commission. He’s emotional.”

As Ryan continued to interrupt Neiger’s reading, town clerk Lisa Stratford, filling in as conservation agent and taking meeting minutes, intervened.

“If you were actually at a public meeting, Mary, you would have been escorted out at this point by a police officer,” said Stratford. “Please stop.”

Brain Drawdown

During Monday’s meeting, Isaiah Robison revealed that he will be stepping down from his position as chair of the commission in April, leaving commissioners with the

challenge of finding both a new conservation agent and a new chair.

Former conservation agent Tessa Dowling accepted a full-time position elsewhere last summer, and stayed on with the Leverett con com in her spare time until December. On Monday, members discussed how they would divide her responsibilities among themselves until they find a replacement.

The con com has received permission from the town to pay the new conservation agent at least \$20 per hour. Some members expressed doubt that this would be enough to attract a qualified candidate, and suggested increasing it to \$25 or more. The town has advertised the position as five to seven hours per week at \$20 to \$30 per hour, “commensurate with experience.”

Meanwhile, the commission’s go-to advisor from the state Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) Mark Inston, the designated “Wetlands Circuit Rider” for western Massachusetts, is on leave for an indefinite period of time. Members said that losing their liaison and advisor within the state agency will make it harder to find guidance on complicated compliance matters, including the Leverett Pond management plan.

“Absent having someone well versed working for us, we’re double exposed with how to process these permits,” con com member David Powicki said.

Neiger said he would reach out to MassDEP and ask about the status of the Circuit Rider program.

Now that the public hearing is closed, the commission has 21 days under state law to vote on the plan, though the applicant can approve an extension. An extra meeting is scheduled for January 31 for members to deliberate on the decision.

When Hankinson asked him when the FLP should expect a decision, Robison said he was hesitant to commit to the 21-day deadline, which would require a vote at the January 31 meeting.

“I don’t know what’s reasonable, Tom,” he said. “I wanted to give a reasonable expectation to you here in public with everybody, not this behind-the-doors email thing.”

Hankinson said the FLP agreed to grant the con com an additional week, until its next regular meeting on February 7, to issue its decision.



PLACE YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE (12 WEEK MINIMUM) CALL 863-8666!

Fred Holmgren
Piano Tuning & Repair

Stay tuned!

(978)544-5494
fredholmgren@gmail.com

Edward J. Terault
(413) 223-5494
www.REILCLEAN.com

Reil
CLEANING SERVICES LLC

• Complete Custodial Services •
• Bonded and Insured •

“We Don’t Cut Corners, We Clean Them!”

Cleaning Franklin & Hampshire Counties since 1972

BOOK MILL
440 Greenfield Rd.
Montague, MA 01351

413-367-9206 www.montaguebookmill.com

Books you don’t need in a place you can’t find.

BIG PICTURE from page A1 exercise classes. We did that for a while and then switched to being open. If you were vaccinated you didn't need to wear a mask, but we recommended them. Then when the town implemented the mask mandate, we were back on masks.

We've been extremely cautious. We hand out masks; we've got hand sanitizer all over the place. We did have a full building air-handling system installed when we were closed, so that's made us feel a lot more comfortable being in the building.

The other thing that works well for us is that the demographic that comes to the senior center is the most vaccinated demographic there is – vaccinated and boosted. People over 65 have been the people who have taken this whole thing the most seriously, and exercise the most caution.

MR: Even when you're closed, the Council on Aging is still active?

RP: I sort of wear two hats: the senior center director or manager, and also the Council on Aging director. I worked throughout all the phases of the pandemic, and if anything I was even busier. It's been a time of handling people's individual needs, rather than making the senior center real vibrant.

A lot of my time has gone into finding food for people, and heat for people. During the initial period of vaccinations being available, I spent hours and days online booking vaccinations. Not everybody in our community has access to a computer, or the ability to use one, so that "digital divide" thing that used to be the catchphrase is still alive and well.

MR: We took four weeks not being in print at the very beginning, and a bunch of our readers let us know that they depended on print.

RP: It's not just a knowledge issue, it's an economic issue – a lot of people might use the computer, but they don't have access at home. When the senior center's closed and the library's closed, there goes their internet service.

MR: What's the age range for your constituency, and what's the total headcount in the community?

RP: We count the people who are 65 and older, and Montague – by the last census, not the most recent one – has 1,920 seniors, almost a quarter of our population. And Gill, who shares the senior center and the Council on Aging, has about 350 people over that age.

In terms of the people who actually come into the senior center, it is probably in the neighborhood of about 450 separate individuals, coming at least once in the course of a year.

MR: Holy cow.

RP: On a day-to-day basis, when we are fully functioning, we have probably about 40 people a day come in for programs, or drop in for information and referral, or something we might be handing out. That number is way down.

In addition to that, I probably get 30 to 35 calls a week from seniors who don't use the senior center, but need help with something else.

MR: And how large of a staff do you have?

RP: Uh, that would be me. [Laughs.] But I want to be very clear, I have a group of volunteers who are out-of-this-world fantastic. I work from 10 to 2-ish, Monday



"If you have mobility issues, sometimes those little things become big things," Potter said. "That's one of the barriers to staying at home."

through Thursday, and the senior center is open from 9 to 2 Monday through Friday. There is a group of wonderful people who open up the doors at 9 in the morning and close them up at 2 or 3 in the afternoon.

Our yoga and Tai Chi instructors also hold their classes after hours, and they do that on their own.

MR: How have you seen the contours of people's needs change in the different phases of the pandemic?

RP: I think people just have more needs. More need for food, more need for heat, more need for information. And information is key.

Today for instance, I got two people set up to get wood from the Wood Bank, which is a real nice thing to have in the community. I got a bag of groceries for one person. All day long at the senior center we had our ongoing once-a-month foot clinic.

This morning I had a call from a person who lives out of town looking for services for his mom who lives here in Montague. That's a common request – I hear from out of town family members a lot who are looking for what kind of services they can access for their older parents who live in Montague or Gill.

MR: Are you ever asked to just check in on people?

RP: Yes. I occasionally do it myself, in my limited amount of time, but we are really fortunate to be able to partner with TRIAD at the Sheriff's Office, and also with LifePath. Both of those are huge resources for seniors in the area. I rarely have to go so far as to ask the police department to do a wellness check.

Elder abuse is an issue, and it doesn't necessarily mean somebody's nasty nephew raiding the bank account – it could also mean older people living by themselves who are not really capable of living by themselves. That's a situation that I would refer to LifePath. They have a great system for checking on people and assessing their needs, and addressing them as best they can.

MR: You do fuel assistance, which is a big cumbersome application.

RP: It is. The fuel assistance program teaches and certifies various social service agency people to do applications, and I've been doing them for about 12 years now.... Community Action, I believe, has developed a way to do it over the phone, but we've got a copy machine, and we just tell people what kind of documents they need to get together; I copy them and submit them with the application, and it works.

MR: What are the food resources?

RP: The Western Mass Food Bank. We do two programs regularly with them: we have a brown bag program, which gets eligible seniors a bag of groceries once a month, and then a couple of years ago we hooked up with them to do a parking lot pantry, so once a month they come and hand out food at the pantry.

The brown bag program is specifically for seniors, and there are eligibility requirements, but the parking lot pantry is open to anyone, regardless of age or financial situation. It's a tremendous amount of food, and it's a really good program. The cosponsor is the Community Meals Program, and the volunteers who work at it are mostly from Northfield Mount Hermon.

MR: And housing?

RP: I do get calls from people who need housing. I give them every phone number, every access point I can get into senior housing in the area. We have some good senior housing with the Montague Housing Authority, and with Park Villa, which is privately owned.... We're fortunate to have a lot of low-income housing in this town.

[But] people are still on waiting lists. If they have qualified for a housing voucher, they're still waiting for eight or 10 years to get into an apartment. It's a long wait...

MR: Are a lot of seniors in town aging in place in homes they own?

RP: Absolutely, yes. That seems to be universally people's preference, to stay in their homes.

MR: Does LifePath offer services to patch that as it gets more difficult?

RP: For low-income people – their services are not available to everybody. So there's a gap.

The Council on Aging has money to help people help low-income seniors do safety-related repairs in their households. Almost anything can be safety-related, but we're particularly thinking about things like grab bars at entrances, ramps, loose thresholds, anything that really needs to be done. We can pay \$300 or \$500 for that kind of repair work.

But I get a lot of calls for people looking for yard work, and quick and dirty home repairs, like, "can you climb on this stool and change a light bulb for me?" Those kinds of things. And that's a big gap in our community, we don't really have people available to do that. Sometimes people just need their trash to get wheeled out to the end of the driveway.

That's one of the barriers to stay-

ing at home, because if you have mobility issues, sometimes those little things become big things.

MR: Is there ever talk of having a volunteer list for stuff like that?

RP: I have tried to do that over the years. There is a sort of *ad hoc* group in Gill that is doing that quite successfully, and it works very well for Gill, because it's a smaller community; many more people know everybody in town. And there are other small communities that have put together groups where that works....

One of the things I had been working on prior to the pandemic was putting together a volunteer driver program, so people could get rides to doctor's appointments, haircuts, grocery stores, visiting a spouse who might be in a nursing home. I had gotten pretty far on that, in terms of putting together the criteria of how it would work, and *bang*, the pandemic happened, and nobody wanted to have anybody in their cars anymore. So I am even right now soliciting for people who would be willing to be part of our driver program.

MR: I know that they keep trying to do new demand-response things over at FRTA...

RP: Demand response is great, [but] there's resistance to using it. For one thing, being a small rural community, people here always drove until they couldn't, and very few of us learned to, or got accustomed to, using public transportation until it became an absolute necessity. So that's a little bit of a barrier. FRTA drivers are also not able to carry people's bundles to the door, and that's a problem too. And with the demand ride you don't get the bus exactly at your curb at 3:15; it might come at 2:45 or at 3:30.... It's difficult to get people to consider using FRTA.

Fortunately, people get their neighbors or their kids or somebody to drive them, but it's a goal of mine to get a transportation system I could dispatch – I could match the riders and the drivers out of the senior center, and get people routed. That's a priority that I was getting really close to when everything fell apart.

MR: Are you helping pass out COVID tests right now?

RP: We do have tests. The tests we have are the ones that came from the state to towns that were economically disadvantaged. Sadly, that's us. Dan [Wasiuk] at the board of health has been metering them out to me, and I've got about a dozen or so now. People are really grateful to get them, it's really a good thing.

When we first got them there was a huge demand, and I was going back to Dan and begging for more. Now I'm down to maybe one or two calls a day for tests. They're beginning to be more available commercially.

MR: So that's all the basic needs and survival stuff. But it's also a community center for older folks – what are some of the fun things going on?

RP: The very best thing, the most successful thing, that we do at the senior center is our weekly exercise programs. We've had a great exercise instructor named Linda Allis, she's been teaching there longer than I've been working there, and she's dynamite. Every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday we get anywhere from 10 to 20 people in for two classes. She does an aerobics class and then a chair exercise class, and it's the most astounding group of people.

Linda is a great teacher and a great social director, and the people who come just have fun, it's really a hoot. They laugh as much as they exercise, it's as much a social occasion as it is exercise.

We have a small group of people that play Bingo, we have a couple of card groups – the Pitch group has been going on forever, and there's another group that plays a game called Five Crowns, which sort of grew out of a previous Canasta group. There are about maybe eight to 10 people in each of those games.

One of the nice things about our senior center is that I never hear of anybody feeling excluded, or not engaging with people. Everybody there is really friendly. I'm always amazed when a new person comes in – it's kind of difficult sometimes to enter a room of 30 people who know each other, but I always hear people being made to feel quite welcome.

One of the advantages to having a very small senior center, which is just one room, is that everybody is together. We never have a situation where four or five people go off to a room and isolate, you know – it's very much a big family.

MR: How long have you been on the job?

RP: Twelve years. I worked at UMass for a number of years and retired, and stayed retired for almost a year. It didn't work out so well. I actually saw an ad for this job in the paper, and I thought, "You know, I've got a management and administration background, maybe I could do this!" I applied, and there I was.

MR: What did you do for UMass?

RP: I was a food service manager for a really long time... [at] the Campus Center, a few dining commons, the Mullins Center...

MR: That's some logistics! You got chops built up that needed somewhere to go.

RP: Yeah, well, one learns not to get too easily flapped. [Laughs.]

MR: Is there anything else you want to make sure we say?

RP: We've got wood at the Wood Bank! You don't have to be a senior, it just happens that the distribution from the Wood Bank occurs through the senior center; it's available to any low-income Montague resident.

I just gave away the 13th bin, and I think I've got nine more half-cord units.

MR: Great... what's your number?

RP: 863-9357.



PLACE YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE (12 WEEK MINIMUM) CALL 863-8666!

Pipione's
SPORT SHOP

- Fishing supplies; Live bait
- Fishing & Hunting Licenses
- Paintball & CO₂ Refills
- Guns & Ammo

Open 7 am 7 days a week
101 Ave A, Turners 414.863.4246

SALES • SERVICE • INSTALLATION
RESIDENTIAL • COMMERCIAL
DOORS & OPENERS

Devine Overhead Doors
Gerry Devine

106 West Street Hampshire: 586-3161
Hadley, MA. 01035 Franklin: 773-9497

HUGE WASHERS!
HOT DRYERS!

SUZEE'S THIRD STREET LAUNDRY
TURNERS FALLS

Open 365 Days
6 A.M. - 10 P.M.

MONTAGUE from page A1

never applied to open town meetings – expired on December 15 despite soaring COVID case counts.

Ellis seemed at a bit of a loss to explain what would appear to be a rather serious oversight by the state. “I want to apologize that this was not something on my radar screen,” he told the board. He called the extension of outdoor dining through the winter, “when people won’t be eating outside,” alongside the termination of virtual town meetings “exceedingly counterintuitive.”

The town’s representatives in the legislature were looking at two possible solutions to the problem, Ellis reported: the governor can issue a “wholesale extension,” or there may be precedent for him to file legislation to allow “an individual exception to one of these rules.”

“We’ll make it work,” Ellis said. “I am really confident, because... this is a common-sense accommodation.”

The board then opened the warrant for articles. The “drop-dead date” for articles to be submitted, according to administrative assistant Wendy Bogusz, is February 10, and the selectboard will approve the final document on February 14 so it can be publicly posted and mailed to town meeting members.

At Wednesday’s capital improvements meeting, Ellis announced that MassDevelopment will be able to contribute up to \$771,000 toward the project to rebuild the pedestrian bridge over the canal at Fifth Street, making it unnecessary to place an article on the warrant appropriating town funds for that purpose.

Cases Keep Climbing

The board met jointly with the board of health and public health director Daniel Wasiuk. Selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz introduced Robin Neipp, who has recently been hired to perform COVID-19 contact tracing under a multi-town “collabo-

rative,” led by the Greenfield board of health and funded by a state grant.

Neipp said that Monday was her first day contact tracing in Montague, but that she had been working in Greenfield for several weeks to “get up to snuff.” She said she is a retired emergency nurse who worked in the Baystate Health system for almost 40 years and “loved my job,” and that more recently she has worked at COVID vaccination clinics at the John Zon Community Center in Greenfield.

The town’s approach to contact tracing, Steve Ellis told the *Reporter*, has evolved during the pandemic. Initially the goal was to contact every positive case counted in the state system, and then contact those who had been in close contact with them. These measures have proven to be unrealistic during the current spike in cases, Ellis said, so the current standard is simply to contact the positive cases, inform them of COVID protocols, and urge them to communicate themselves with any close contacts.

At Monday’s meeting, Neipp said she texts a list of COVID-positive patients with a callback number and a link to a CDC website with protocols. She said she was “triaging” the list by calling “the very old and the very young” first.

Health board member Melanie Zamojski reported on the status of an epidemiologist position slated to be hired under the same grant. She said the collaborative had approved the job description and “application process,” but she was not sure if the job had yet been posted.

Wasiuk reviewed the town’s latest COVID metrics, which showed 165 new positive tests in the week leading up to January 8, and 84 the week before. “Certainly the numbers have accelerated,” he said.

Ellis reported that the town had purchased 1,000 test kits from the state bid list, at a per-unit cost of \$18.45; both kits include two tests. He noted that the prices continued to

rise despite the state posting. “I am not sure under what procurement magic that is acceptable,” he said.

After a lengthy discussion, the two boards decided to meet jointly whenever possible.

Liquor Licenses

Bogusz reviewed the notification Montague must send to the state to renew its liquor licenses. The selectboard must affirm that each licensed business is open, and has certificates of building inspection and insurance.

Without naming specific businesses, Bogusz said that most had submitted all the required documents, but that one was not issued a certificate of inspection by the building department. After further conversation it was revealed that the business without an inspection was Wild Child Cellars at 42 Canal Road, owned by Curt Sherrer.

Sherrer, who was in attendance, said that he was surprised by the rejection of the inspection, and that he thought he needed to be issued a “pouring permit” for his planned cidery, which is not yet open, before inspections and insurance are required.

Bogusz said she had spoken with town counsel, who advised that Sherrer’s business could be opened for inspection “with conditions.” Ellis urged Sherrer to communicate with the building inspector about this option, and the discussion ended on an agreeable note.

Bureaucracy

At the request of town planner Walter Ramsey, the board executed an agreement with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments to assist Montague in the first phase of updating its “Comprehensive Plan.” The agreement is a contract for \$33,000, funded by a state grant, to implement a “community visioning and scenario planning” process.

Ramsey also reviewed a number of actions required by the state

Department of Environmental Protection to close out the capping of the old burn dump on Sandy Lane. These mainly involve addressing erosion at a number of points on the periphery of the solar array which now sits atop the former dump. Ramsey said the town has enough money in its “capping account” to pay for these projects.

Ellis announced that the US Treasury Department has issued the “final rule” for spending the federal COVID relief aid provided under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Apparently the rule is actually many rules, contained in a weighty 457-page document.

Ellis said he would not “have the bandwidth” to analyze it himself, but that “we do have organizations such as the [Massachusetts Municipal Association] to do that.” He suggested “pausing the big conversation about ARPA funding until we see that analysis.”

Other Business

The town’s new library director, Caitlin Kelley, came before the board to request approval of an application for a “Preservation Assistance Grant For Smaller Institutions” from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The grant would provide \$9,216 to preserve historical documents and objects, primarily held at the

Carnegie Library. The board approved the request.

The board signed an agreement to auction a property adjacent to 517 Federal Street (Route 63), just north of the intersection with North Leverett Road, previously acquired by the town by a tax taking.

The board also executed a new lease with the Center for Responsive Schools for the Colle building on Avenue A.

Ellis notified the board that the state Department of Transportation had unexpectedly notified the town that it would be renovating the Fifth Street bridge over the power canal, and the “white bridge” on the same route over the Connecticut River.

“The Commonwealth has found a project to sink about \$45 million into at some point in the future,” said Ellis. “I don’t think at this point we have any indication of how quickly that might be... When we received this, there was a little note of incredulity.”

Kuklewicz said his father had told him that the “white bridge” – which is not noticeably white – had replaced another bridge washed out in the flood of 1936, which was white.

“I’m not sure that was the absolute fact,” he said.

The next selectboard meeting is scheduled for next Tuesday, January 18 at 6:30 p.m.



NOTES FROM THE GILL-MONTAGUE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Revenue Down, Costs Up, Cases Up, Etc.

By **MIKE JACKSON**

GILL-MONTAGUE – The regional school committee held its first meeting of 2022 on Tuesday, and heard a presentation on the preliminary budget for FY’23. The pandemic’s long-term and short-term impacts on the schools were both on display.

“Everything’s been a little slow lately, because of all the cases,” student representative Syna Katsoulis reported, adding that plans for a Snowball Dance at the high school this month have been scrapped.

The schools opened with a two-hour delay on January 3. Superintendent Brian Beck said he drove to Pittsfield to pick up the district’s COVID test kits, and 60% of the staff showed up on a Sunday to pick them up. Three employees tested positive and were isolated that day. Pool testing is regularly turning up cases, and staff meetings and professional development will now be held remotely.

Newly hired secondary assistant principal Kristen Schreiber had difficulty logging onto the Zoom and will introduce herself at a future meeting. Beck shared that the district’s new food service manager has resigned.

Business manager Joanne Blier said Montague police are requesting the district increase its contribution for the school police officer from about \$50,000 a year to about \$75,000. Beck shared a list of Officer Dan Miner’s duties. He was warmly praised, but the committee grumbled about the cost. “He’s acting for the whole town of Montague,” said Gill member Bill Tomb, “and he’s also acting in the venue that probably has the highest concentration of citizens of the town of Montague. I can’t understand, frankly, why the town of Montague expects the district to pay the balance of this officer’s salary.”

Montague member Heather Katsoulis suggested a survey of students and staff about the position.

The centerpiece of the meeting was the preliminary budget. Blier projected revenues of \$26,209,351, an 8.6% increase, and expenditures of \$26,504,566, a 9.8% increase. The district has taken a hit on enrollment during the pandemic. More students have moved in that the district is obligated to place out in special ed programs; choice in is down and choice out is up; and the count of students going to charter schools climbed from 63 to 77. “That’s a huge hit on our budget, when you have 14 extra students going,” Blier said.

The deficit would be much greater were it not for federal emergency ESSER grants, which add \$1,076,405 to next year’s budget. Expenses are driven by charter and special ed tuition, staff wages and benefits, and the addition of 21 full-time equivalent educational jobs.

Montague member Jennifer Waryas noted the district was “adding a lot of personnel using money that will be exhausted” when the ESSER program expires.

Blier agreed, but said the jobs were necessary to combat pandemic learning loss, and that she hoped the district enrollment would pick back up again, leading to increased state Chapter 70 aid down the road. “Some of these positions are not going to continue into the future,” she acknowledged.

The school committee will hold a working meeting January 18 and vote on the preliminary budget January 25. Beck said school officials are tentatively meeting with the finance committees of the two towns on January 31, and that the February 8 and 15 school committee meetings will be open to the public. A final vote on the budget is expected March 8.

No Montague residents have volunteered to fill an open seat on the committee. “I am optimistic that we might get a letter of interest in the near future,” said chair Jane Oakes. A mysterious observer on the call nodded.

LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here’s the way it was on January 12, 2012: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

Leverett School Committee Cuts Budget in Anticipation Of a Prop 2½ Override

The Leverett school committee engaged in a rigorous budget wrestling exercise on Monday, as members tried to reduce an expected hike in the \$1.7 million operating budget for the Leverett Elementary School for the coming fiscal year from \$96,311 (a 5.63% increase) to an increase closer to 2.5%.

By the end of the meeting, the committee had prioritized about \$46,904 in cuts, knocking the anticipated increase in the budget down to about \$50,000 (2.58%). That number, combined with an early estimate for an increase in Leverett’s share of the regional school budget of about \$71,000, could still force the town to turn to an override of Proposition 2½ to fund operations for the schools and town departments in the coming fiscal year.

Red Fire Farm Completes Move to Meadow Road

This is the year Ryan and Sarah Voiland have been talking about since 2009, when they bought two parcels of land on Meadow Road with the goal of moving Red Fire Farm from Granby to Montague. Now, just weeks into 2012, that dream has been realized.

Unpacked boxes are stacked in the office, a sign is hanging on the barn, new food processing and storage areas are under construction or completed, and both Ryan and Sarah have somewhat dazed, exhausted, and delighted expressions when they talk about all they have done and what they hope to accomplish.

The Voilands have been farming intensively at the site of Red Fire Farm in Granby while waiting for the soil in Montague to transition to the standards required for organic farming. Sun, rain, and wind have done their job over the required 36-month time period.

Preliminary G-M Budget Comes In Below Target

The Gill-Montague school committee reviewed a preliminary FY’13 budget Tuesday that comes in with a 2.4% increase from FY’12, just under the 2.5% target agreed to by member towns, representatives of the state education department, and the district under the five-year fiscal compact of 2010.

Interim superintendent Nadine Ekstrom outlined a preliminary \$16,724,932 budget for FY’13. The preliminary budget includes at least \$90,000 for hiring a new SPED director, increases for elementary school substitutes, additional money for summer programs and field trips, new cameras and equipment for the TV studio, 2% increases in SPED transportation and heating oil, and hikes for Medicaid costs, workman’s comp, and the GIC health care.

PLACE YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE (12 WEEK MINIMUM) CALL 863-8666!

Bryan Hobbs Remodeling LLC

Blown Cellulose Insulation • Spray Foam Insulation
Airsealing • Energy Audits • Replacement Doors & Windows

Email: bryanhobbsremodeling@gmail.com
Now Accepting Credit Cards

Office: (413) 775-9006
Lic # 083982
Reg # 139564

Bryan G. Hobbs
PO Box 1535
Greenfield, MA 01302

STONEDWORK
— BUILD. REBUILD. MEND. —

R. SKELTON, WALLER
(413) 367-2435 • skelton.rob@gmail.com

B. RUBIN & SONS INC.

COMPLETE AUTO REPAIRS

Shocks • Tires • Batteries • Starters
Struts • Tune-ups • Brakes • Oil Change

194 MILLERS FALLS RD. • 413-863-2236

10% SENIOR DISCOUNT FREE ESTIMATES

MASS INSPECTION STATION: NO. 13051

FARREN from page A1

waiting for a response from Trinity since November 22 concerning three requests from the community, following the announcement of Trinity's intent: whether the company would share its assessment; whether it had considered preservation of the oldest section of the complex; and whether it would join the town in an "originally agreed upon" study of the Farren's prospects for reuse.

Dana's response included a partial breakdown of the "direct costs" of maintaining the building, including \$4 million in mechanical upgrades, \$3.9 in electrical upgrades, \$3 million to replace the floors and \$2 million to replace the roof, and \$1.5 million to address "[s]everely eroded mortar joints, water infiltration damage."

"[T]he costs for remediation of the Farren Care Center property far exceed the costs to tear down the building," Dana wrote.

The selectboard discussed the email on Monday. "I was expecting, honestly, a bit more from Trinity," said chair Rich Kuklewicz. "My feeling is that we should reach out to the management... to tell them that we had expected a more comprehensive review."

Ellis warned that the company is seeking a "fairly aggressive time table" for the demolition, and that "unless they submit an incompetent or non-code-compliant" plan to the town, there would be no legal basis for denying a permit for the job.

"Those [costs] aren't unexpected, given tours that I've done of the building before," Ellis added, "and in particular the core HVAC systems which had previously been described as failing."

"Some of the reuse would require substantial funds," Kuklewicz said. "I've heard a lot of passionate pleas to do things, but none of them have really had any plan that had any sort of real financial backing. All that said, I would like to see Trinity provide us more detail."

"I would recommend we table any further communication with them until we can have the conversation with the community about what it is the community wants," said member Matt Lord.

Montague City Improvement Association member Lilith Wolinsky said she would like the town to invite Trinity representatives to a public forum, in order to ask them why they had promised to partner with the town on a redevelopment study while seeking permission from the state to close the facility, and then changed their mind.


"My goal is to have the building be considered for reuse... I'm focused on the old part of the building," she said.

The board agreed to set a date for a public discussion on Monday, February 7, and invite Trinity officials. Town planner Walter Ramsey was directed to organize it.


"Happy to do it," Ramsey said. "A full community vision would take time, and maybe that's not where we're at, but I look forward to at least leading a forum."

"We need to sharpen our thinking around exactly what we're asking about," said Ellis.





LET'S GET VACCINATED



Vaccine Clinic

Thursday, January 20
from 5pm to 7pm at
The Brick House
24 3rd St, Turners Falls, MA 01376

Clínica de Vacunas

Jueves 20 de enero
de 5pm a 7pm
The Brick House
24 3rd St, Turners Falls, MA 01376

**Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson's Janssen
 COVID & Flu vaccines
 available / disponible**

**Incentives
 for first time
 vaccinated**

Register / Registrarse
Not required, but suggested.
No requerido, pero sugerido
Questions? / Preguntas?
(413) 244-3254 (413) 409-2004


**Incentivos para
 los vacunados
 por primera vez**

Ages 5 +
Boosters available for those eligible


**Edades 5 + Refuerzo disponibles para
 los que son elegibles**

15 minute on-site observation required Se requiere observación de 15 minutos en el sitio


oneholyoake.org/stay-safe-holyoke/






OneHolyoke
Housing • Development • Community




Get Vax Vacúnate
Turners Falls




Gándara Center
Culturally Sensitive Care

@OneHolyoke




bhn



asg

PLACE YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE (12 WEEK MINIMUM). CALL 863-8666!



New Bakery Open!
411 MAIN ROAD, GILL
OPEN 7 DAYS, 8 AM - 7 PM
413-863-4431
WWW.UPINNGIL.COM


UPINNGIL


Food You Need from the Land You Love

Dennis L. Booska Phone & Fax
Dennis L. Booska, Jr. **413-863-3690**


Booska's Flooring

169 Avenue A, Turners Falls **Tile**
Member **Lino**
The Flooring Network. **Carpets**






FRANKLIN COMMUNITY CO-OP
144 MAIN STREET GREENFIELD, MA 01301 (413) 773-9567 3 STATE STREET SHELburnE FALLS, MA 01370 (413) 625-2548



**Improve Air Quality
 & Heating/Cooling
 Efficiency**


DUCT CLEANING

Free Video Inspections
 Air Duct • Baseboard • Dryer Vent Cleaning
 Log on to see our Rotobrush video
Call 413.223.5494 or visit www.REILCLEAN.com



**SHANAHAN CONSTRUCTION
 SUPPLY CO. INC.**
SCSC "Rock solid service with level advice"


Complete Masonry Supply


Offering a complete line of pavers,
 wall stone, retaining wall block and more. 

298 Avenue A., Turners Falls **413-863-4322**
 and at our new location or 802-579-1800
 529 S. Main St, Brattleboro www.shanahansupply.com

Start the Future Today!

- Wealth Management
- Trust Services
- Estate Settlement





 **GSB**
**Wealth Management
 & Trust Services**


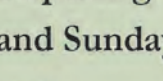
(413) 775-8335 • greenfieldsavings.com

GREAT FALLS HARVEST

Market and Restaurant

Market and Café opening
Friday, Saturday, and Sunday
8 a.m. to 7 p.m.
 Takeout 5 to 7 p.m.

Market & Restaurant
109 Avenue A 50 Third Street
Downtown Turners Falls
863-0023

The Whistle Stop Cafe


413-834-8174
29 East Main Street Millers Falls


Instagram: [whistlestopcafe_millersfalls](https://www.instagram.com/whistlestopcafe_millersfalls) Facebook: [The Whistle Stop Cafe](https://www.facebook.com/TheWhistleStopCafe)

Peter Waters Painting Services

Interior/Exterior
 Custom Residential
 Fully Insured

Office: 978-544-6534
 Cell: 413-461-5172
 Wendell, MA
peterjwaters88@gmail.com







Local Solar PV Installers
 for over 16 years
 in western Massachusetts

GREENFIELD SOLAR

"When day comes, we step out of the shade aflame and unafraid. The new dawn blooms as we free it. For there is always light. If only we're brave enough to see it. If only we're brave enough to be it."
 Amanda Gorman, *The Hill We Climb*



SolarGreenfield.com
 2 Fiske Ave., Greenfield
 (413) 772.3122
 Call for free site assessment!

 **PREMIER DEALER**



JOAN PILLSBURY PHOTO

FEATURES@MONTAGUEREPORER.ORG

OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER

JANUARY 13, 2022

Above: Gill reader Joan Pillsbury looked out her dining room window at noon last Friday to see this beautiful bobcat, scouting for food in the season's first snow.

Making Art with Mushrooms: Madge Evers at the Grubbs Gallery

By W. KAIZEN

AMHERST – “I collaborate with mushrooms,” artist Madge Evers told me as she described the art-making process she used in works currently on view at the Grubbs Gallery in Easthampton. Although at first glance her ghostly pictures seem abstract, a second look reveals images of plants emerging through veils of smoky whites and pale yellows against black backgrounds. These sprays of light colors are made from actual mushroom spores in a process called spore printing.

Although non-photographic, her images have the quality of photographs, particularly of the kinds of contact prints favored by Surrealists like Man Ray. While Man Ray’s photographs were made by laying various objects directly on photo paper and then exposing it to light, Evers uses mushroom spores to make her images by setting ripe mushroom caps on paper on top of other plants she has similarly harvested from the woods. The mushrooms release their spores, which coat the paper in detailed designs that capture both positive images of the undersides of the mushrooms themselves as well as negative images of the other plant material once it’s removed.

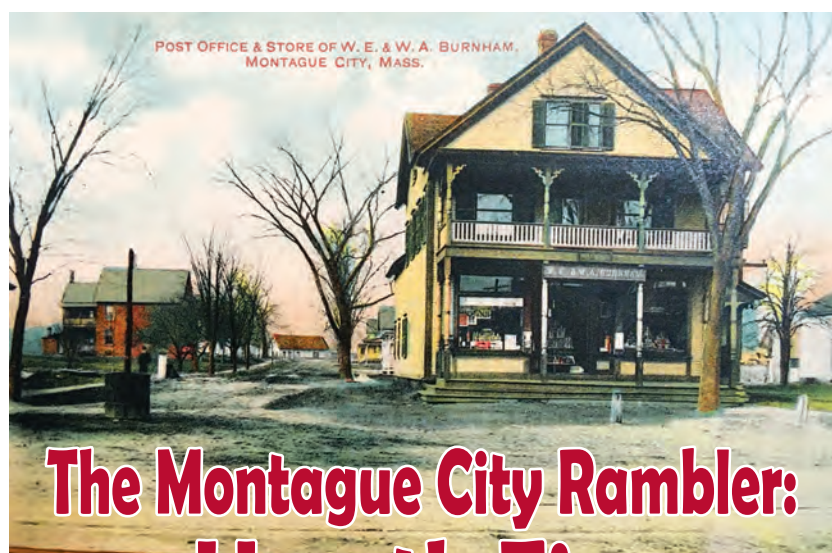
Evers studied photography before raising children and having a career as a teacher. Now retired, she has re-dedicated herself to making art. A long-standing gardener, in 2015 she started cultivating wine cap mushrooms. She soon found out that they had a mind of their own as they began volunteering beyond the confines of her beds.

The visible parts of mushrooms, while showy, are

only temporary organs that they use to reproduce themselves. A fungus’s more permanent body lies underground in dense, rhizomatic tangles of mycelium. The caps that appear in damp weather eject millions of spores that create new mushrooms where they land – unless see **MUSHROOMS** page B5



Artist Madge Evers with some of the spore prints she is showing this winter at the Grubbs Gallery in Easthampton.



The Montague City Rambler: Hearth Fire

By LILITH WOLINSKY

MONTAGUE CITY – One week into the much-vaunted New Year: I am home in isolation, awaiting test number two for what we presume is the uber-contagious Omicron variant of COVID. For almost two years, I have adopted the self-preserving life of a semi-hermit in the hopes of staving off the more lethal forms of this

disease, and so my symptoms of viral encroachment are puzzling. Any exposure must have happened at one of my favorite local grocers, where I still peruse ingredients for Thai and/or Italian – depending upon the week, and my mood – or via the dryer repair man, who hung out briefly in my basement seven days ago.

Either way, I lost my voice, have more than the usual nasal congestion,

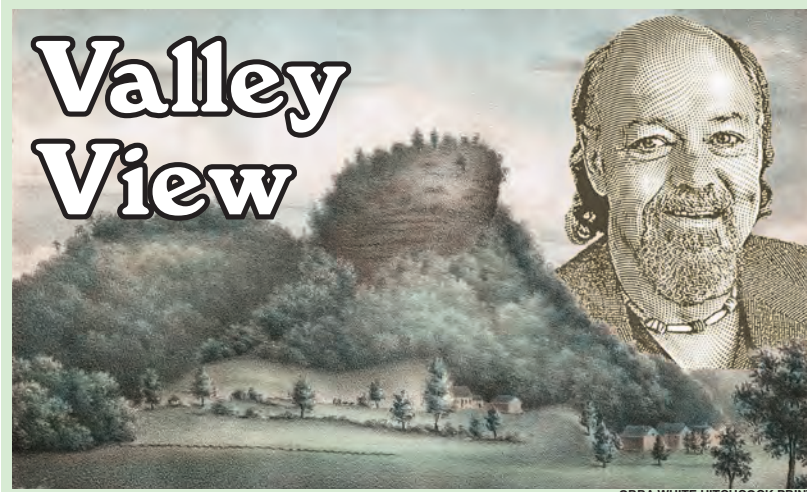
and am bundled in layers of wool to keep the creeping cold at bay.

My mother, two thousand miles away, has a confirmed case of COVID at almost 80. She is hypertensive and has brain disease, but I am almost too tired to rail today at the social inequities which have exacerbated her risk. I shall list a few: female, a single mother, and one who fell into and could not surmount poverty, in part due to family obligations which disproportionately affect women, and which our society does not respect nor support, as evidenced by longstanding funding priorities.

These impacts have followed her through life, limiting options at every turn, including now, when I would like nothing more than for her to have ease, loving care, and simple pleasures.

I awoke today to the sharp pattering of ice falling from the sky, and the world as a shiny hazard, in shades of white and gray. My baby winterberry offers bright red see **RAMBLER** page B3

Valley View



ORRA WHITE HITCHCOCK PRINT

By GARY SANDERSON

GREENFIELD – That unfortunate, 6,000-gallon Athol diesel spill into a Millers River tributary named Mill Brook on December 22 sent my wheels whirling.

The tanker-truck rollover that required Jaws of Life driver extraction unleashed reminiscence about my earliest newspaper days at the *Greenfield Recorder*. That means it took me back to the early 1980s when a previously near-dead Millers River, fouled by industrial pollution, human waste, and years of neglect, was reborn for trout stocking after a two-decade hiatus. The recent catastrophe especially reminded me of affable old pal Peter Mallett, whose animated calls I answered many times on deadline when I didn’t have time to talk or the heart to tell him so.

Mallett, 70-year-old founder of the Millers River Fishermen’s Association and self-appointed watershed watchdog, has devoted many years into making the Millers River watershed better for everyone. He seems to know every spring hole, squaretail brook, fiddlehead patch, and big old Hen of the Woods oak in the watershed; that and deer runs, berry patches, pheasant and partridge coverts, and maybe, just maybe even hot spots for arrowhead hunters. Who knows? The man may have even bumped into a hidden marijuana patch or two while bushwhacking the terrain.

Mallett not only has a wealth of knowledge to share. He’s put his money where his mouth is – personally buying, raising, and releasing trout of all sizes into the watershed, while raising a ruckus when anyone dares to disrespect his favorite river system.

I never met Mallett during my coverage of the Millers River renaissance. We crossed paths well after restoration and restocking was underway. By the time we met through many phone calls, faraway anglers were once again traveling to fish a trout stream that had once attracted the likes of Red Sox Hall of Famer and noted flyfisher Ted Williams and cohort Curt Gowdy,

longtime voice of the Red Sox and host of ABC TV’s *The American Sportsman* in the 1960s and ‘70s. If the likes of Williams and Gowdy were fishing the Millers River during the glory years of our Grand Ole Game, then it had to be special, and was.

My first professional foray into Millers River country resulted in my first front-page story, and over time led to a Hampshire-Franklin District Attorney’s office investigation. Enlightened by a streamside tip that I chased and confirmed, I had become embroiled in a spicy newspaper war with a group of Millers River trout-fishing advocates from Wendell, whom I dubbed “Wendellites” in my Thursday *Greenfield Recorder* outdoor column *On the Trail*. The continuing story spawned many columns, which in turn drew angry letter-to-the-editor retorts in an entertaining and very public spat. It was the type of controversy columnists dream about.

It all began when I broke the unwelcome news that human consumption of Millers River fish was unsafe due to sedimentary PCB and heavy-metal poisoning. With half-lives in the thousands of years, the hazardous chemicals weren’t going anywhere soon. In fact, if we continue to give global-warming deniers a seat at the public-policy conference table, these river carcinogens may just outlast humanity on this planet.

Obviously, the Millers River activists who had worked hardest to put their free-flowing stream back on the Massachusetts trout-fishing map were not happy when the state Division of Fisheries and Wildlife was forced to post streamside public health warnings cautioning anglers that eating fish from the river could be hazardous to their health. As a result, I became Public Enemy No. 1 to the political Wendellites.

It was fun. I rode the public debate in glee for some time in bold, black print.

Although I have largely lost touch with the Millers in recent see **VALLEY VIEW** page B4

Pet of the Week



C. CARMODY COLLAGE

“BUDDY HOLLY”

Buddy Holly came to Dakin as a stray, so we don't know anything about his past life or experiences. While here, he spent some time in an office with a staff member so we could learn more about this petite fella!

Once he is comfortable with you, Buddy is a true lap cat, and loves pets and to make biscuits. He is chatty as well, and likes to tell you all about his day.

He is, however, a sensitive boy

who is overwhelmed quickly by new smells and sounds. He needs an adult-only home with no other animals. Don't miss out on this handsome boy!

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.

MONTV / MUSIK / MOUNTAIN



JENNA WIKLER/PHOTO

Forty-Three: Mazozma

Interview by J. BURKETT
And TROY CURRY

TURNERS FALLS – Happy new year everyone! Hope everyone's year is going great so far. It's great to be here for yet another in this great paper! We really hope everyone continues to do great things this year. See below for an update to this column this year, but meanwhile, on to this interview...

Mazozma is a unique and cool artist. His “real” name is Mike (Mikey, Michael, “Ma”) Turner, and he has been doing music forever... well, he started playing guitar in the ancient year of 1991, anyways.

Mr. Turner was an important part of the well-known band Warmer Milks, and I guess the name “Mazozma” combines his normal solo

moniker (née Michael) and the title of his 2014 album *ZOZ*. Most of the Mazozma releases are guitar-based, and the first LP was actually a full-on rock album. Others, like 2018's *Stark Joy*, are stripped down to just an acoustic guitar and vocals, and memorable songs.

It's hard to describe some of these releases. They can evoke some deep emotions. We recommend that you check the releases out ASAP – maybe start with *Stark Joy* or *Heavy Death Head*; both are still available from Feeding Tube Records in Florence.

And as for M/M/M... Last year we started adding some music reviews to this interview column, and this year we will continue this, if anyone has releases they want to send. And also this year we will have some help from our friend Troy Curry. He did most of this interview with Mazozma – who recently moved to the UK, so let's all wish him the best over “the pond”!

MMM: You have a sound that is unlike anything else. You're a phenomenal songwriter, and you make it seem so easy. Is it easy for you? How did it all start for you?

MT: I find it simple to do what I do, but half the time I carry a low self-opinion about my output. I could always do better. I started playing guitar in 1991, and have been writing songs for just as long.

MMM: Do you remember your first concert? The first song or music that blew you away?

MT: The first concert I attended was Christian singer Amy Grant in 1983. She was my mom's favorite artist at the time. After the concert was over, we all ran to her tour bus for autographs. I fell against a metal fence and cut my cheek open. It was a strange night.

The first secular concert I saw was either Miami Sound Machine, or the Kentucky State Fair where I saw Weird Al Yankovic and Cinderella in the same evening.

MMM: So do you have a fave skateboarder that inspires you? Favorite skateboard graphics?

MT: That's a hard one. There's so many amazing skaters these days. I appreciate how far skating has come in terms of style and technicality.

When I was a kid in the late '80's and early '90s, I looked up to the H-Street team. Danny Way's part in *Shackle Me Not*, when he does that weird kickflip fakie (?) on the launch ramp, blew me away. My favorite graphic is the Nash “Nightmare II.”

MMM: How did Mazozma start? Did you do it the same time as Warmer Milks? Which came first?

MT: After Warmer Milks, I started playing solo as Ma Turner. At one point I put out a Ma Turner cassette called *Mazozma* on Robert Beatty's AHM Editions Label, and ended up shedding the Ma Turner name and playing music under the moniker of Mazozma.

I guess Mazozma is different than Warmer Milks because it's different people in a different time. I approach music in a similar way to how I did then, but I'm not the same person I was when Warmer Milks was active. I think it's nice to freshen things up every once in awhile.

MMM: There is a lyric in one of your songs, “Living”... It's so beautiful. How did this track come about, and where and when was it written?

MT: I wrote it in Kentucky sometime in 2013, and it pertains to emotional collapse. For myself and everyone else existing on this planet. I'd say it happens to all of us at one point or another.

MMM: Tell me some about your experience in Turners Falls, and the scene there, if you like?

MT: Turners Falls presented itself as a home to me when I truly needed one several years ago. It has been nothing but good to me. The music and art that comes out of Turners is beautiful. I already miss it so much. It was hard to leave.

I love APIE, Josh Burkett [blush], Tony Pasquarosa, Patrick Borezo, Sunburned Hand of the Man, Weeping Bong... the list goes on. More importantly, the vibe overall is so thick with magick. I know that might sound corny, but I believe it to be completely true.

MMM: How about a favorite album, this week or today?

MT: Cat Stevens' *Teaser and the Firecat*, since Thanksgiving. Today I listened to Celtic Frost while doing dishes. A few weeks ago I went on a Sun City Girls binge.

MMM: Do you have any plans for Mazozma in the near future?

MT: I just started jamming with a guy here in Brighton. He agreed to play under the Mazozma moniker, so we're working through some of my new songs, seeing what works.

Senior Center Activities JANUARY 17 THROUGH 21

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 Jonathan 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 1/17

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

Needlecrafts Circle

Tuesday 1/18
12 p.m. Tuesday Morning Knitters
3 p.m. Tai Chi

Wednesday 1/19

9 a.m. Veterans' Agent Hours
11 a.m. Aerobics
11:45 a.m. Chair Exercise
1:30 p.m. Mobile Pantry
4 p.m. Mat Yoga

Thursday 1/20

10 a.m. Chair Yoga
1 p.m. Cards & Games
Friday 1/21
10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise

ERVING

Erving Senior Center is open 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Mondays through Fridays. Open for cards, coffee, and billiards. 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.

Mondays

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

Tuesdays

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

Wednesdays

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

Thursdays

9 a.m. Re-Store & Re-Emerge
10 a.m. Stretch & Balance

Fridays

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.

PLACE YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE (12 WEEK MINIMUM) CALL 863-8666!

DOLAN & DOLAN
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

174 AVENUE A
TURNERS FALLS MASSACHUSETTS
01376
413-863-3133

PERSONAL INJURY, WILLS & ESTATES, WORKER'S COMP

BestLocalBank.com

FREE Online Banking with Bill Pay, Transfers, Account Opening, Debit Card Controls & More!

FREE Mobile Banking APP with Mobile Check Deposit, Alerts, Freeze/Unfreeze & More!

GREENFIELD Cooperative Bank **NORTHAMPTON** Cooperative Bank

Avenue A, Turners Falls | 413-512-5012

413-256-6217

fine instruments
bought and sold
repaired and restored

Fretted Instrument Workshop

49 So. Pleasant St., Amherst, Mass. 01002

OrigamiUSA

Origami is for anyone,
anywhere, anytime!

- Find a local community origami group
- Fold from diagrams in our publications
- Shop for origami paper and books
- And much more!

Join us at: OrigamiUSA.org
Email: admin@origamiusa.org
Tel: 212.769.5635

TNT Productions
DJ & Karaoke specialists

413-522-6035
www.tntprodj.net

REAL PICKLES

Locally grown vegetables
Fermented & raw
100% organic

A worker co-op in Greenfield, MA
www.realpickles.com | (413) 774-2600

RAMBLER from page B1
 respite – right outside the door – from the stark landscape found elsewhere. It is a twin pair, male and female, planted together, and both needed for berry production. In autumn it clashed, even by my wide standards, with the maroon hydrangea tree just a few feet away, but it shares its singular gifts now, in these short, dark days.

I hoped, as so many did – and probably unrealistically, since years are not light switches waiting to be flicked – that the new year would usher in less heavyweight fare. I hoped to write more about my cats, and my travels, and the satisfaction of preparing and eating fresh vegetables, including recent meals. One example – a soup thick with local greens, and tiny white beans, garlic-laden, and flavored with two kinds of cheese – a deep bowl of comfort with flakes of salt on top.

My bandwidth has been nearly hijacked, however, by the effort of trying to keep myself, and those I love, healthy and alive.

Other things I care about – the Farren and Montague City getting

a fair shake; my garden; making curtains; getting a retirement gift for a valued colleague; pursuing partnership; rug making; book writing; and baking birthday cookies for a trusted friend – pop up as soon-to-be-forgotten blips on my radar, back-burnered before they are even fully considered. My house is strewn with notes of things to tend when these urgent things have resolved, or eased.

I take comfort in seeing my mother's face, not too sick to crack a joke; or the toothless smile of a friend's seven-month-old baby, too far away to hold, but close enough to share a giggle. Also, my kitties, sleep, a good book, a warm fire, and the soft *thunk* my hefty cleaver makes, a rhythmic meditation on food and life, and a birthday gift one year ago.

I am lucky, I know, and still: the tensions and choices of this time do not settle easily into soft flesh. They are acute and many, jagged and full of compromise. The hearth fire burns as I continue to make my way through these strange times.



Montague Community Television News

'Dadadino' Talks Shop

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

TURNERS FALLS – Catch up with the Montague selectboard and finance committee on the MCTV Vimeo page, which can be found linked to the MCTV website, *montaguetelevision.org*, under the tab "Videos."

Also new this week is an episode of *In Studio*, from Easthampton Media Studios. Montague artist John Landino is the guest, and he shares updates and insights into his artistic process.

All community members are

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

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

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

TV SYNOPSIS

The Flash: Armageddon (CW Network)

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – The *Flash* TV series on the CW network has never had a five-part season opener, but it had one for the 8th season. A time-traveling psychic alien named Despero comes after the Flash for causing something called Armageddon.

We see Despero in the first scene of the first part of the opener. He admits when he first sees the Flash that he is here to kill him. There are a bunch of interesting "guest stars" in this storyline. Ray Palmer, a.k.a. The Atom, guest stars in the first episode; we see him and the Flash fight a villain.

I found the first part to be lackluster. The only thing in the episode that I found really interesting was when Despero's alien form turns out to be one of a giant red alien.

The second part of the opener consists of Despero explaining why the Flash caused Armageddon. He basically said he will go mad due to one more thing going wrong in his life, the straw that apparently breaks the camel's back.

They really did a huge job of the end of this episode. This part also features the first guest appearance of the character Alex Danvers from *Supergirl*. Barry (the Flash) loses S.T.A.R. Labs and his job as a CSI for Central City.



In the third part, it turns out the straw that breaks the camel's back isn't exactly what it seems – we learn that it wasn't supposed to happen at all.

In a huge crossover event, the superhero Black Lightning was made part of this universe that the Flash is in. He ends up in this episode, and Barry tries to get him to remove his power because he thinks he is going mad. This ends with a twist that is well suited for this show, and actually

makes sense when it comes to why things appear as they are, and explains who set all this up against Barry. The end has viewers entering a whole new reality in the show, and that definitely sets things up for a very cool fourth part.

Part four confirms that pretty well, as Barry somehow turns into the Reverse Flash and the Reverse Flash turns into Barry. It seems the Reverse Flash has created his own version of the Flashpoint timeline to do that. I know from the comics that this is what happens to Barry when he stops the Reverse Flash from doing something that changes his whole life. That apparently creates a very interesting storyline in the comics, and that it's what happens in this episode when the Reverse Flash does it.

This all makes for a very cool episode to watch. It's a fantastic alternate-reality episode, and in his effort to restore things, Barry gets help from an unlikely ally. In the final and fifth part of this feature, the "last straw" event I mentioned is completely undone, and things are back to normal. The last part, like the other parts, has an interesting guest star who figures into the storyline as well. To my surprise, there is also an appearance of a character I thought was only going to be last seen in Part 4. But I was wrong.

This was a good, and very different, season premiere of *The Flash*!

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Too Fancy For Fourth; Many Icy Roads and Alleys; Turkey Assisted; Rebar Noted; 10 Grams of Fentanyl

Monday, 1/3

8:24 a.m. Injured turkey has been hanging around for two days; now sitting on the hood of a car on Oak Street. Environmental Police and Massachusetts Fish & Wildlife unable to assist. Animal control officer en route.

11 a.m. Leverett PD took a call reporting gunshots in the West Chestnut Hill Road area. Officer checking area; reports nothing showing.

1:44 p.m. Greenfield PD requesting officer go to a Montague address and pass information along to the resident regarding property he left at Foster's. Services rendered.

4:14 p.m. Caller from Mark's Auto reports that one of their customers' vehicles had the catalytic converter cut out of it sometime in the past two weeks. Shop owner currently reviewing video footage to see if they got it on camera. Officer advises that footage will probably not be useful due to the lighting.

4:39 p.m. Caller requesting that officer be at Turners Falls High School when basketball practice gets out at 6:15 p.m. due to a vehicle speeding through the parking lot every night; caller concerned vehicle might hit a student. Officer advises he sat in high school parking lot and did not observe any vehicles speeding through.

5:08 p.m. Caller reports that a dark gray Chevy

SUV is always at a Fourth Street location; suspects drug activity. Referred to an officer.

5:36 p.m. Caller from Third Street reports that someone was throwing rocks from her window around 30 minutes ago. Officer advises no damage to window; did not observe anyone in area.

Tuesday, 1/4

3:13 p.m. 911 caller from Turners Falls Road in Greenfield stated it was a misdial; not sure how his phone dialed; he wasn't even holding it. Caller stated he is driving into Greenfield in a red Ford F-150. Greenfield PD advised.

Wednesday, 1/5

8:40 a.m. Officer advising that Route 63 has become very slippery. State DPW notified.

9:43 a.m. Chief advising of vehicle into tree on Millers Falls Road near the airport. 2:47 p.m. Caller from Fourth Street states that there was a fancy white car parked out back; caller thinks they may have been there to do a drug deal. Car is now gone, and caller did not actually witness any transactions.

2:56 p.m. Manager from Food City reports that an employee's wallet was stolen off of a checkout register. They have it on video, along with the plate number of the vehicle the suspect left in. Officer heading to address vehicle is registered to. Wallet returned; nothing taken from it.

6:56 p.m. Caller states they are on Millers Falls Road following a truck that is all over the road: crossing over the middle line, traveling completely in the opposite lane, then into the breakdown lane. Second call reporting same thing. Caller states vehicle went into a ditch at one point then back onto the road, possibly struck a guardrail, and continued traveling. Caller states vehicle was attempting to back into driveway but was not able to. Vehicle crossed into Erving. Shelburne Control contacted; Erving PD also en route. While still on phone with second caller, Erving PD located vehicle. Erving PD requesting additional units; MPD officers en route.

8:27 p.m. Caller states that a female has stolen her dog. Caller states she has proof it is her dog and a police report from when it was stolen. Caller would like assistance getting her dog back. Officer spoke with caller; going to speak with other female. Negative contact.

11:16 p.m. Caller from Third Street reports a smell of natural gas all around her residence. Shelburne Control contacted for FD.

Thursday, 1/6

8:54 a.m. Walk-in reports that someone threw a piece of wood at her car and smashed one of her windows while driving through the intersection of Turnpike and Turners Falls Road. Report taken.

5:08 p.m. Following a vehicle stop on Millers Falls Road, a party was arrested and charged with a lights violation; marked lanes violation; and operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license.

6:11 p.m. Following a vehicle stop on Turners Falls Road, a citation was issued for unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle; driving within marked lanes; unregistered motor vehicle; uninsured motor vehicle; and attaching plates to a motor vehicle.

10:42 p.m. Task force stopping two vehicles containing individuals with active warrants. A 40-year-old Gill man was arrested on a straight warrant and two default warrants and also charged with trafficking in more than 10 grams of fentanyl; possession to distribute a Class B drug, subsequent offense; and resisting arrest. A 37-year-old Turners Falls woman was arrested on a default warrant. A 22-year-old Turners Falls man was arrested on a straight warrant.

Friday, 1/7

4:48 p.m. Shelburne Control received a call from a passing motorist reporting

a potential single-vehicle accident on Bridge Street; gray vehicle with damage to driver's side door. MPD officer advises that he doesn't believe there was an accident; he has seen this car driving around with this damage. Officer advises vehicle is legally parked and there was no accident.

5:15 p.m. Caller reporting that she hit a deer heading north on Route 63. She is no longer on scene but stated that the deer may be in the road. Officer checked area; nothing in road.

Saturday, 1/8

2:57 p.m. Motorist reporting a piece of metal sticking up near the end of the Canal Road bridge in the westbound lane. Officer advises that a piece of rebar is sticking up at the end of the bridge in the middle, but not an emergency. Message left for MassDOT.

Sunday, 1/9

8:14 a.m. 911 caller reporting small black sedan off the road near F.L. Roberts; does not appear to have struck anything; driver is out of the vehicle. Report taken.

8:53 a.m. 911 caller reporting red pickup truck off road and into tree on Millers Falls Road. Operator out of vehicle, last seen walking down West Main Street toward downtown Millers Falls. Officer located operator. Vehicle owner declined tow; they will take care of flat tire themselves at Mark's Auto.

5:02 p.m. Caller reporting that the alleyway off of Montague Street by High Street has not been treated, and it is very icy. DPW advised.

9:43 p.m. 911 caller reporting single-vehicle accident on Millers Falls Road near the airport. Vehicle hit a tree; both vehicle occupants awake and walking around, but need medical attention. Both occupants transported to hospital. Rau's on scene for tow.

10:29 p.m. Officer advising that roads are icing over; requests DPW be contacted. DPW notified.

11:45 p.m. 911 call from monitoring company stating that they received a crash notification from East Chestnut Hill Road. While on the phone, company stated that driver made contact and requested to cancel dispatch. MSP Northampton called stating involved vehicle was found damaged in Leverett and upon further investigation was found to have crashed on West Chestnut Hill Road damaging a "slow" sign. MSP just wanted to advise of the damage and let MPD know they had investigated the accident.

PLACE YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE (12 WEEK MINIMUM) CALL 863-8666!

SPIRITS, BREWS & FINE WINES
 53C S. Main St. South Deerfield, MA
 295 Amherst Rd. Sunderland, MA

New Location Now Open:
 6 Main Road, in Gill
 (formerly Jan's Package Store)
 Come check us out!

Deerfield: (413) 665-2456
 Sunderland: (413) 665-5030
 Gill: (413) 863-5730

French King
 Restaurant & Motel

BREAKFAST AND LUNCH
 FRIDAY – 8 A.M. TO 2 P.M.
 SATURDAY & SUNDAY – 7 A.M. TO 2 P.M.

DINNER
 FRIDAY & SATURDAY – 4:30 TO 9:30 P.M.

CALL TO CONFIRM: (413) 423-3328

Doug's Auto Body
 Doug Smith - Owner

PRECISION
REPAIRS

MA Reg. #RS2190

Ph. (413) 863-2785
 Fax: (413) 863-0120
FREE ESTIMATES
REPAIRS ON FOREIGN & DOMESTIC CARS AND TRUCKS

39 Center Road
 Gill, MA 01354
FREE LOANER CARS

VALLEY VIEW from page B1 years, I presume streamside warnings are still prominently displayed along the “major” river, a status that ensures it receives the biggest and best trout MassWildlife hatcheries have to offer, and plenty of them.

When I recently mentioned to Mallett the media war I ignited back in the ‘80s, he didn’t seem to associate me with those familiar streamside warnings he most likely resents. Originally from Athol, he may not have read the *Recorder* back then. So, I gave him a brief overview, beginning with how the whole fiasco started with a surreptitious streamside tip delivered by an unimpeachable source at the festive first stocking of the river below the Farley Flats railroad trestle in Erving.

That day at the popular fishing hole produced a celebratory scene – with stocking-truck motors purring, netsful of trout being dumped into the river, TV crews from Boston, Worcester, Springfield, and maybe even Hartford filming the event for the nightly news. Scribes were there interviewing sources and scribbling notes in pads, while politicians, fish and wildlife officials and local gawkers schmoozed in the small gravel parking area off Route 2.

Yes, it was a glorious day in eastern Franklin County. After decades as an open industrial and human sewer before the federal Clean Water Act of 1972 kicked in, the proud Millers River was back.

Or, was it?

As it turned out, unbeknownst to those in attendance, including me, what is known in newsroom parlance as a “scoop” was about to rear its ugly head and rain on the parade.

Though after 40 years I may not recall every minute detail from that day, it seems to me that my source, a distinguished, bespectacled man getting on in age, was wearing a tweed jacket and tie with a gentleman’s top hat. He had spotted me talking to sources, recognized me from my weekly column sig, and approached me furtively away from the action as things were winding down. We had never met, but I was familiar with his son and his landed estate near the confluence of the Millers and Connecticut rivers. Identifying himself as a former chemist for Erving Paper Mill, he had some information I might find interesting.

When we slithered away from the mass, he delivered his bombshell. Although the decision to again stock the river was in his opinion a good thing, it was, he opined, irresponsi-

ble. He had fished the Millers since youth and was happy it was being reborn, but there was an important problem that was being ignored – or maybe even, dare say it, *covered up*. According to him, the river was contaminated with PCBs. He was certain the state Department of Environmental Quality Engineering (DEQE) – now the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) – had records to prove it.

It was big news that had to be investigated, confirmed or denied – my new task.

Before the Internet and email era of news-gathering, I distinctly remember going home to South Deerfield, calling DEQE on the phone, and by dumb luck being connected to a spokesman whose Whately family I knew. Although I didn’t know the source himself, I did know his younger brother and sisters, and he knew who I was. He said he wasn’t familiar with any Millers River studies off the top of his head but would check into it. I gave him my phone number. He’d get back to me.

A day or two later, his call came. He said I was onto something and asked for my snail-mail address. He’d immediately send copies of records documenting Millers River PCB and heavy-metal pollution. These poisons were long-lasting, destined to remain in the sediment for millennia, contaminating all life feeding in the ecosystem. Though such pollution status does not preclude stocking or angling on a stream, state mandate demands that such waters be posted with warnings for anglers who may eat its fish.

I can’t say I was shocked. The Millers River had been my personal poster child for local polluted rivers, worse even than the Connecticut, into which as a teen I wouldn’t have dipped my pinky under the Sunderland Bridge. Younger folks today have no perception of this, but I do, because I lived it, as did Mallett.

As an Athol boy, Mallett says he saw raw sewage flowing through town in the ‘60s. Downstream, below Erving Paper Mill, the river’s color signaled to Route 2 travelers the color of toilet paper being produced on any given day. Mallett recalls the time when big suckers around the Starrett Tool Company dam were “committing mass suicide” by jumping out of the river to escape dreadful industrial chemicals dumped into the water.

So, no, I can’t say I was shocked to get confirmation of PCB contamination from my DEQE source,

and likely neither were the people living in the Millers River valley. That doesn’t mean the news was welcome. Uh-uh. They didn’t want to hear it. At least not my Wendellite foes who had worked hardest to bring trout fishing back to their neighborhood for selfish reasons. That is, they wanted their own major river to fish, eliminating travel to the Deerfield River. It only got worse as I continued piecemealing out additional news and barbs they objected to, at time vociferously.

The Wendellites responded with hateful personal attacks in letters to the editor, and the entertaining battle went on for months, if not years. Every chance I got, I’d poke them, and they’d poke right back. Finally, though, they took the argument a step too far. Or at least that was the opinion of then-*Recorder* publisher Alexander Hutchison.

What stirred Hutchison’s ire and brought in the DA’s office was a terrorist note that arrived at my *Recorder* desk. As I recall, my name and *Recorder* address was typed onto the envelope’s face, and the threatening note inside was composed of bold letters cut and pasted from magazine headlines. Though I can’t quote the message verbatim, it was a warning from the sender that he knew my work schedule and where I lived, and was tired of my Millers River columns. The pasted-on signature read “Abu Nidal,” whom I recognized as *the* Palestinian terrorist of the day.

To be honest, I was humored, not scared, by the letter and showed it around the newsroom with a chuckle. My Wendellite friends were all wound up, and I thought it was hilarious.

Not so with “Hutch,” by far the best of six publishers for whom I worked. When he caught wind of the threatening note, he marched it straight to the DA. Apparently the DA’s office didn’t pursue it, because I was never aware of it being pursued.

All I can now say, decades later, is that I’m still kickin’ and Millers River sediment still holds PCBs and heavy metals. All it took to stir those contaminants back into the flow of my column was the unfortunate December 22 oil spill, one that will likely have long-term effects on a proud and defenseless trout stream.

Frankly, the Millers River can’t seem to catch a break. The classic old trout stream bordering the ancient Mohawk Trail deserves better.



Surviving Breast Cancer

By Julie Cunningham

Part 16: ‘Grade’ Versus ‘Stage’

AMHERST – What does it mean to have “aggressive” cancer?

After my surgery in October, further testing revealed the presence of the HR2 genetic mutation where we thought it was absent, and Grade 3 cancer cells. Cancer gets a stage and a grade: the stage is how the cancer has progressed, and the grade is how aggressive the cancer is, and how likely and how fast it might spread.

So, I originally had a grade of 2 for my cancer. That’s a medium grade. The lowest grade you can get is a 1, and I believe the highest and most aggressive is a 3 or a 4 – I’m not clear if cancer can be graded as a 4 or if it always stops at 3. However, I am now grade 3.

I have grade 3, triple-positive breast cancer. Or *had*. It’s not inside me anymore. But I guess we are assuming some of the little fockers got loose and are moving around my body trying to create problems. So even though we removed the cancer, I’m getting immunotherapy treatment and hormone therapy. It’s not what I wanted, but so far it’s not that bad.

What the doctors are doing is essentially removing all the estrogen from my body and giving me drugs that help my immune system fight the cancer. I’m not doing radiation, and I’m not doing any more chemo. The drugs can have very powerful side effects, and I was warned about them prior to beginning the new treatment. However, so far the side effects are just annoying. I have some adult acne, and I buy the same face soap that I used when I was 15. I’m not moody at all or emotional, and I haven’t had a hot flash yet.

There are other possible side effects that may be yet to come. I have one more drug to add to the three I am already taking. I could get some bone pain, and I have to pay attention to my diet and my workout habits. I guess I had a bit of PDS (Prolonged Durex Stress Disorder) from chemo, because so far this feels okay. It doesn’t feel nearly as traumatic or difficult as going through chemo.

I feel more like myself, for better or worse. My skin does look good, although I think it was aged slightly by the treatment. My hair looks good and it’s actually straight. If you knew me, you knew that I had wicked curly hair that was so dark it was almost black. Well, now it’s growing in with a reddish tint and it’s straight, of all things.

I think the biggest thing is dealing with the fear and self-doubt. I have a lot of self-doubt about how I missed my cancer for so long, and a lot of anger towards myself for not doing something sooner. No cancer is good cancer, and no one wants to find cancer, but the sooner it’s dealt with, the easier it is to treat and cure. I wish I had found my cancer before it mutated to be more aggressive with the HR2

mutation. I don’t know when that would have been, but maybe a few years back would have been okay.

Before COVID-19, at least.

And thank goodness so far COVID-19 hasn’t impacted my treatment. But that fear exists too. With non-essential procedures shut down, if I had scheduled my surgery for 2022 I wouldn’t have had the same result. It would have been more limited. And maybe we would have had to go back, because the process of proving what is essential versus what is an emergency may have changed the order of things. I didn’t have to do that. I just had to prove that it was necessary to my quality of life and well-being overall.

Many people right now have aggressive cancers like me and need similar treatment, and the COVID-19 pandemic may make that difficult. Having aggressive cancer makes everything a little more stressful and a little more scary. I certainly had some anxiety about COVID-19 prior to my surgery. I was tracking the numbers every day, in fear that my surgery would be canceled. I was a nervous wreck. I am so grateful and thankful now that I got through it, and COVID-19 is just annoying and not threatening my surgery.

With aggressive cancer, my diet has changed. I have cut sugar by 90%, alcohol, and anything that’s tasty. I’m already allergic to gluten, so there wasn’t much left to cut out. I eat a lot of vegetables and avocados, coconut, and if you can believe it, eggs. Egg whites are supposed to increase white blood cells and egg yolks have a lot of nutrients in them, so they are key to survival, just in moderation.

I’m constantly fighting the feeling that everything is bad for me, because if you Google anything it says it’s bad for you. Everything has something that isn’t good and something that is beneficial. I had to rewire my brain after my diagnosis because I was afraid to eat the wrong thing. After a lot of work, I have the healthy eating thing down and I do eat tasty treats, just not as often. And I do drink wine, just not as often. It’s a balance. Everything is a balance.

Exercise is also key, because the medications I am on can impact your heart. But I can’t run again yet because of the surgery I had. I tend to walk up Mount Sugarloaf as long as it isn’t too icy, which is a good workout. I’m supposed to keep my heart as healthy as possible while I’m on immunotherapy, which means exercise is a priority.

Every morning I do some sort of workout. Sometimes it’s 20 minutes, sometimes an hour. It depends and it varies, but it’s something that I make sure I fit in. I’m not trying to look like Pamela Anderson. That’s not realistic. I’m just trying to stay healthy.



PETER MALLET PHOTO

Cleanup efforts visible along the Mill River.

PLACE YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE (12 WEEK MINIMUM) CALL 863-8666!

LIC #36550-EL 1-413-345-1687

ELECTRICIAN
CHRIS M. STRAKOSE

RESIDENTIAL • COMMERCIAL • INDUSTRIAL
ALL ELECTRICAL INSTALLATIONS AND REPAIRS
EMERGENCY SERVICE

9 SWAMP ROAD
MONTAGUE, MA 01351
EMAIL: CSTRAKOSE.ELEC@GMAIL.COM

FULLY INSURED FREE CONSULTATION

Dudek Tax Service
10 Masonic Ave
Turners Falls
MA 01376
Frank J. Dudek

413.863.5394 - Office
413.775.3327 - Cell
frankd_74@yahoo.com

ED L. Dealer in used Home Furnishings

SMALL FURNITURE • COLLECTIBLES • DECORATIVES

374 Deerfield Street • Greenfield
Featuring: Lamps Mirrors Chairs Baskets

Call (413) 834 - 3128 TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT

MASK REQUIRED • EXCLUSIVE SHOPPING!

MEDICINE

Treating Seasonal Affective Disorder

By DR. CATHERINE DODDS

FRANKLIN COUNTY—“Now is the winter of our discontent.” In his play *Richard III*, Shakespeare perfectly captures what those of us in northern areas feel as the deep winter sets in. Dreary, overcast days when daylight hours feel too short. Nor’easters that bury us in snow. Cold, biting winds that no amount of bundling can fully keep out. And winter blues. When severe and disabling, these winter blues can be a sign of a medical

condition called Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD).

SAD is a type of depressed mood that is brought on by the change in season, beginning in the late fall and easing off by spring. It occurs in 3% to 5% of the general population, and up to 15% of people with underlying Major Depression have a seasonal component to their symptoms.

As with any type of depression, the main symptoms of SAD include at least two weeks of feeling sad, down, hopeless, or cranky for

most of the day, nearly every day. In addition, people with depression lose interest in things they used to enjoy doing or feel like they no longer care as much about things in general, and may feel guilty or worthless related to these changes. Some people also have changes in weight, appetite, sleep, energy level, memory, and concentration.

With Seasonal Affective Disorder, these symptoms are directly related to the upcoming winter, and symptoms improve once the winter has passed. SAD feels a bit like hibernation – wanting to do nothing but eat and sleep as winter approaches.

So what can we northerners do about these winter blues, and especially those of us suffering with Seasonal Affective Disorder? Daily exercise, healthy eating, and a regular sleep schedule help with the symptoms. However, the most important step is to get more light exposure. While getting outside in nature as much as possible is a positive step, sometimes work

schedules, icy roads, or weather conditions make getting adequate sunlight each day impractical.

A special type of 10,000 lux bright white light box, called a “sun lamp” or “SAD light,” is the best treatment for persistent SAD symptoms. The light box should be positioned 20 to 30 inches from the face, at a distance that allows the full intensity of light to shine towards the face while seated and facing the box, with the light aimed slightly downward or sideways to minimize glare. Keep your eyes open during Bright Light Therapy, with the light box visible in the peripheral vision. You can glance at the light box, but avoid staring directly at the light.

Bright Light Therapy is best done for 30 to 60 minutes in the early morning, shortly after waking up, and done at the same time each day from late fall to early spring. Alternatively, some people use sun lamps that provide Dawn Simulation Therapy, where the brightness of the light changes to mimic a sunrise for 30 to 90 min-

utes, scheduled to finish at one’s planned wake-up time.

Bright Light Therapy and Dawn Simulation Therapy can be used together. Some people benefit from Bright Light Therapy in the early evening in addition to the morning.

You can do other activities while doing Bright Light Therapy, including reading, eating, exercising, watching TV, or working on a computer. Side effects of Bright Light Therapy are rare but can include eye strain and headache. If you have underlying eye disease or light-sensitive eyes or skin, check with your healthcare provider prior to trying light therapy.

Medications and psychotherapy may be necessary to treat severe Seasonal Affective Disorder. If winter tends to bring you more than a little discontent, or if you feel unable to function due to the winter blues, contact your healthcare provider.

Catherine Dodds, M.D.
lives in Turners Falls.

MUSHROOMS from page B1
someone puts a piece of paper in the way.

Capturing mushroom spores on paper is a technique long practiced by naturalists to record and identify species. It has also been taken up by hobbyists. A quick search on Etsy shows pages of framed prints, t-shirts, and other mushroom memorabilia made by spore printing.

Although Evers began creating spore prints to help her identify mushrooms, the mystery of her work – its scale and abstraction – transcends these humbler origins. She began to experiment with the technique, drawing on her early days studying photography.

“As I began to play more,” she said, “the mushrooms began telling their own stories.” Describing

her process, she said, “I harness the ways in which mushrooms release their spores.” She puts the mushrooms gill-side down on paper, moving them around over the course of a day or two. She is less concerned with obtaining scientifically accurate depictions of mushrooms than making captivating forms.

When I asked her how she adheres the spores to the paper, Evers said that there are a variety of techniques, including glue or pumice gel. Spraying with fixative leaves an undesirable residue on the dark grounds she prefers, but she’s found that no adhesive is necessary. The spores stick to the paper just fine on their own.

Because she’s not sure what their long-term permanence will

be, she makes photographic editions of her work as well. “Some people prefer the photographs to the originals,” she said. “I guess having actual mushroom spores on their wall freaks them out.”

Evers lives in Haydenville and collects her specimens on walks with her husband. Occasionally she’ll spot an enticing patch from her car and pull over to harvest them. “It’s important not to overharvest them,” she said. “I make sure to leave the mycelium intact.”

Evers’ favorite print-making mushroom is the jack o’lantern, whose gills light up with bioluminescence at night. A number of prints in her work at the Grubbs Gallery are made with these. Although the jack o’lanterns’ glow quickly fades when picked, they have left striking marks on both *Carry a Torch* and *Kenai Herbarium*. Both artworks are about two by three feet and orientated vertically.

From a distance, the crescent-shaped jack o’lantern spore deposits on *Carry a Torch* look like moth wings fluttering through porch light. Smaller, rust-colored deposits along the right side were made by scaly pholiota. Ghostly images of branches of fennel explode like frozen fireworks in the night sky.

Some of the spore deposits are so thick that they coagulate in putty-colored pools striated with dark gray. Across the whole of the surface, a light gray haze colors the otherwise black background, coating the image with an air of evening fog. This is work meant to be seen in person. Few of the picture’s many details are apparent in photographic reproduction.

The details in *Kenai Herbarium* are even more striking. Using mushrooms and other vegetation gathered while on a trip to Alaska, *Kenai Herbarium* is like a mushroom’s eye view up from the forest floor. The pale-colored spore residue looks like light filtering through piney boughs.

Up close, delicate linear trails can be seen filigreeing the picture’s surface. These lines were made by yet another of Evers’ wild collaborators: worms that crawled from the mushrooms, leaving their own



The ghostly details of this print, *Carry a Torch*, are made with a combination of natural materials including mushroom spores.

imprint on the picture’s surface. Contributions by invertebrates, including worms and insects, are not uncommon in her work.

“This is a perilous moment for plants and fungi, as so for all of us,” said Evers. “Climate change is directly affecting the plants that feed us and the fungi that help things decompose and keep the cycle of life spinning.”

Although Evers’ images aren’t colorful, they’re not dark either, at least not in spirit. In the work on display at the Grubbs Gallery, she captures less the darkness of climate change than the fleeting quality of the natural world. While there is a hint of grief in her work, it has much in common with classical Chinese brush painting, whose goal, in part, was to capture the ephemerality of the natural world, something spore prints are

well suited for. Rather than bemoan our fate, Evers has found a way to collaborate with mushrooms, plants, worms, and insects. However cloaked in darkness, her images celebrate the connections between life forms while acknowledging that we need to be more aware of our natural environment. Their ghostly quality can be read as the animating, ever-changing spirit of nature as much as a requiem for its loss.

Evers’ exhibition runs through March 23. See more of her work at www.sporeplay.com. The Grubbs Gallery is located in the Reed Campus Center of the Williston School, at 40 Park Street, Easthampton. The Gallery, centrally located on the first floor, is open during the school year on weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.



W. KAIZEN PHOTOS

Evers made this print, *Kenai Herbarium*, with vegetation gathered in Alaska.

PLACE YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE (12 WEEK MINIMUM) CALL 863-8666!

FEDERAL STREET BOOKS
8 Federal Street, Greenfield
federalstreetbooks.com

Bringing Peace to Tired Muscles
Welcoming New Clients In December
Gretchen Wetherby, LMT
Massage Offices in Shelburne Falls and Millers Falls
www.massagetherapy.com
gretchenwlm@gmail.com | +13-824-7063

BKONFONQEQWIYSS . IPY
HMZGESCQVQFHJW . MMO
FONTLVPEAXQAHDO . SHC
LJKEVOBFBNAPGR . RED
SECRETBROADCAST . NET
a weekly secret message podcast

The Children's Page

YONERDOD ILLUSTRATION

Words by BEVERLY KETCH - Illustrations by HANNAH BROOKMAN



THE MOON WAS SHINING DOWN INTO THE LOVELIGHTS LIVING ROOM AS THE LACY CURTAIN SWAYED IN THE EVENING BREEZE. MR. MOON LOVED TO WATCH THEIR HAPPY LITTLE FAMILY AS HE ROSE ABOVE THE HORIZON. IT SOOTHED HIS MELANCHOLY SOUL.



TONIGHT ELDA WAS PUTTING CURLERS IN CHELLA'S HAIR AS VIOLA KNITTED SO QUICKLY THAT HER KNITTING GREW BEFORE THEIR EYES, WINDING ALL AROUND THE SOFA AS THEY WHILED AWAY THE TIME BEFORE BED. UNEXPECTEDLY THEY HEARD A KNOCK ON THE DOOR. WHO COULD IT BE?



HELLO MR. HARBINGER! HOW NICE TO SEE YOU! THANK YOU FOR DROPPING BY!



OH, WELL WELL, YOU'RE WELCOME MY DEAR. I JUST BROUGHT YOU THIS TRAP I INVENTED TO CATCH CARNIVOROUS LIZARDS. I BELIEVE THEIR HABITAT HAS MOVED NORTHWARD AND I DO HATE TO THINK OF ANY OF YOU KIND LADIES BOTHERED BY SUCH BEASTS.

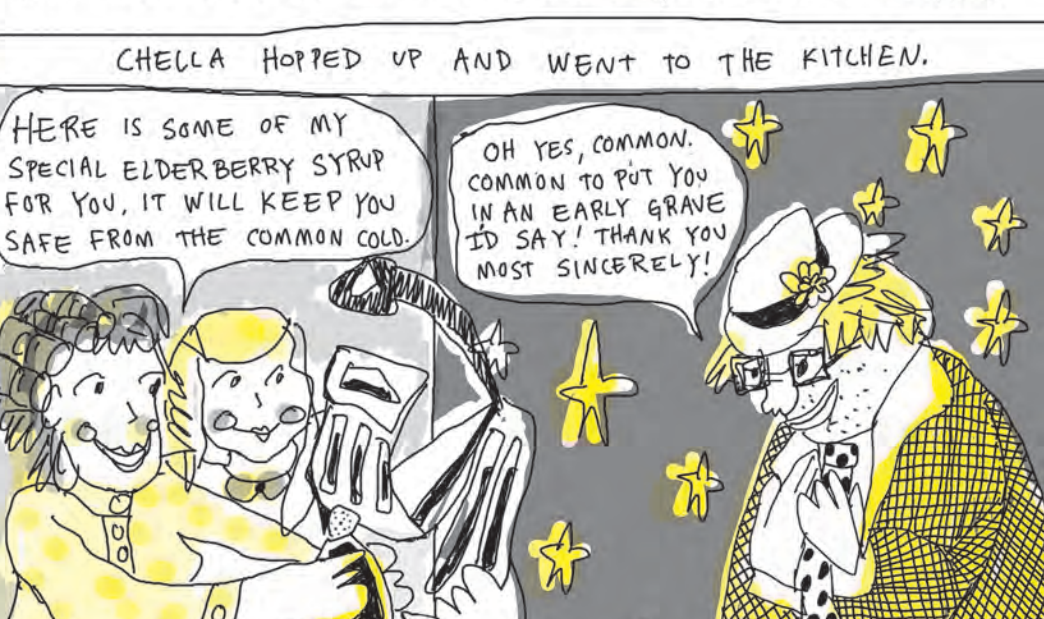
ELDA OPENED IT, AND THERE WAS MR. HARBINGER, HOLDING A STRANGE AND MENACING CONTRAPTION.

"YOUR THOUGHTFULNESS," ELDA SAID EARNESTLY, "IS TRULY ONE OF A KIND."



THANK YOU!

THANK YOU!



CHELLA HOPPED UP AND WENT TO THE KITCHEN.

HERE IS SOME OF MY SPECIAL ELDERBERRY SYRUP FOR YOU, IT WILL KEEP YOU SAFE FROM THE COMMON COLD.

OH YES, COMMON. COMMON TO PUT YOU IN AN EARLY GRAVE I'D SAY! THANK YOU MOST SINCERELY!

CHIMED VIOLA AS HER KNITTING SPREAD ACROSS THE ROOM, AND CHELLA AS SHE SAT ON HER PIANO BENCH, HER HAIR ONLY HALF IN CURLERS.



MR. HARBINGER TOOK HIS LEAVE AND WANDERED DOWN K-STREET HAPPILY WITH HIS TREASURE. THE NORTH WIND AND MR. MOON WATCHED HIM FROM ABOVE AND THE NORTH WIND GAVE THE MOON A WINK AND BLEW HIS HAT DOWN THE STREET, SENDING HIM SCAMPERING AFTER IT.

MOMENTS LATER, ELDA EMERGED TO GO HOME TO HER LITTLE HOUSEBOAT. THE NORTH WIND GASPED WITH DELIGHT AT THE SIGHT OF HER, SENDING HER THE SOFTEST AND STEADIEST BREEZE TO LIFT HER HAIR LIGHTLY FROM HER SHOULDERS. "GOOD NIGHT ELDA," THE WIND SEEMED TO SAY AS SHE MADE HER WAY HOME.

PLACE YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE (12 WEEK MINIMUM) CALL 863-8666!

Come see what's Cookin'!

DIAMOND FARM
126 MICHAMON HOLLOW RD.
MILLERS FALLS, MA
863-866-6666

MASSIVE BOOKSHOP EST. 2020
YOUR LOCAL ANTI-PRIME BOOK SERVICE

VISIT US AT: MASSIVEBOOKSHOP.COM

About-face
Computer Solutions

(413) 863-5447
176 Avenue A Suite 2,
Turners Falls
WE FIX COMPUTERS!
www.about-facecomputers.com

Turn your computer troubles around!



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



FRIDAY, JANUARY 14

The Brewery at Four Star Farms, Northfield: *King Saison*. 6 p.m.
New City Brewery, Easthampton: *Weege and the Wonder-twins*. 7 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *The Gaslight Tinkers*. \$ 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 15

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

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Jill Sobule*. \$ 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Jahdan Blakkamoore* (with members of *Dub Apocalypse*), *DJ Iganic*. \$ 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Whalom Park, Opel*. 9:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 20

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Grateful Dead Night*. \$ 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 21

The Brewery at Four Star Farms, Northfield: *Moon Hollow*. 6 p.m.

Progression Brewery, Northampton: *Rosie Porter and the Neon Moons*. 7 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Eleanor Levine, Wallace Field, Naomi Westwater*. \$ 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 22

The Brewery at Four Star Farms, Northfield: *Ragged Blue*. 6 p.m.

Nova Arts, Keene: *Bad History*

Month, Danny Kemps. 7 p.m.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: Movie with live soundtrack, *The Boxer's Omen* (1983) with music by *Sunburned Hand of the Man*. \$ 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Hubby Jenkins*. \$ 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 23

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Sunset Mission, Zoe Lemos, Addie, Fake Sisters*. \$ 7 p.m.

Palladium, Worcester: *Thursday, Cursive, Jeremy Enigk, The Appleseed Cast*. \$ 6:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 28

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Get Down With Your Hometown*, online festival. See sheatheater.org for full lineup. \$ 6 p.m.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 29

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Get Down With Your Hometown*, online festival. See sheatheater.org for full lineup. \$ 6 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Cinmastorm*, mystery movie double feature: "Strange animation." Free. 7:30 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *High & Mighty Brass Band*. \$ 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3

Academy of Music Theater, Northampton: *Cowboy Junkies*. \$ 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 4

Parlor Room, Northampton:

Cloudbelly. \$ 7:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 5

The Brewery at Four Star Farms, Northfield: *Little House Blues*. 6 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Aversed, Jeopardy, Bellow*, more TBA. \$ 7 p.m.

Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: *Max Creek*. \$ 8 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Editrix, Godcaster, Underwear*. \$ 8 p.m.

Iron Horse Music Hall, Northampton: *The Niels*. \$ 8 p.m.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8

Palladium, Worcester: *Cattle Decapitation, Creeping Death*, more. \$ 7 p.m.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10

Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: *Mannequin Pussy*. \$ 10 p.m.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 11

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Della Mae*. \$ 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12

The Brewery at Four Star Farms, Northfield: *The Wildcat O'Halloran Band*. 6 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Peter Mulvey*. \$ 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13

Bishop's Lounge, Northampton: *Owsley's Owls*. \$ 9:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Storypalooza 3: Danger!* \$ 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19

Bombyx Center, Florence: *Angel Bat Dawid & The Brothahood*. \$ 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24

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

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25

Palladium, Worcester: *Cannibal Corpse, Whitechapel, Revocation*, more. \$ 6:30 p.m.

Tree House Brewing, South Deerfield: *Iron & Wine*. \$ 7 p.m.

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

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: Movie with live soundtrack, *Peter Pan* (1924) with harp score by *Leslie McMichael*. \$ 7 p.m.

Academy of Music, Northampton: *Bruce Cockburn*. \$ 8 p.m.

Shutesbury Athletic Club: *The Diamondstones*. 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 3

DCU Center, Worcester: *Tyler the Creator, Kali Uchis, Vince Staples, Teezo Touchdown*. \$ 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 4

Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: *Superchunk, Torres*. \$ 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, MARCH 5

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Pioneer Valley Jazz Shares presents *Michael Musillami Trio*. \$ 8 p.m.

8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Lich King, Stone Cutters, Toxic Ruin*. \$ 8:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, MARCH 6

Academy of Music, Northampton: *Rickie Lee Jones*. \$ 7 p.m.

TUESDAY, MARCH 8

Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: *Stephen Marley*. \$ 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 11

Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: *Iceage, Sloppy Jane*. \$ 8 p.m.

MASS MoCA, North Adams: *Animal Collective, L'Rain*. \$ 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, MARCH 12

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: Movie with live soundtrack, *The Arrival* (1983) with music by *The Empyreans*. \$ 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, MARCH 13

Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: *Son Volt, Jesse Farrar*. \$ 8 p.m.

Symphony Hall, Springfield: *Boyz II Men*. \$ 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, MARCH 19

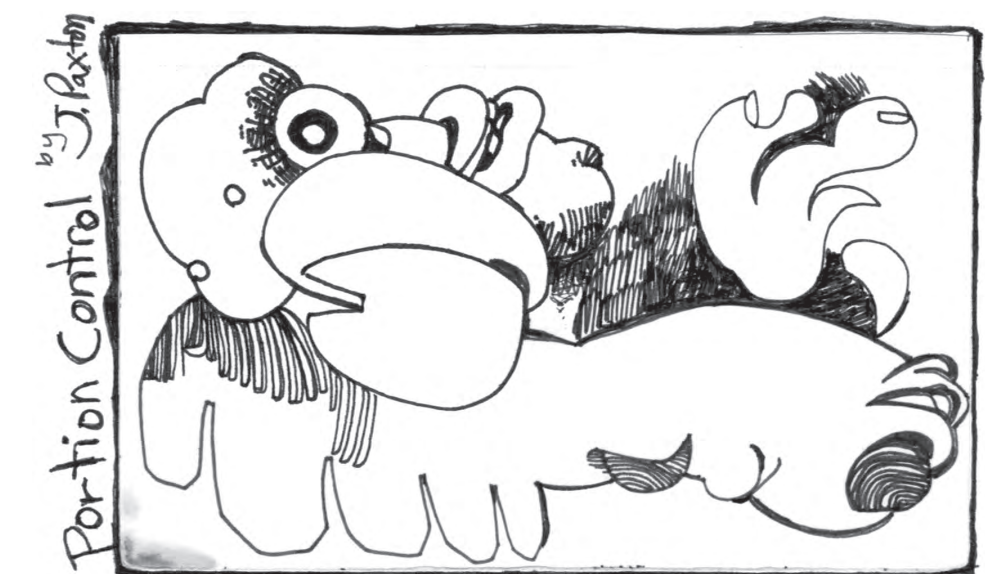
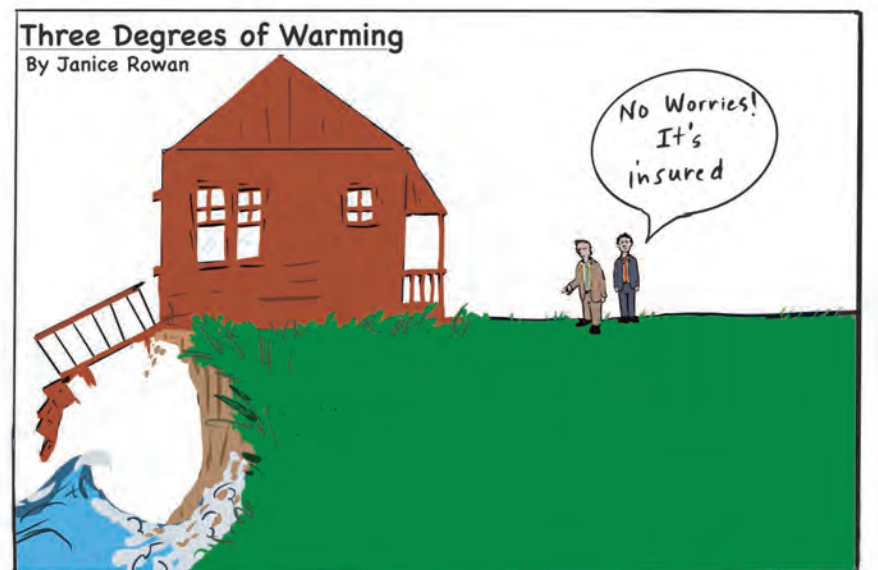
Academy of Music, Northampton: *Henry Rollins*, spoken word. \$ 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 24

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *David Bromberg Quintet*. \$ 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 25

MASS MoCA, North Adams: *Car Seat Headrest, Barteas Strange*. \$ 8 p.m.



Submit your comics and puzzles to editor@montaguereporter.org. Original & local creations only, please!

MONTAGUE CRYPTOJAM !!!
MV YUPZ MV GOINI TV
RYIPGS, RULINGS TV ILTY.
- NUKING HIPPIES

CRACK THE CODE? SEND YOUR ANSWER TO: INFO@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

46 episodes are now available!

Look for us on Apple/iTunes, Spotify, Stitcher, Anchor, Castbox, and elsewhere...



The Montague Reporter Podcast

PLACE YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE (12 WEEK MINIMUM) CALL 863-8666!

TURN IT UP!
MUSIC & MOVIES
 BOOKMILL | MONTAGUE CENTER | 367.0309

BUCKINGHAM RABBITS VINTAGE
 VINTAGE, SECONDHAND & HANDMADE FOR ALL!
HOLIDAY HOURS
 THU 12-4 SAT 12-6
 FRI 12-8 SUN 12-4
 (all thru dec!)
 102 AVENUE A TF MA 01376

Gerri Johnson, Realtor
 ABR, CRB, CRS, GRI, SRES
 413-863-9736 • GerriJohnson@Realtor.com

Gerri Johnson & Associates REALTORS

66 French King Hwy., Gill WWW.GJAR.COM
 GERI JOHNSON, CRS 30 years of experience.

In Memoriam: J.D. Crowe and Tony Rice

By JEFF SINGLETON

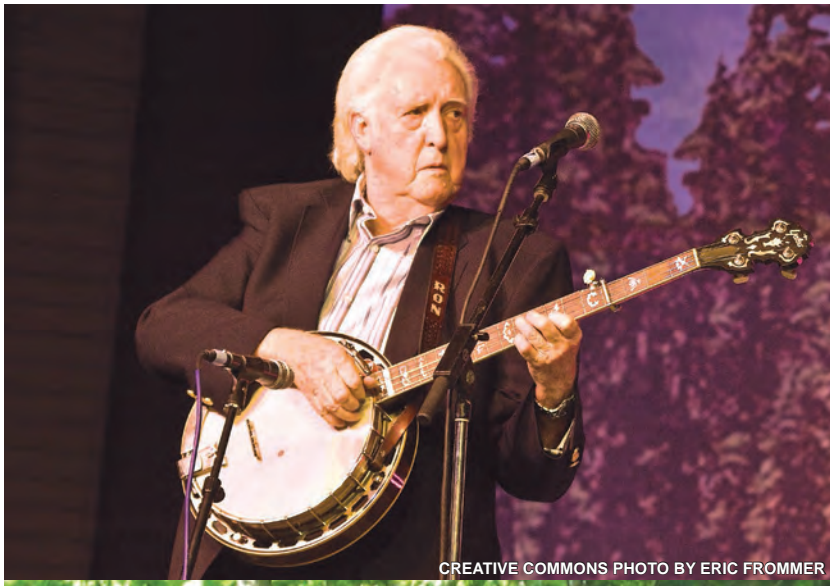
TURNERS FALLS – J.D. Crowe, one of the great bluegrass banjo players of the post-WWII era, died this December, on the day before Christmas. Tony Rice, one of the great guitar flat-pickers who, with Crowe, created some of the great bluegrass songs of that era, died one year earlier on Christmas Day.

These milestones bring back some old memories for me who, as a Connecticut high school student obsessed with this music, piled into a car with three buddies in the early summer of 1966 and attended a bluegrass festival in Roanoke, Virginia.

Crowe, born in 1937, was not a Boomer; he straddled the classic era of bluegrass in the '50s and the "newgrass" of the 1970s.

I have noticed some confusion about the definition of "bluegrass," particularly among Northerners not well versed in the genres of country music. It is often confused with what we used to call "old timey" music, which includes the fiddle-heavy jigs and reels associated with square dancing, and with mainstream country music. The confusion is understandable, since bluegrass draws from and often intersects with those other traditions, but the music and its definition are distinctive.

Bluegrass is a modern genre created after the Second World War. At its core are syncopated rhythms generated by the acoustic banjo, guitar, mandolin, fiddle, and bass. Although these instruments are generally not electrified, they are often held up to microphones in a way that makes them almost seem plugged in, creating a driving, high-powered sound. There is also an emphasis on vocals, often three-part harmonies with a high tenor voice that resembles the old barbershop quartets.



CREATIVE COMMONS PHOTO BY ERIC FROMMER



CREATIVE COMMONS PHOTO BY JORDAN KLEIN

Our reporter reflects on the recent deaths of bluegrass greats J.D. Crowe (top) last month and Tony Rice (bottom) a year before him.

A mandolin player named Bill Monroe is generally credited with "inventing" bluegrass in 1946. This is surprisingly accurate, although it actually took Monroe a bit longer than a year to get there, and other musicians played important roles.

The most famous and influential of these was Earl Scruggs, who added the distinctive syncopated banjo roll to Monroe's band and is perhaps best known for the soundtrack to the 1967 movie *Bonnie and Clyde*.

Jesse McReynolds added a syncopated mandolin, and fiddle players for Monroe started curving in and out of the core melody in a way that was quite different from the old-time jigs and reels.

Content-wise, bluegrass draws from and absorbs numerous music traditions and genres, but it is most famous for its nostalgic songs about the "old home place" that has been destroyed by modernization, particularly by the movement from

hill farms to factory towns. Check out Jim and Jesse's version of "Paradise," an anti-strip mining song, on YouTube.

There is also sometimes a rather casual attitude in bluegrass toward violence against women, as when the lead singer imagines shooting his unfaithful girlfriend with a shotgun loaded with "rock salt and nails," or compares himself to a "fox on the run."

But bluegrass is also famous for its slow, four-part harmony gospel songs and incorporating more recent folk and rock music. One of Crowe's greatest tunes, recorded with Rice, is "Sin City," an apocalyptic song about the destruction of Los Angeles and the record industry's corporate bureaucracy by an earthquake. It was written by Gram Parsons, formerly of the Byrds. So of course...

*On the thirty-first floor
A gold plated door
Won't keep out the lord's
burning rain.*

Speculation about these lyrics, including the theory that the song was partly driven by the assassination of Bobby Kennedy, abound, but the harmonies are good old bluegrass.

Bluegrass's creation in the late '40s and early '50s raises some interesting questions about the huge amount of creative innovation in American music at that time. That innovation included Chicago and Kansas City electric blues, rhythm and blues, and rockabilly (Elvis' early records on the Sun label), which morphed by the 1950s into rock and roll. The music revolution of the time also included bebop jazz (see Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, and Thelonius Monk), with its small combos and creative abstract expressionistic solos.

There are plenty of other examples, but the interesting question is,

why did this creative energy all explode at the height of the Cold War, generally seen as a culturally conservative era of suburbs, consumerism, and consensus?

Part of the answer is probably that this was also an era of technological innovation, when records and record players with "Hi Fi" enhanced the sound of good music. NBC radio was beaming out the "Grand Ole Opry" from Memphis, to be received by newly-electrified rural towns and the big bulky gas-guzzling cars motoring down Route 66. The music was also received by young black Americans recently moved to northern cities, by rural white Americans who had left their own "old home place," and by middle-class Americans youth, the so-called greatest minds of their generation who were rebels without a cause.

So the Cold War consensus may have produced its cultural antithesis, which was to explode into political action in the 1960s as it joined with the Civil Rights movement.

But enough of my pontificating. Hopefully you may still be interested in tapping into some classic bluegrass, which you can now access for free due to the wonders of another revolution, exemplified by the internet and YouTube. I would recommend "Sin City," Bill Monroe's "In the Pines," Flatt & Scruggs's "Foggy Mountain Breakdown," the Stanley Brothers' "Rank Stranger," Don Reno and Arthur Smith on "Feudin' Banjos," the Country Gentlemen's "Bringing Mary Home," and "Listening to the Rain" by the Osborne Brothers. All on YouTube.

RIP, J.D. Crowe and Tony Rice. You are lucky spirits whose hard as nails instrumentals and "high lonesome" harmonies still tear through the cold winter nights in Turners Falls, Massachusetts.



PLACE YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE (12 WEEK MINIMUM). CALL 863-8666!