

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 20 – NO. 15

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

FEBRUARY 24, 2022

Avian Influenza Appears In Northeastern States

By SARAH ROBERTSON

WENDELL – A highly contagious strain of avian influenza has been found in recent weeks among wild and domestic birds in 12 states and Nova Scotia, and Massachusetts officials are encouraging poultry farmers to keep their birds in enclosed spaces to slow the spread.

The H5N1 virus was detected in January in dozens of birds harvested by hunters in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia, and this month at commercial chicken and turkey farms in the Midwest.

According to the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR), the closest cases discovered so far have been in New Hampshire's southern coastal county of Rockingham, where the virus infected 20 wild mallard ducks.

Birds in Connecticut and Maine have also been affected.

"I know a lot of the commercial farms are very concerned about backyard flocks," said Anne Diemand Bucci, co-owner of Diemand Farm in Wendell. "Over the last five or ten years I've seen a lot more coolers at the end of driveways with eggs for sale."

At Diemand Farm, a threat that close means stepping up biosecurity controls and keeping a watchful eye on its flocks of chickens and turkeys for symptoms. Diemand told the Reporter that farm staff will be washing their boots before entering the chicken coop, and disallowing visitors in the enclosures.

"If it gets any closer, what we end up doing is, with any delivery truck – propane, grain, or anything – we

see **BIRD FLU** page A8

Extra Winter Road Repairs, Climate Resiliency Funded In Gov's Supplemental Budget

By JEFF SINGLETON

FRANKLIN COUNTY – Towns in the region could be receiving significant increases in state aid for road repairs, under a supplemental budget for the current fiscal year filed with the legislature last Friday by Governor Charlie Baker. The increased infrastructure spending for this fiscal year includes a 50% increase in Chapter 90 highway aid, \$100 million for a "winter recovery assistance program," and an additional \$150 million for projects under the Municipal Vulnerability program created several years ago to address the effects of climate change.

The infrastructure proposals are part of a broader bill funding a wide range of projects, including grants to special education schools

to address the impacts of COVID, support services for victims of crime, and rental assistance to low-income individuals and families. Baker's letter to the legislature stated that spending under the bill would total \$2.4 billion in supplemental appropriations, "at a net state cost of \$1.6 billion."

The Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA), which represents cities and towns on Beacon Hill, expressed its "deep appreciation" for the bill in a letter to Baker and urged its members to encourage "swift passage of this supplemental funding."

H.4479 would increase total state Chapter 90 highway aid funding from \$200 to \$300 million using funds from the state's budget

see **ROADS** page A7

AINSWORTH AT LARGE

Spring Training Report



Our roving correspondent checks in from Jupiter, where labor talks are underway.

By CHIP AINSWORTH

JUPITER, FL – All was quiet at Roger Dean Stadium in Jupiter on Tuesday, where the representatives for Major League owners and players are trying to reach a new collective bargaining agreement.

They convene in the St. Louis Cardinals clubhouse, which is beyond the right field wall. The Cardinals share the 6,871-seat stadium with the Miami Marlins, who were scheduled to host the New York Mets on Saturday.

Fans anticipated seeing their

first big league game since Houston's Yuli Gurriel grounded out to end the 2021 World Series, but all games have been canceled until March 5. MLB commissioner Rob Manfred says a deal must be reached by Monday to save the start of the regular season and Jupiter is where it will happen.

Only a handful of reporters were keeping vigil on the sidewalk outside the stadium. One of them, Chelsea Janes, covers national baseball for the Washington Post. Around the corner her photographer

see **AT LARGE** page A5

Shea Gains In-House Booking Agency

By MIKE JACKSON

TURNERS FALLS – The independent music venues that have survived two years of a pandemic are cautiously crawling out from their hiding places, hoping it is safe again to book indoor concerts after the cancellations brought by new variants in the fall and winter. Up and down the Connecticut River valley the landscape has changed, with a handful of mid-sized promotion companies settling into close relationships with a few key venues. Competition is brewing, but audiences still remain small.

At the Shea Theater in Turners Falls, a town-owned facility operated by a non-profit group, the prospect of key promoters focusing their energies elsewhere has led to a plan to expand the in-house "Shea Presents" series, along with a newly announced partnership with a Warwick-based company to book and promote those nights.

Phil Simon, owner of Simon Says Booking and Publicity, will serve officially as a "programming consultant" for the Shea; Kelly Drew, who has handled publicity for



JACKSON PHOTO

Kelly Drew (left) of Simon Says Booking joins Shea Theater Arts Center managing director Linda Tardif and president Chris "Monte" Belmonte in the box office.

Simon Says since 2017, will double as the theater's marketing director.

"It's a little bit of throwing spaghetti up against the wall and seeing what sticks," Shea Theater Arts Center (STAC) president Chris "Monte" Belmonte said of the arrangement. "This adds another level of engagement with different types of audiences."

"With the beauty and availability

of such an amazing facility, any night that doesn't have amazing programming is a shame," Simon told the Reporter. "The acoustics and sightlines are really stunning – there isn't a bad seat in the house."

Simon, who cut his teeth in the early 1990s representing bands in Oregon and moved to Massachusetts 20 years ago, said he has now

see **SHEA** page A7

SNOW SNAKE

Have Snake, Will Travel (Weather Permitting)

By CHARLOTTE MURTISHAW

BRATTLEBORO, VT – The ongoing Brattleboro Winter Carnival is studded with historic sporting events: the centennial Harris Hill Ski Jump competition last weekend, for instance, and on Sunday, February 27, the Snow Snake competition hosted by the Atowi Project and Retreat Farms.

Rich Holschuh, director of the Atowi Project, estimates that Sunday in the Meadows may be the first time in hundreds of years that snow snake is played in Abenaki Elnu homelands.

With the Snow Snake competition, which initiates a broader local effort by the Atowi Project to uplift Abenaki cultural heritage, "we're trying to build community, to teach, to bring people together, and help folks to understand there's a lot more here in terms of stories and relationships than most people are aware," Holschuh said. "To the



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ATOWI PROJECT

A player launches a snake at an event in Vermont last year.

degree we can absorb that knowledge and act upon it, this will be a better place to live."

A snow snake is a carved piece

of wood which travels along the groove of a raised track built out of snow. In the simplest form of the

see **SNOW SNAKE** page A4

High School Sports Week: Tournaments!

By MATT ROBINSON

TURNERS FALLS – The PVIAC Western Mass basketball tournament kicked off this week, the Turners Falls-Franklin Tech cheer team won first prize, and the Turners boys won their first game of the season in a very classy manner.

There were several one-sided contests in the PVIAC Western Mass basketball tournament. The Hoosac Valley girls buried Smith Academy 66-2, a score reminiscent of a recent Connecticut bloodbath. The Turners girls outclassed the Granby Rams to the tune of 47-12 in the first round of Class D contenders, but after winning that first game, Thunder traveled to the Berkshires straight into the eye of a Hurricane.

The Franklin Tech girls, who qualified for PVIAC, MIAA and Vocational tournaments had a date with the Devils this week. This Class C contest was close for one period, but the last three quarters were all Drury.

see **SPORTS** page A5



ROBINSON PHOTO

Turners Falls sophomore guard Taylor Greene moves past the Granby Rams' Sophia Gagnon on Monday. The Thunder rolled to a 47-12 victory in the PVIAC playoff game.

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All War

"Our borders were not of our own drawing," Kenyan ambassador Martin Kimani told the UN Security Council on Tuesday in a speech widely seen as a rebuke to Vladimir Putin's assertion of historic Russian claims to the Donbas.

"Today, across the border of every single African country, live our countrymen with whom we share deep historical, cultural and linguistic bonds.... We believe that all states formed from empires that have collapsed or retreated have many peoples in them yearning for integration with peoples in neighboring states. This is normal and understandable. After all, who does not want to be joined to their brethren and to make common purpose with them?"

"However, Kenya rejects such a yearning from being pursued by force. We must complete our recovery from the embers of dead empires in a way that does not plunge us back into new forms of domination and oppression. We rejected irredentism and expansionism on any basis, including racial, ethnic,

religious or cultural factors. We reject it again today."

Kimani's speech was stirring — though not without its problems. The Kenyan state, after all, has not always deferred to international law in its dealings with abutters. More troublingly, this assumes the multilateral institutions we do have are pure and effective, and impose consequences impartially.

As this issue goes to press Thursday morning, Russia has passed from a recognition of two separatist republics to a full-scale incursion and bombardment. A nuclear state on the rampage is terrifying. Markets are in panic. Much more will have happened by the time you read this.

War in Europe is not more evil than war elsewhere in the world. Russia is violation of Article 2(4) of the UN Charter — and so was the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the ongoing Saudi intervention in Yemen, and the annexation of the Golan Heights, which the US affirmed in 2019. We need multilateral institutions capable of stopping *all* war.

Walking the Talk



Green, at right, during the December 1994 convocation at the Auschwitz camp.

The first time I shared dinner with Paula and Jim in November 1994, Paula told me of her plans to coordinate the upcoming Convocation at Auschwitz, a week-long gathering of 200 Jews, Christians and Buddhists to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the liberation of that fatal camp in Poland.

"We plan to celebrate the last night of Chanukah," she told me. "Under the main entrance, with its sign 'Arbeit Macht Frei' [Work Makes You Free]."

That moment launched both a long friendship and a deep respect for Paula's work and her abilities

as a peacemaker.

Needless to say, tensions and emotions at the Convocation ran high, but Paula's expert and consistent facilitation kept us all from descending into chaos and dissension. Thanks in part to her, we left with a sense of renewed determination to heal our troubled world.

Paula was one of those rare souls who truly "Walked the Talk" of her values and convictions. She will be dearly missed by those of us who were touched by her life.

Daniel Brown
Arroyo Seco, NM



Fern Kolakoski has been the director at the Franklin County Survival Center for three years, and was a member of the board of directors since 1996. The food pantry at the Turners Falls center distributed 14,625 pounds of food in January 2022; volunteer time at the thrift store and pantry in January totaled 346 hours.

Letters to  the Editors

Remembering Paula Green

By RICHIE DAVIS

LEVERETT — "Living life to the fullest" is an aspiration for many of us, especially as we realize how truly precious life is.

Better than anyone I've ever met, Paula Green seemed to achieve that quality long before her life ended Tuesday at age 84.

After she retired, the Leverett international peace builder, educator, and dialogue facilitator could have put to rest a 25-plus year career training peacemakers around the globe in how to begin the healing process in the aftermath of violent conflict.

Trained as a psychologist, she'd already founded the Karuna Center for Peacebuilding in Amherst in 1994 and led a convocation at Auschwitz to mark the 50th anniversary of the 1945 liberation of Nazi death camps.

Through Karuna, she led multi-year interventions in dozens of the world's most intractable post-conflict areas, including Bosnia, Rwanda, Israel/Palestine, and Myanmar. Simultaneously, she began teaching graduate students from around the world at the School for International Training in Brattleboro, founding the Conflict Transformation Across Cultures (CONTACT) program to share her peace-building skills.

I began writing in *The Greenfield Recorder* about Paula's incredible efforts around the world as I interviewed her after her return from Bosnia or Palestine. I came to understand her passion in making a difference, working with opposing forces in Rwanda and South Africa to truly see each other as humans all with the same needs.

Reconciliation was the long-term goal, but discovering each other's humanity was always the critical,



Paula Green, in a 2012 file photo.

ed issues of race, class, politics, and religion, I had absolutely never felt as safely "held" as when Paula was with us, doing her life's work.

Paula also helped a group of western Massachusetts, Kentucky and South Carolina residents foster dialogue across racial lines as a "Bridge for Unity" effort in 2019.

I made sure hers was one of the "extraordinary lives" described in my recent book, *Good Will & Ice Cream*, based on the many interviews I'd had with Paula. Yet she was clearly in a league of her own, as someone whose life's work could never stop.

Just before she began suffering anew from the cancer that she'd battled 17 years ago, Paula was

powerful necessary first step.

This was living life to the fullest.

Recognized in 2009 by the Dalai Lama as an "unsung hero of compassion," Paula had just retired from her work at CONTACT and stepped down as Karuna's founding executive director when the political polarization that became evident surrounding the 2016 election made clear she needed to work in her own country.

"I had seen in so many war-torn countries where the roots of war were connected to the dehumanization of 'the other,'" Paula told me. "I had a worrying sense of the dehumanization and blame, and the aggression that comes along with that, was escalating."

I was fortunate enough to see Paula at work as she facilitated discussions between Leverett residents and their counterparts from eastern Kentucky as I covered Hands Across the Hills, just as I'd participated in CONTACT. There, I'd watched her help students from around the world recognize our own prejudices and work through the hidden cycles of violence in our midst.

In any discussion, as we confront-

working to set up a second Dialogue Across Divides training this spring for people from around the country learn to foster dialogue across divides. It's work that I've heard many critics describe cynically as doomed to failure even before it begins.

Yet as she has said, again and again, "We didn't start this exchange project to change people's votes; we did it to bridge divides and find a spirit of humanity in each other, and to acknowledge that, and to know that's in all of us. And that's the beginning of our common ground.... This is a model, an opportunity to experiment with 'how do we do this?'"

Even after her death, it's clear that Paula Green's work cannot end. More than ever, there's a desperate need for that dialogue to help people see that we're all in this together. She wouldn't have it any other way.

Richie Davis is a retired long-time reporter and editor at the Greenfield Recorder, and blogs at RichieDavis.net.

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

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LOCAL BRIEFS

formation about the school's offerings, applications, and open house registration are available at www.gcvs.org. You may contact the school at (413) 475-3879 (select option 2) or info@gcvs.org.

rian attitudes when the novel was written," which can hopefully provide discussion opportunities for moviegoing families afterwards.) Tickets and information at www.epsilonspires.org.

Compiled by NINA ROSSI

It's time to start planning for spring gardening projects. Get started with **Garden Design 101** with Mary Jo Maffei tonight, Thursday, February 24, at 7 p.m. hosted by Greenfield Public Library.

A description of the free online course says that it "takes concepts from architecture, interior design, and garden design, and shows you how to incorporate these principles into your garden. Topics include assessment, function, enclosure, third dimension, texture and shape, rhythm and repeat planting, timing and massing, color, and maintenance." For more information and to request the Zoom link, email librarian@greenfieldpublic.org.

The Brick House Community Resource Center in Turners Falls announces two **free S.T.E.M. classes for teens** 12 years and older: **Graphic Design** using Illustrator, 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. on Mondays for six weeks starting March 14, and **Python Coding**, 4 to 5 p.m. on Thursdays for 16 weeks starting March 3.

Pizza is provided, and there is a stipend upon completion of the courses. Email Megan Richardson at mrichardson@brickhousecrc.org or call (413) 800-5705 to sign up.

The Brick House and HEROES also offer **Home: An Expressive Arts Journey for Young Adults** on Tuesdays from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m., starting March 8 and ending April 22. They invite teens to "explore the many meanings of home in an intergenerational setting through

expressive arts, and create a work of art to share your story with the community."

A community presentation on Earth Day, April 22, will wrap up the workshop series.

If you want to learn more, there will be an information session at the Brick House at 24 Third Street next Thursday, March 3 at 3 p.m., or email mrichardson@brickhousecrc.org.

The National Spiritual Alliance (TNSA) in Lake Pleasant will host its next **psychic medium fair** this Saturday, February 26. To book a 25-minute personal reading with a medium, visit the reservations page at www.insausa.keepandshare.com.

All readings are for "entertainment purposes only," according to the TNSA, and cost \$30.

The **Greater Commonwealth Virtual School** has upped its enrollment to 1,200 students for the current school year. Applications for the 150 new openings for students in grades 7 through 12 are being accepted through this Friday, February 25. Applications for the 2022-23 school year are due by April 1.

The virtual school serves students from kindergarten to 12th grade. If the number of applicants exceeds capacity, students will be entered into a lottery system, with results published on the GCVS website. Families will receive an acceptance or waitlist notification within one week, with drawings every two weeks until slots are filled.

Virtual open houses will be held March 1 and March 17 at 7 p.m. In-

The Franklin County Community Meals Program is holding its third **Brown Bag Brigade** on Sunday, February 27 at the Second Congregational Church in Greenfield between 4 and 6 p.m.

The Brigade seeks to provide shelf-stable meals to patrons when community meals aren't accessible. They are asking people to assemble and decorate at least 10 brown bags full of non-perishable, shelf-stable foods, or make a monetary contribution.

Participants may share video or photos of their donations with #BBB2022 or @FCCMP. For more information, visit fccmp.org/bbb or email info@fccmp.org.

This Saturday, February 26 at 7 p.m. at Epsilon Spires in Brattleboro there will be a special screening of the **1924 silent film Peter Pan**, with live harp music by Leslie McMichael and additional special effects by Turners Falls's own Lovelights Theater – the same folks who mastermind the Children's Page in this paper, and bring us Fairy House Day on Avenue A.

McMichael has created scores on commission for silent film, animation, and dance, writing for harp, strings, and toy instruments. "It's thrilling to go on tour playing my original score live with film screenings," she says. "Pairing the visual of film with my music allows my harp playing to meld with the expressive acting so typical of the silent era – very fun!"

The silent version of *Peter Pan* was shelved by Paramount for over 80 years before being restored. It features "amazing special effects" and actors flying around. (There is also a content warning about "problematic stereotypes which reflect the Victo-

FACES & PLACES



MIKE JACKSON PHOTO

Llennyn Toomajian mixes liquids in a graduated cylinder Wednesday during a STEM workshop on forensic science at the Brick House Community Resource Center in downtown Turners Falls. The Brick House is launching two free series of after-school STEM classes next month for youth 12 and older: *Graphic Design in Illustrator*, and *Coding in Python*. See the Local Briefs column above for more details and contact information.

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SNOW SNAKE from page A1
game, players attempt to “shoot” their snake farthest along the track. More competitive environments may also incorporate more complex team and scoring elements, as well as upgraded equipment such as metal cleats.

Snow snake is a popular sport among many northern indigenous tribes, and has enjoyed a robust revival in recent generations. Recent snow snake events have ranged as close to home as northern Vermont and New Hampshire, and as far as Wisconsin and Minnesota.

In preparation for the event, the Atowi Project and Retreat Farms hosted a snow snake-making workshop last weekend. Higher-than-expected interest in the event ran up against its limited capacity; Holschuh envisions future workshops will be planned to match the enthusiasm, and hopes to use Sunday's competition to fill in the gaps.

“Interest is very strong; a lot of folks are intrigued to learn about what they were never told,” Holschuh said, about the Abenaki Elnu presence and history in the area. “This Sunday, we’ll have a little fun and talk about it.”

Those who did not get into last weekend's workshop need not sit home and weep: Participants are not expected to BYO snow snake, and

can borrow extra equipment at the event, which is free, family-friendly, and even features refreshments.

The plans are in place, the audience is eager, the snakes are made – but there's still one last hurdle in the form of weather. The rash of early-spring temperatures crashed Harris Hill's anniversary event on February 18, and if trends continue, a similar fate may be in store for Sunday's big game. Without sufficient snow or stable ice, snow snake cannot be played.

The Atowi Project Facebook page will be updated Saturday night if conditions are not amenable to the planned event. And while this week's unseasonably warm temperatures may compromise this event, regardless, the track is laid to shoot many a snow snake in winters to come.

As of press time Wednesday night, the National Weather Service predicts 5 to 8 inches of snow in Brattleboro on Friday, though ice conditions are hard to predict. The competition will take place at Retreat Farms Meadows (45 Farmhouse Square, Brattleboro, VT) on Sunday, February 27 from 12 to 3 p.m. Details may be found on the respective Atowi Project and Retreat Farms websites: atowi.org and retreatfarms.org.



Elnu Abenaki Chief Roger Longtoe Sheehan carefully sands his snow snake during last week's snow snake-making workshop.

NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

New Coordinator Inherits Federal ‘Windfall’; Discussion Turns to Underpaid Town Staff

By JOSH HEINEMANN

Town coordinator Glenn Johnson-Mussad began the Wendell selectboard's February 16 Zoom meeting by providing board members with an overview of Wendell's position with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) relief money. Massachusetts had \$5.29 billion in its local recovery fund to distribute to towns, with Wendell's share being \$262,440. Of that, \$44,000 came last June and \$85,000 came in August. The remainder will come sometime.

“Quite a windfall for the town,” said highway commission chair Phil Delorey.

Selectboard chair Dan Keller asked what the town can use the funds for. \$75,000 is committed for capping the former landfill, and \$40,000 is committed for correcting PFAS in the Swift River School water system. New Salem is taking the lead in the project of getting clean water for the shared school.

Johnson-Mussad asked whether the town keeps a central list of potential large capital expenses. Finance committee chair Doug Tanner said those expenses are mostly in the back of people's minds. Tanner was reminded by fire chief Joe Cuneo that Cuneo wants to replace Wendell's 1988 tanker truck with a newer vehicle, one less top-heavy, easier and safer to drive.

Other departments have similar wishes and needs that have been put off. The highway barn needs a new roof, especially of its south-facing half, the best south-facing roof on any town building, will be used to hold solar panels. The library and town offices need new computers.

Keller said the town should have a plan before it starts spending.

Johnson-Mussad said ARPA regulations allow a “loss of public revenue” during the pandemic as a legitimate use of ARPA funds. Considering larger municipalities, the rules allow a minimum of \$10 million below which expenses do not have to be documented, similar to the IRS's standard deduction for charitable expenses. It seems that Wendell has that money to spend.

Highway Department

Massachusetts has also allocated \$7.5 million in grants to compensate towns for repairs needed

after the July storms. Wendell will have to match funds, but can get compensated for emergency repairs the road crew made on Farley Road after those storms. Delorey said he put in a request for \$350,000 to cover those repairs.

Delorey said the headwall to a culvert near the Diemand Farm is crumbling, and restated that the culvert should be replaced and its surroundings strengthened. A three-year-old estimate for the work was \$312,000, and he thought that by now the cost could be as high as \$400,000.

The highway department has saved \$390,000 of Chapter 90 money for that work, and the engineering design is paid for and still valid. Delorey said the MassDOT computer system has been upgraded so well it is impossible to use, but that he finally spoke to “a human being!” about the project. Different sources of money may or may not be used, and it was hard to tell how the full cost would be paid. Delorey said he would like the town to put down \$100,000.

Tanner said the highway department returned \$65,000 to the town by deferring 2021 paving, and money is available in other accounts.

Delorey also brought up that he has been working 20 hours a week and more as highway commission chair, including a lot of computer work, a bit much for his \$600 a year stipend. This year he also built the new free store shed, with help, and was the town's agent for the overhaul of the police station. The job is becoming too much.

Keller said a similar situation probably exists in other departments, and the selectboard should look at other positions that are not fairly compensated, and said help like that is just up the UMass Collins Center's alley.

Selectboard member Gillian Budine said she would contact Collins Center public services manager Michael Edwards.

Wood Bank

The conservation commission approved using a town-owned property on Davis Road for a wood bank, but is still looking at other potential sites. Putting a wood bank there will not be simple, with details of access and liability for volunteers that still need attention.

Tree warden Cliff Dornbusch will be part of

a committee formed to get a functioning wood bank. Budine said she knows of a forester who moved into town, and will contact him about joining the committee.

Selectboard member Laurie DiDonato said there is a non-profit group that can help with the wood bank details, and she agreed to follow up. One virtue of the wood bank committee is that its existence will be short term.

Other Business

With the confirmation that town clerk Anna Wetherby and moderator Katie Nolan will be available, the selectboard picked Wednesday, April 6 for a special town meeting. Articles are expected to include authorizing rehab money for painting the town hall, but draws from the rehab account might not be necessary if ARPA money may be used. The warrant will have to be posted by March 23.

One bid for painting the town hall came before this meeting, and one was expected to arrive the next day, February 17; Keller said he was scheduled to meet with a third contractor at the town hall that day. DiDonato had checked with energy committee chair Nan Riebschlaeger, who approved of redirecting rehab money for the project, but it may not be necessary if ARPA money can be used. Tanner's first choice is to use ARPA money, and if that becomes an issue, money from the town's building rehabilitation account may be used, if authorized at the town meeting.

Johnson-Mussad said he was willing to help Wetherby with some town clerk chores, but that former coordinator Nancy Aldrich advised against him taking minutes for selectboard meetings, a job that interferes with participating. Wetherby has been writing selectboard minutes, but she said she “will be delighted the day they hire another person” for the job.

Johnson-Mussad suggested that the pay be changed from a salary to hourly, because some meetings are long while others are short, and some weeks have extra meetings. A change like that would become part of the personnel policy, and would need input from treasurer Carolyn Manley.

The next town newsletter is scheduled to be out April 1. Submissions are due March 15.

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AT LARGE from page A1

was getting a shot of a solitary fan leaning in at the ticket window. "A rare bird," said an onlooker.

"Got lucky," she laughed.

The stadium is located in Abacoa, a sprawling upscale community with narrow streets that wind between condominiums and shops. Cars passed slowly, the way drivers do when they're rubbernecking after a car wreck.

A stroll around the park revealed only an occasional Cardinals fan, but the team's souvenir store was open for business. A red Cardinals baseball hat cost \$42 and a "Spring Training" t-shirt cost \$39, not including Florida's seven percent sales tax.

The eye-popper was a Tommy Bahama shirt with a Cardinals logo that cost \$118. "Someone came in yesterday and bought two of them," said the shop clerk. "Once they're gone, the price on the next order is going up to \$148. Inflation, you know."

The lockout began on December 2, but daily negotiations didn't begin until Monday. Last week, long-time baseball writer Tom Verducci told SiriusXM's Chris Russo: "There is no urgency on both sides to get something done to save opening day. In 1990 there were round-the-clock negotiations."

A media room had been set up across the street where media types kept their laptops. A case of water and snacks were on a table near the door, but people preferred being outside.

I approached a diminutive fellow wearing a blue shirt with "ESPN" on it. He looked at me and said "I'm on the phone," pointing to his white earbuds.

That was the extent of our conversation. Real pleasant chap.

Janes was more sociable. She sat in a foldout chair under a palm tree close to the gate where the owners' negotiators enter and leave. Other reporters were stationed at the end of the building where the player reps enter through the Cardinals locker room.

"How will you know when there's an agreement?" I asked Janes.

"That's a really good question, probably Jeff Passan will have something," answered Janes, referring to the ESPN columnist who uses Twitter to drop his scoops.

"So this is it?" I asked her. "You're going to sit here every day until something happens?"

"Yeah," she said. "Real heavy lifting."

Chip Ainsworth, local freelancer, has pen, does travel. He lives in Northfield normally.



**Town of Leverett, MA Board of Selectmen
ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS**

Sealed Bids for the construction of the "Town of Leverett, Shutesbury Road Culvert Replacement Project" will be received by the Board of Selectmen at the Town Hall, Selectmen's Office, Leverett, MA 01054 until 2:00 p.m. local time on **March 10, 2022** at which time the Bids received will be publicly opened and read. Sealed Bids must have outer envelope marked as "Town of Leverett, Shutesbury Road Culvert Replacement Project." The work consists of removing the existing 72" corrugated metal pipe across Shutesbury Road, and replacing with a 9.5' wide by 8.0' high precast concrete open bottom culvert with a precast concrete headwall on each end. Restoration of site location and permanent paving of trench through existing road is also included. Bids shall be on a lump sum as indicated in the Bid Form.

All Bids for this project are subject to the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 30, Section 39M as amended. Bidding Documents may be obtained electronically from the Tighe & Bond website at www.tighebond.com/Projects_Out_to_Bid/ Prospective bidders must complete a one-time registration process on the web site in order to receive log-in credentials. Bidders must log in to the web site to download bidding documents for the project. Bidders will be added to the "planholders" or prospective bidders list upon downloading the bidding documents for the project. Bidding Documents may be examined and/or obtained at the office of Tighe & Bond, Inc., 53 Southampton Road, Westfield, Massachusetts between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, legal holidays excluded. A bid deposit shall be furnished in accordance with the Instructions to Bidders. A non-mandatory pre-Bid conference will be held at the site on **March 2, 2022 at 9:00 am.**

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**TOWN OF LEVERETT,
MASSACHUSETTS**

SPORTS from page A1

On the boys court, Tech shot out to an 18-0 first quarter lead over Westfield Academy, but was unable to hold on to the lead. The Turners boys also played in a lopsided contest, but coach Gary Mullins didn't run up the score - he and the Hampden coach simply emptied the benches, and let all the kids play.

Boys Basketball

Westfield Tech 59 - FCTS 52

Smith Voc 57 - FCTS 40

TFHS 53 - HCSW 18

Duggan 46 - TFHS 40

On President's Day the Westfield Technical Academy Golden Tigers came to Franklin Tech for the first round of the PVIAC non-qualifiers' after-season. There were very few spectators in the gym, but they made up for it in sheer volume. Although the Eagles ceded the height, they played aggressive ball and hit all their marks.

In the first quarter, Franklin couldn't miss, and Tyler Lafountain hit two buckets from way outside the three-point arc at the end of the period to put the Eagles up an amazing 18-0 after one complete. Though they didn't score a single point in the period, the Golden Tigers seemed relaxed, calm, and confident.

The Cats sprang back in the second quarter, and two minutes in they had halved the score to 20-10. As they gained ground, Franklin's shooters started to miss, and Westie pulled within four points by the half, 32-28.

Tech began committing fouls in the third, and West finally pulled into a 33-32 lead. The teams traded points for the remainder of the period, and with 18 seconds left, West sunk a free throw to go up 39-38.

In the fourth Westfield began hitting the long ball, while Tech accumulated fouls. With six minutes left, Westfield's lead had ballooned to 9 points, and Tech had eight fouls to the Tigers' two. Franklin

made a late game-run, but West kept hitting the outside shots, soaring to a 59-52 final score.

The Tech boys traveled to Northampton on Twos-Day (2/22/22) for a rubber match against the Voc Vikings. This game was close for the first 24 minutes, but the Vikes outscored the Eagles 19-7 in the last quarter to take the game 57-40, improving their record against Tech to 2 and 1 this season.

Also on Twos-day, the Turners Falls boys hosted the Hampden Charter School of Science West. Turners took advantage early of West's sloppy dribbling and poor passing, and their poking, prodding defense led to steal after steal.

Powertown took a commanding 15-2 lead after just six minutes, and that's when Coach Mullins sent in the reserves: the starters sat down, and five relief players entered the game. Mullins kept the second string in until midway through the second period before sending his starters back in to close out the half. At the buzzer Turners was up 33-5.

Anything can happen in high school sports, and I wasn't convinced of the victory. The Scientists scored the first seven points of the second half to make it 33-12, but Turners quickly regained their composure and closed out the third quarter leading by a healthy 42-14.

In the fourth it was all subs. Both teams emptied their benches to let the kids play, and Turners cruised to a resounding 53-18 win, their first victory of the season.

What I took away from this game was the sportsmanship from all sides. No one made distracting noises when players took foul shots, and the players from Hamp never lost their spirit, chanting "Lets Go Hampden!" until the final buzzer.

And in the fourth, with Turners up by an insurmountable margin, the Thunder backups had the chance to run up the score - they had a four-on-one, and an easy score - but they

listened to the coaches and slowed it down, swinging the ball around the circle and holding off until the shot clock was under 10. At the game's end, after Turners dribbled out the clock, the kids from Hampden stood up and clapped for both teams.

The starters scored most of Powertown's points, but the backups also put the ball in the bucket. Branden Truesdell scored 17, Alex Quezada 8, Levin Prondecki 6, Matt Crossman 5, JJ Charles and Kiri Corbin 4, Jakob Murray-Lavin 3, and Blake Pollard, Joey Mosca, and Cam Burnett 2 each.

The Boys of Thunder closed out their season on Wednesday with a close-fought 46-40 loss to John J. Duggan Academy.

Girls Basketball

Drury 52 - FCTS 28

FCTS 51 - Saint Mary 44

TFHS 47 - Granby 12

Hoosac Valley 55 - TFHS 5

The ladies from Franklin Tech traveled to North Adams on Monday for a date with the third-seeded Devils of Drury.

"Going to be a pretty difficult match-up for us," Tech coach Joe Gamache said before the game.

And it was. The Eagles managed to keep the margin to 6 after the first quarter, but only scored 2 points in the second, and went into the second half down 26-9. Drury piled on more points in the third, and though Tech managed to make up some ground in the final period, the Devils won by 24.

Tech had a balanced attack as always, with eight different players scoring points: Kaitlin Trudeau 7, Hannah Gilbert 6, Emily Ryan and Kyra Goodell 4, Emily Eastman, Jillian Crowningshield, and Christiana Dunn 2, and Lea Chapman 1.

The Lady Birds traveled down to Westfield on Wednesday and beat the St. Mary's Golden Saints, 51-44.

Franklin Tech will host Lexington's Minuteman Regional this Saturday at 4 p.m. in the semifinals of

the state Vocational tournament. If they win, they'll host the championship game on Sunday, time TBD, against the victor of the Old Colony RVT-Upper Cape Cod Tech game.

After I left the Franklin-Westfield Tech game, I headed to watch the Turners girls play Granby. The pre-game talk was that Granby has a poor record, but plays tougher teams. Another ill-boding fact was that neither of Powertown's two big ladies, Lily Spira and Morgan Dobias, were dressed for the game.

So Thunder had to use teamwork and sheer determination to defeat the Rams. Throughout the game all the Turners players spread their arms out wide, tipping and picking the passes. This aggressive play led to some early fouls, but it didn't slow down the Thunder - they made steals and wrestled away loose balls, preventing jump calls.

The closest the Rams came was at 5:32, when the score was tied at 2, but Powertown then out-hustled the Rams and soared to a 17-7 lead at mid-game.

The second half was much worse for the Bovines as Powertown used crisp passes to stymie their opponents. At one point all five girls touched the ball as they passed it down the court without dribbling once before the ball was shot in. Powertown put the game away in the third, outscoring Granby 19-2 to take an insurmountable 36-9 lead going into the final quarter.

Granby still had no answer in the fourth for Turners' handsy defense and coordinated offense, but with a few seconds left to play, they scored the last basket to make it 47-12. Turners simply dribbled the time away, and advanced in the tournament.

Surprisingly, only four Turners players accounted for all of Powertown's points: Abby Holloway (16), Madison Liimatainen (14), Taylor Greene (9), and Emily Young (8).

The Thunder Ladies traveled to Cheshire on Wednesday, to challenge the top-ranked Hoosac Valley Hurricanes. Hoosac came into the game having just beaten Smith Academy 66-2.

Last month, down in Connecticut, Sacred Heart Academy girls beat Lyman Hall 92-4. The coach was suspended, and the school apologized. According to my sources, the Smith Academy trouncing was not mean-spirited. But the announcers watching the Hoosac-Turners game on Bear Country did question why Hoosac kept in all their starters, and continued their full-court press when the game was no longer in doubt.

Turners matched the 'Canes at the beginning, tying it at 2 and then 5, but Hoosac then went on a scoring frenzy and Turners was down 18-8 after the first period. The second quarter was all Hoosac, as they kept Powertown from scoring any points at all.

Turners did score the first basket of the second half, but weren't able to keep pace, and when the final buzzer sounded they were on the losing end of a 55-15 shellacking. Again, four girls scored in this one: Liimatainen and Greene (5), Young (3), and Morgan Dobias (2).

The loss knocked the Blue Ladies out of the PVIAC playoffs, but they will play on in the MIAA statewide tournament.

Cheer

As I entered Monday's Thunder-Rams game, I was greeted by Kaitlyn Miner. "They won first place!" she announced. When I spoke to coach Sarah Underwood, she confirmed that the Turners cheerleaders took first place in their latest competition, and will contribute at least two more trophies to the school's display case.

"We have two more competitions this weekend," Underwood said. "That is, if they're not canceled by the storm."



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

– William Carlos Williams

edited by Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno
Readers are invited to send poems to the
Montague Reporter at: 177 Avenue A
Turners Falls, MA 01376
or to: poetry@montaguereporter.org

February Poetry Page

Sugaring

Maple has milked our last summers,
let her nurse you back to when
we ran free at the lakeshore
and you never wondered how much food
our cabinets could hold.

That night my son grabs both my hands
armwoven. They tell us, mothering,
we will never know endings
last time to turn back blankets,
heal the broken, bandaid shallow cuts,

place a lost tooth under the pillow
mark eight weeks on the calendar,
my daughter tells me she feels
safe in our sugarbush,
sap still a mystery,

where color happens
how flavor arrives,
subtle, heavy, toffee bright
heat, the long boil, freeze, thaw
above all, time.

– Katherine Hagopian Berry

Sunrise

A cloud's parabolic arc
latches onto the son's glowing globe
and lifts it above the horizon.
It is this daily pulling that raises us
from the night of cares
and smog of our souls.
It is this march of an hour
into the clear air, freshly awakened,
that calls like the coo of a baby,
a blue breeze that sings
its way through our garden.

– Rodger Martin

Vacation Poem

Briefly this afternoon
I forgot that I existed.
In a sunlit cove I did not witness the shoreline
as much as I became it.
The rocks were quietly talking, the ocean
was polishing what it could touch with its caresses.
A plover ran on tiny feet after the crabs.
The water from last night's rain
trickling through roots and moss,
finding its way, as all water does
to the sea.

So it was a surprise
to find I had hands;
feet that made the rocks groan
and windblown hair that teased
the back of a neck
which turned out to be mine.

In the moment of my remembrance
I was struck with the certainty
that if I lived, so someday I must tackle the process of dying.
It seemed like such a bother
to spend any time at all in an anxiety of future loss.

It seemed simpler to be rainwater, the shoreline,
the crabs inching away from the plover,
the stones turning gently into sand.

– Katherine Journey

Witness Relocation

Everything euthanized iced white
until the slowstart sun
puts a shine on her best crystal
lays a tablecloth skybaby blue on the
snowyfields a silent meditation
levitating you through the window
taking you out of yourself
returning you somewhere
deeperinside sun rising higher
pulling your cozy desire up like
flannel overalls teasing you away
from allneedsdoin' this silent fire
trying its best to seduce and you
let it give yourself to it all in
the only witness after all

*The kitchen fluorescence
flickers and flirts
a slow buzz swarming*

– Candace Curran

Don't Forgive the Dam

To hold still in the current
is not to be cured is only to
accept the effort of suspension
a salmon treading water
in the moving stream

Nor should the river or the fish
love the dam and why would
the water-buried village forget
the once open doorways of churches
their stained glass windows gone
dark pressed upon by deeper dark

Under the town clock's long hands
turning like milfoil weed
the drowned streets of the heart
invite no one to meet and kiss
No you don't forgive the dam

But neither do you blame the lake
that grew against it
that shoulders its given
load and holds up the injured
children who come to float on it
innocent above flooded farms

At water's edge the exposed rocks
stay warm to the touch
of the sun long after nightfall

– Alice B. Fogel

Contributors' Notes

CORRECTION: We got it wrong last month in a way we deeply regret. We inadvertently attributed Robert Eugene Perry's wonderful poem "26 seconds" to "Richard" Eugene Perry. Apologies to Robert.

SPECIAL NOTE: These poets are all reading in the Authors and Artists Festival, February 26 and 27, 2022. Visit www.nature-culture.net/authors-artists-festival to register for this free online festival. Katherine Hagopian Berry, Candace Curran, Alice B. Fogel, and Rodger Martin are also included in the 2021 volume edited by Lis McLoughlin, *Writing the Land: Northeast* (Wendell, MA: Human Error Publishing), an anthology of 11 land trusts and 40 poets who wrote poems inspired by their adopted lands. See writingtheland.org.

Katherine Journey studied poetry with Mary Jo Salter and Brad Leithauser at Mount Holyoke College. Like all great English Literature majors, Katherine now works in IT. She lives in a cohousing community in central Massachusetts with her husband and three cats.

Katherine Hagopian Berry (she/her) has appeared in the *Café Review*, *Feral*, and *Writing the Land*, among other places. Her first collection, *Mast Year*, was published in 2020. She is a poetry reader for the *Maine Review*.

Rodger Martin has published four books. He is a New Hampshire poet, editor and journalist. He has worked with land trusts in New Hampshire and Maine. He has a new book of poetry with calligrapher Zi Chuan in both English and Mandarin due out in 2022.

Alice B. Fogel was New Hampshire's poet laureate from 2014 to 2019. Her latest collection is *Nothing But*, poems on Abstract Expressionism and its effect on our consciousness. Recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship, she is also the author of *Strange Terrain*, on how to appreciate poetry even if you don't "get" it. "Don't Forgive the Dam" was previously published in *Cold Mountain Review*.

Candace Curran, twice named Western MA Poet's Seat laureate, is co-founder and organizer of collaborative word-and-image multimedia exhibitions including INTERFACE I-X and Exploded View. Publications include *Bone Cages* and *Playing in Wrecks* (Haley's Press), and journals and anthologies: *Raw NerVZ*, *Meat For Tea*, *Silkworm*, and *Compass Roads*.

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ROADS from page A1

surplus for this fiscal year. Assuming that the Chapter 90 funding formula is applied across the board, this would mean an increase of up to 50% in local aid for eligible highway projects. Montague highway superintendent Tom Bergeron estimated that this could mean an increase in state aid to his town of approximately \$244,000.

Chapter 90 aid is distributed to towns according to a formula which considers road mileage, population, and the level of employment. Using the current fiscal year's levels of aid to estimate the impact of the increase, Gill would receive an additional \$73,550, Erving \$42,603, Wendell \$93,603, and Leverett \$74,439. The city of Greenfield would receive \$315,723 more this year.

The MMA, noting that Chapter 90 has been virtually frozen for a decade, has argued in recent years for an increase to \$300 million annually, but Baker's proposal is an emergency measure. "We look forward to partnering with you and the legislature for a permanent increase in Chapter 90 to the \$300 million level," MMA director Geoff Beckwith wrote to Baker this week.

Within local cities and towns, Chapter 90 funds are typically not part of the regular budget process, as approved at town meeting. In Montague the account is



A warning sign on Wendell's Jennison Road.

often used to make emergency repairs, or to provide required matching funds for new grant applications.

Baker's proposed bill allocates \$150 million to the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) grants, a program adopted in 2017 to provide "support for cities and towns in Massachusetts to identify climate hazards, assess vulnerabilities, and develop action plans to improve resilience to climate change" in the words of state's Climate Change Clearinghouse website (resilientma.org).

The allocation appears to be funding a wide range of approved projects already in the state pipeline, which are listed in Baker's bill. These include \$100,000 for a "solar panel and battery installation" for municipal buildings in Wendell, \$300,000 for a similar project in Whately, and \$1 million for a "community resilience hub" in Northampton.

The bill also contains a \$900,000 earmark "to remove a dam as part of the Osgood Brook Restoration project in the town of Wendell."

According to Montague town administrator Steve Ellis, the project to address perennial flooding on Montague City Road has already been funded under an earlier MVP grant round, and is ready to go out to bid.

The third infrastructure allocation under the supplemental budget is a separate \$100 million to "help municipalities repair roads from winter damage," though according to the MMA these funds may also be used for "repair or replacement of traffic control devices, signage, guardrail, storm grates, road striping, or painting."

This is listed as a grant program, but the *Reporter* could find no clear criteria to apply for or issuing grants. In 2013 the state implemented a similar "pothole program" after a particularly snowy winter, but that appropriation utilized the Chapter 90 formula for distribution.

"I had the same question," said Ellis when asked how towns could apply for the winter emergency aid.

"It's a little murky," Gill town administrator Ray Purington agreed.



SHEA from page A1

booked "somewhere between 20 and 30,000 shows" on behalf of artists, and "well over a thousand" working for venues in New Hampshire, Connecticut, Missouri, and elsewhere.

Former programming coordinator Emma Ayres, leaving for graduate school, recommended STAC pursue a working relationship with Simon Says, according to Belmonte.

Simon Says's roster skews toward improvisational jam bands, reggae, and Americana, as well as tribute bands – three nights the company has booked at the Shea in April will feature acts covering the Talking Heads, Pink Floyd, and The Band respectively.

"I'm very honored to be ushering in a new age of live music in my old town," said Simon, adding that when he lived on Fifth Street between 2003 and 2005, "there really weren't any live music options in Turners."

Drew, a Greenfield native who informed the *Reporter* that she has seen Rush 71 times in concert, said working for Simon Says has been a "dream job," and expressed joy at being able to work again after a pandemic layoff.

"It's been really interesting to see this place get cool, because growing up it was not cool," Drew said. "I had this conversation with myself on the plane ride home from the last show [Rush] ever did: 'Okay, Kelly, you're moving back to Greenfield to stay. Why do you want to live here?' And then I was like, 'Oh my God, there's such a vibrant music scene in the area!'"

"People are understanding, as a result of what they missed and what they weren't able to do, how much they enjoyed witnessing the creation of music and art directly in front of them," said Simon. "Many people derive their greatest meaning, in their lifestyle or in their lives, through the gathering and the enjoyment of live music."

Scaling Up

The two organizations have agreed to book a handful of Shea Presents shows each month during the spring, and then evaluate whether audiences are returning to pre-pandemic levels.

Managing director Linda Tardif said STAC will continue to rent the theater to existing promoters – Signature Sounds, DSP Shows, and Pioneer Valley Jazz Shares all have shows booked in March or April, and the hope is that Laudable Productions will also return – and to work with groups on the "community level" for theater and more eclectic offerings.

"I come from a theater background myself," Tardif explained. "I always have in my mind the hope we can get enough regular programming that sustains the [Shea], so that we can take continued leaps into having shows which I say, lovingly, 'don't always bring in the big bucks.'"

As of press time, the Shea calendar shows an event this Saturday – an installment of *Cinemastorm*, a series of free cult-movie double features – followed in March by two Jazz Shares events, a weekend run of a youth production of *The Phantom of the Opera*, and then two Shea Presents events, the roots-rock Adam Ezra Group and an all-Saturday festival focusing on Americana acts.

April's schedule includes Amy Helm, daughter of The Band member Levon Helm, booked by Signature Sounds; Seventies singer-songwriter Janis Ian, booked by DSP Shows; and the three tribute bands.

According to Simon, the expectation is to eventually scale up activity to ensure the venue is in use between 100 and 200 nights a year.

"As one person, you can only do so much," said Tardif. "We hunkered down, and now it looks like we can come out of it bigger than before."

Stretching Out

The theater was originally built

in 1927 by Dennis Shea, then owner of the adjacent Colle Opera House. It was purchased by the Renaissance Community religious group in 1973, and in 1986 became the property of the town of Montague. Local fundraising and a \$1 million state grant supported its renovation, and in 1990 the town began renting it to a non-profit operator, Shea Community Theater, Inc., for a dollar a year.

Over the next quarter-century the theater was used mainly by a number of community theater groups, but by the mid-2010s the non-profit's capacity began to flag, and the town announced in 2014 it would be issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the renewal of the ten-year contract. Board members criticized the RFP's conditions, and the organization announced it would not be submitting a proposal.

Belmonte, a Turners Falls resident who worked as a program director and morning show host at 93.9 FM The River and whose children participated in Young Shakespeare Players productions at the Shea, helped assemble a new organization, recruiting Signature Sounds owner Jim Olsen, who had already been booking concerts at the venue. STAC submitted the only response to the RFP, and was awarded the contract to operate the Shea in 2015.

The group's stated vision was to make the venue a "dynamic center for the performing arts," offering "diverse, creative programming – from punk rock to poetry slams."

"These two people come with myriad connections that the people here currently don't have," Belmonte said of Simon and Drew's entry to the Shea organization.

One of the new ideas on the table is to book country music acts.

"It is our aim to bring people into the theater that haven't had opportunity elsewhere," Simon told the *Reporter*. "Country music is a very popular genre of music in Western Mass for which fans have nowhere to go,

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LOOKING BACK:

10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here's the way it was on February 23, 2012: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

Warren Wows 'Em

The air was full of expectancy. Elizabeth Warren, the Cambridge Democrat mounting a challenge to incumbent US senator Scott Brown (R), entered the Arts Block Café on Friday, February 17, from her tour of downtown Greenfield with mayor Bill Martin, and set off a tumult of applause and cheers.

She plunged into the midst of the packed, standing-room-only crowd, shaking hands and greeting people one by one.

Here was the consummate consumer finance advocate, the Harvard prof who challenged Treasury secretary Tim Geithner's policies on banking practices. Turned down to head the new Consumer Finance Protection Bureau after spearheading its creation, Warren came back home to Massachusetts last year and soon plunged into the race for the Senate seat long held by Ted Kennedy, which the Dems ceded to Scott Brown in an off-year election after a lackluster campaign by Martha Coakley in 2010.

Warren was introduced by Franklin County sheriff Chris Donelan, who concluded his remarks by saying, "It seldom happens in politics that you have a chance to correct a mistake. We have that chance with Elizabeth Warren."

Montague: Wage Study Proposed Over Pay Concerns

Workers in town departments are dissatisfied with their levels of compensation after several years of budget tightening. In response to several complaints throughout town departments, the selectboard on Tuesday agreed to have a special town meeting in late March or early April in order to vote on funding for a wage and classification study.

Staffing and wage cutbacks since the recession began have challenged town departments, and "each department has a good case they can make" for more staff or better compensation, said selectboard chair Mark Fairbrother.

Selectboard member Pat Allen emphasized that having the big picture to "get context" would be critical for the town to make the best choices possible given continued budget constraints.

so we'll be looking at doing that, and we're hoping to expand into ethnic music... the Shea is going to be your home for underrepresented music."

"There's two pop country radio stations within like a 20-mile radius, and another one 40 miles down the road," said Belmonte. "There's no good reason why we shouldn't be inviting that audience in just because I come from a '93.9 The River' perspective."

"And I hate jam bands," he added. "That's on the record. But who am I to say, 'we're not gonna book any jam bands because Monte hates the Grateful Dead'? Phil's got his finger on that pulse, and I think it's perfect."

Drew, after clarifying that Rush was not a jam band, said that she has "learned a lot about the Grateful Dead" during her time working at Simon Says, where she has

provided publicity for jammers bands such as Max Creek and the Englishtown Project, Neil Young tribute group Sugar Mountain, and the Skatalites, a legacy band touring with one original member of the mid-'60s ska pioneers.

"Pandemic or not, Americans are ready to enjoy live music in public again," said Simon. "A variety of societal changes is resulting in people's desire to enjoy live music for the sake of the live music, less so about alcohol consumption, seeing and being seen, or dating...."

"The pivot and adjustment that artists and the entire industry had to take was really quite extensive, and it gave me a lot of pride to see what our clients and our peers in the industry were able to achieve in the most difficult times.

"Thankfully, 2022 feels a bit more rosy."



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BIRD FLU from page A1

will mix up a solution and spray it on their tires,” Diemand said. “We’ve done that in the past, but we’re not at that point where we’re doing that yet.”

The avian flu is a naturally occurring virus, but highly contagious strains have evolved in recent decades that can have a devastating impact on chickens, turkeys, ducks, and other birds. According to the CDC, avian flu infections in people are rare, but prolonged exposure to birds can lead to infections in humans, which are often fatal.

The last major outbreak in the United States, a seven-month span beginning in December 2014, was predominantly caused by the virus’s H5N2 strain. During that time more than 50 million chickens and turkeys in 21 states either died of the disease, or were culled to stop the spread.

According to a study by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the loss represented 12% of the egg-laying chickens in the United States and 8% of turkeys raised for meat. The price of turkey meat saw a modest increase, and egg prices spiked, then fell in late 2015 as demand was met by increased imports.

Diemand said her family has never had to cull a flock due to the avian flu. “We’ve been very fortunate – once your farm gets it, the government usually comes in and depopulates, because it’s so easily transferred,” she said. “The first time I remember being aware of it was in the ‘70s, and then every few years it seems like it pops up again closer to us.”

The farm canceled its annual easter egg hunt during the 2015 outbreak, and has not held it since. “We would have like 700 people come for easter egg hunt,” she said. “[Avian influenza] came too close for comfort, so the Department of Ag said cancel it.”

On February 10 MDAR announced that a “highly pathogenic avian influenza” had been detected in a commercial turkey flock in Indiana and in wild birds in the Southeast; five days later, the agency announced the virus had been detected in the wild ducks in New Hampshire, domestic birds in Virginia, and commercial poultry in Kentucky. So far over 118,000 turkeys have been euthanized in southern Indiana to stop the spread of the virus, as well as 12,000 turkeys on a farm in western Nova Scotia.

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Last week Maine’s Animal Health Division announced that “non-commercial backyard birds” (non-poultry) in Knox County were infected with H5N1; on Wednesday the state announced that it had reached a similar flock nearby.

According to Diemand, there are currently 1,200 laying hens at the Mormon Hollow Road farm, but no turkeys yet. She plans to drive to Canada on Friday in her Hyundai Tucson to pick up around 400 fledgling turkeys – in Lancaster, over 800 miles away from the Nova Scotia outbreak.

State and federal officials advise farmers to keep their flocks out of contact with wild birds, particularly waterfowl, as they tend to be the vectors of the viral disease, though they don’t present symptoms as severely as birds raised in close quarters by humans. The coming spring migrations may compound the threat; the 2015 outbreak peaked in April and May.

“Although many strains of avian influenza can cause varying degrees of illness... this particular outbreak has generally caused birds to die without any other signs of illness,”

the Massachusetts state website reads. Chickens or turkeys infected with avian flu can die within hours of infection, or show symptoms including lethargy, decreased egg production, swelling of the head or eyes, or mucus discharge.

The USDA administers a program to compensate flock owners for any animals euthanized as part of the avian flu control effort. According to Diemand, farmers have an incentive to catch the illness early, as they cannot be compensated for birds that die of the disease.

“The Department of Agriculture do come in, and they do take over, which is a drag, but it will stop it from spreading,” she said. “The sooner that you contact the folks that will help figure it out, the sooner you will get compensated.”

The state website advises “owners of fancy or exotic birds” to keep receipts and sales records in order to record their value. MDAR is urging anyone with backyard birds or commercial flocks to check for symptoms, and immediately report anything resembling avian flu to its Division of Animal Health at (617) 626-1795.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

More Than Just One Month

GREENFIELD – The Communities that Care Coalition (CTC) will be celebrating Black Excellence through two events during Black History Month, and continuing that celebration 365 days of the year.

CTC community engagement and programs associate Keyedrya Jacobs has been working closely with students at several Franklin County and North Quabbin schools to create posters celebrating Black Excellence in the form of music, art, fashion, and politics. Each school’s representation will be posted on the **Greenfield Commons** from February 18 through the end of the month, for the community to walk up and experience them in an outdoor gallery.

This Friday, February 25, Greenfield Community Television (GCTV) hosts a **Performance Project First Generation** screening and panel. First Generation brings together young adults ages 15 to 22 who self-identify as “first generation” for artistic training, leadership development, and inter-

generational mentoring. Forming an artistic ensemble, First Generation members create original, multi-lingual physical theater performances based on their life experiences, conversations, and discoveries with a focus on social justice. This compilation of their work centers around the school-to-prison pipeline. At 5 p.m. on February 25, GCTV will air the film on Channel 15, Facebook Live, and YouTube, followed by a conversation panel with First Generation alumni.

Project Black History 365 is a concept that implements the teaching of Black history as an all-year-round topic. Keyedrya Jacobs and other CTC staff will be working with local youth to identify ways to do this and to share among schools and community groups. For more information, contact Jacobs at kjacobs@frcog.org or (413) 800-2138.

CTC has also been celebrating Black Excellence on its website at communitiesthatcarecoalition.com/news-updates/.

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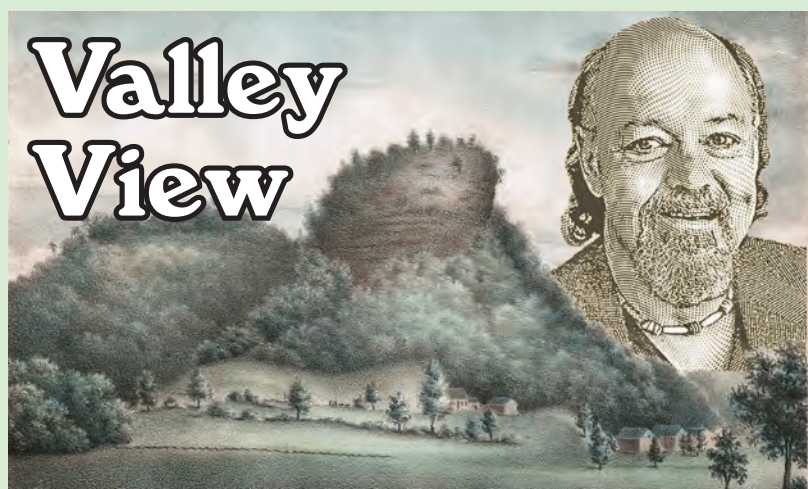
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FEBRUARY 24, 2022

Above: More ice, more rivers – this time Barton Cove, taken from Riverside by reader Suzette Snow-Cobb.

Valley View



ORRA WHITE HITCHCOCK PRINT

By GARY SANDERSON

GREENFIELD – We’ve all heard the old adage proclaiming a picture’s worth 1,000 words – in some cases, an understatement, like, for instance, the example I’m about to share.

A quick glance at an online postcard depicting a streetscape with old jalopies in mid-1950s downtown South Deerfield was all it took to unleash in me a flood of fond childhood memories. The black-and-white image appeared on one of my daily spins through eBay. It showed a brand spanking new Professional Pharmacy standing on the corner of North Main and Elm. Built in 1952 by downtown landlord Paul Georgiole, it was a low-budget replacement for the stately Bloody Brook Inn, destroyed by an overnight fire on March 14, 1951.

The sight of that intimately familiar building and the bulbous old cars harkening back to my mother’s green 1953 Chevy sedan really stirred my imaginative juices, sweeping me back to a childhood of bicycles, skates and skis, snow forts, mountain hideouts, nickel packs of Topps baseball cards, and double-scoop ice cream cones for a dime. We enjoyed a brand of small-town freedom that’s unfortunately unavailable to children today. Sad but true. I’m thankful to have been there to experience it before parental paranoia clenched its stifling grip on foot-free childhood freedom.

The photo postcard was shot from the mouth of South Main Street across the downtown four-corners, looking north toward Conway Road on the left. The corner pharmacy luncheonette door is

open for business. Route 116 was soon to be rerouted around the outskirts of town as Routes 5 & 10 had been five or six years earlier.

Back then, the main highway from Amherst to Conway still went right through the center of town, passing the east side of the common to a right-angle turn past the Grammar School and over the railroad bridge spanning Bloody Brook. That bridge has been closed for some 50 years, the school demolished some 30 years ago.

For some reason, the internal image that first came to mind looking at that streetscape was a fun-loving downtown character named Mike Rura standing at the corner politicking as a 1960 candidate for State Representative. I will never forget the summer day my father decided to have some fun with Rura, a teammate from the Greenfield Lions semi-pro football team. Our Chevy station wagon’s windows were rolled down as we approached the four-corners stop sign from the north. When my dad spotted the candidate working the sidewalk, shaking hands and passing out political pamphlets and bumper stickers to passersby, he deepened his voice and yelled a hearty “Boorah for Rura.”

My brother and I thought it a hoot, and of course the catchy phrase was immediately imprinted. Rura just looked up, immediately recognized the source, flashed a warm smile and waved with a mittful of political paraphernalia. Little did he know that he had acquired new young fans from whom he could expect to be needled with that playful Bronx cheer for the rest of his downtown campaign. From that see **VALLEY VIEW** page B3



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Professional Pharmacy in South Deerfield.

OSCARS PREVIEW

Remaking *Dune* (Denis Villeneuve, 2021)

By W. KAIZEN

AMHERST – We live in an age of remakes. It’s been more than a decade since critics began logging justified complaints about corporate greed and the sheepishness of an entertainment industry that continually rehashes old stories rather than investing in new ones. With profitability as their main concern, big-budget movie producers continue to refuse to take chances on new IP. We’re on what? The third *Spider-Man* reboot in as many decades?

It comes as no surprise that *Dune* – the popular sci-fi story first penned by Frank Herbert in 1965 and first made into a film by David Lynch in 1984 – would get the remake treatment, with Denis Villeneuve of *Blade Runner 2049* directing. What is surprising is how many Oscars the new *Dune* was recently nominated for. That’s ten (!) for those who are counting, including for Best Picture.

Herbert’s tale is set on the desert planet Arrakis, which is where vast caches of spice – a thinly veiled analog for oil, necessary for interplanetary travel – are found. “He who controls the spice, controls the universe,” says Baron Harkonnen,



Timothée Chalamet stars as Paul Atreides in the 2021 remake of *Dune*.

the story’s big bad guy. The book centers on the young prince Paul Atreides as he leads a rebellion against Harkonnen and the intergalactic emperor backing him.

The original *Dune* movie had a difficult gestation. In the wake of the success of Stanley Kubrick’s *2001: A Space Odyssey*, Herbert’s book was optioned by Alejandro Jodorowsky. Jodorowsky was infamous for his first two movies, *El Topo* and *Holy Mountain*, which quickly became favorites of the midnight movie circuit.

Jodorowsky, who re-imagined *Dune* as a psychedelic ecological allegory, assembled a team of

young hotshots to help him realize his vision, including French comic book artist Moebius (née Jean Giraud), American special effects wizard Dan O’Bannon, and Swiss artist H.R. Giger. He put his own pre-teen son, who was to play Paul, through months of six-hour-a-day martial arts training. Through charm and guile, he somehow convinced Mick Jagger, Orson Welles, and Salvador Dali to star in it.

Jodorowsky and his team spent over a year putting together a film treatment that they bound into a massive book. After shopping it around to movie studios, alas, see **DUNE** page B2

Adopt Ziggy! (Just Kidding...)

By LEE WICKS

MONTAGUE CENTER – My imaginary ad would read: Looking for his forever home, Ziggy is a sweet and curious 93-pound Great Pyrenees puppy, so happy to meet new people that he knocks them off their feet. When he stands on his hind legs with his paws on your shoulders, he can look you in the eye. He will then want to kiss you. Don’t let him; he eats his own poop. His gorgeous white coat needs constant brushing, and since he contracted giardia, his hind end needs frequent washing.

No problem: Ziggy loves water, so much so that he drinks from the small lake that has overtaken our yard since heavy rain fell on frozen ground. The standing water is contaminated with giardia, so Ziggy is re-infecting himself daily.

His new home should have a dry and sunny yard. Be aware that he will defend that yard, which will need a five-foot fence. He will bark at sounds you cannot hear, and things you cannot see. (He was relentless one day last week, and then I learned that my neighbor had two bobcats in her driveway. Good job Ziggy.)

Potential adopters ought to know that Ziggy is a thief. Leave an oven mitt on the counter or a dish towel or a sponge, and he will steal it faster than you can react. He will bring it to “his” sofa and shred it and eat the pieces. He will snap and growl if you attempt to take it away.

You can try to bribe him with something of equal or greater value. If you have some steak around, you might retrieve the towel before he swallows it and gets a blockage that requires surgery.

Pet health insurance is recommended for Ziggy’s new family.

He likes wood, and he’s eating our house, inside and



WICKS PHOTO

The Great Pyrenees puppy greets his veterinarian.

out. We thought it was teething and he’d grow out of it, but now it’s become a habit. Ziggy gnaws on window sills, baseboards, and trim. He chews carpets and curtains. Our family room is currently stripped of things Ziggy will shred, like throw pillows, wall hangings, and the aforementioned rug and curtains.

If we found another home for Ziggy, we’d have the window sills and baseboards fixed and fill the hole in the floor. Yes, he ate some of the floor. It was a slightly rotted patch of wood right by the door where snow melt had

see **ZIGGY** page B6

Pet of the Week



DAKIN HUMANE SOCIETY PHOTO

“BILLY”

Billy is a gentle, friendly dog who you can take anywhere. If having a dog who's into hugs and belly rubs is on your “must have” list, Billy is your guy. He adores people and is good with kids as well as adults, but has not lived with other pets. Billy is house trained and will also use pee pads.

Sadly, his guardian passed away, so he's here to brighten up someone else's day. He can be your sunshine until spring arrives.

Billy will have some trouble walking for the rest of his life, but he is an energetic little dog who doesn't let anything stop him from enjoying life.

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.

DUNE from page B1

no one trusted Jodorowsky to direct, and the project was ultimately purchased by Dino DeLaurentiis, who hired David Lynch. (The whole of this drama is recounted in the 2013 documentary *Jodorowsky's Dune*, which is every bit as good as either of the actual *Dune* movies.)

At the time, Lynch was also a far from obvious choice. Although he was coming off the success of *The Elephant Man*, his only other film to date was *Eraserhead*, another indie favorite as strange as anything directed by Jodorowsky. DeLaurentiis tied his fledgling director to a short leash and kept the right to make the final cut for himself.

When Lynch turned in a version that was too long, DeLaurentiis had the film edited to a more audience-friendly length, although this made Herbert's already complex tale of interplanetary political intrigue even harder to follow. Critics hated the movie. Intended as *Star Wars* for adults, Lynch's film was too weird for reviewers like Siskel and Ebert, who panned it.

Nevertheless, Lynch's *Dune* became a cult favorite, beloved by a core fanbase despite – or because of – its cheesy special effects and high melodrama. It's long been a staple at my house. I've seen it multiple times on DVD, though I must admit I usually fall asleep while watching it and finish it off on a subsequent evening. I've come to think of its soporific, albeit nightmarish, quality as one of the most appealing things about it.

Lynch uses a variety of dream-like techniques. Whispered voice-overs capturing the recurring internal dialog found in Herbert's book are as prevalent as spoken dialog. Visionary hallucinations abound, including one that takes us into the womb of Paul's pregnant mother Jessica. A laughably creepy alien looks like an enormous, half-rotten Mr. Peanut floating in a jar fogged with spice gas.

None of these are found in the new *Dune*. Instead, we get high-end CG and a planet that looks like its buildings were designed by Louis Kahn, which is not a bad tradeoff. The new *Dune* looks much better than the original, whose sets often seemed made from leftovers of some long-lost D.W. Griffith spectacular painted black. Its brutalist production design (another of the film's Oscar-nominated categories) ideally conjures the architecture of Herbert's desert planet.

Otherwise, the movies are more similar than different. Half an hour into the new *Dune*, I began to wonder why they bothered to make a new one.

One reason, and one of the main reasons behind all reboots, is that the largely teen and twenty-something moviegoing audience likes to see people of their own age on screen. Current heartthrob Timothée Chalamet

plays the lead role of Paul.

Both films focus on Paul and Jessica's relationship. Chalamet plays Paul as a moody Young Werther given to petulance and self-doubt, whereas Kyle MacLachlan played the previous version of Paul with square-jawed authority.

Rebecca Ferguson is excellent in the new *Dune* as Paul's mother Jessica, although she's also got big boots to fill – Francesca Annis played Jessica in Lynch's *Dune* with high-camp aplomb, sporting the most amazing hairstyling of any Hollywood movie ever. Ferguson plays Jessica far straighter, evincing real care for Paul, whom she protects with believably passionate intensity as he slowly grows into a world-conquering hero.

But here's the rub. Paul is also known as “Kwisatz Haderach,” or the chosen one destined to liberate the Fremen people native to Arrakis. While the previous *Dune* had an all-white (or nearly all-white) cast, the new *Dune* portrays the Fremen entirely as people of color, making Paul yet another great white savior of a nation of non-white people.

Villeneuve's *Dune* hews closely to Herbert's book, where the Fremen's association with people of Arab descent is clear. Herbert based his book on the life of T.E. Lawrence, a.k.a. Lawrence of Arabia, the British soldier who became famously entangled in the Arab uprisings against the Ottoman Empire in the early part of the 20th century. The 1963 film *Lawrence of Arabia* starring Peter O'Toole was a touchstone for both Herbert and the new *Dune*.

In the wake of Black Lives Matter, it seems a misstep for the film to rehash what now seems to be such a tired, if not offensive, trope. There are parts of the story that resonate with recent events, such as the idea of an invading foreign power getting bogged down in a desert conflict with determined, well-armed rebels. Having a white prince step in to save them is out of touch with both the prevailing sentiment of our time and the need for new stories.

While Lynch's *Dune* packed the whole of Herbert's book into a single film, the new one is just part one. Perhaps the film will swerve in its next installment, as Herbert does in *Dune* sequels like *Dune Messiah*, where Paul's despotism hubristically leads to interplanetary genocide.

The story of a wannabe savior turned despot does have contemporary resonance, as do desert battles for much-needed resources on an ecologically damaged planet. I'm eagerly awaiting *Dune* part two, which is scheduled to be released on October 23, 2022, to see how things turn out.



Senior Center Activities

FEBRUARY 28 TO MARCH 4

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 2/28

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

Tuesday 3/1

12 p.m. Tuesday Morning Knitters
1 p.m. Chair Yoga
3 p.m. Tai Chi

Wednesday 3/2

9 a.m. Veterans' Agent Hours
10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise

Thursday 3/3

1 p.m. Bingo
4 p.m. Mat Yoga
10:30 a.m. Brown Bag

1 p.m. Cards & Games

Friday 3/4

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 snacks daily. 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.

Monday 2/28

Closed (Presidents Day)

Tuesday 3/1

9 a.m. Good for YOU
10 a.m. Line Dancing
11 a.m. Strength & Conditioning
12:30 p.m. Bingo

Thursday 3/3

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

Friday 3/4

9 a.m. Open Sew Quilting

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.



Surviving Breast Cancer

By Julie Cunningham

Part 19: What a Difference a Year Makes

AMHERST – A year can make all the difference.

Today I took my son to a trampoline park in Holyoke called Altitude. It's a great place to go to let him run around and play with other kids. Today was a bit crowded, but Hunter didn't notice or seem to mind. He ran around for a solid hour and a half with what looked like 50 other kids, jumping on the trampolines and playing in the foam pits.

I sat on the side, talking to other parents and keeping a watchful eye. Most of the parents were sitting on a black bench in the middle of the park, where you could see most of the activities without having to move much. Some of the dads got onto the trampoline with the kids, but it was so crowded they couldn't jump around much. The girls were doing back flips and cartwheels on the trampoline, and at one point, a dodgeball game started. Workers in yellow shirts walked around keeping an eye on things.

Suddenly, while sitting there, I remembered coming to this same trampoline park last year late April

or early May, about three to five weeks into my chemo. I remember it was after chemo had started because it was one of the first times I was wearing a wig, and I remember feeling self-conscious about how it looked and being overwhelmingly tired.

I remember how the hour dragged. How I sat on the other side of the park away from the other parents because I felt like they wouldn't accept me with my new wig that I thought looked obviously fake. I remember I had my lashes and my eyebrows still, and I wasn't even thinking at that point that they would fall out. It was enough, at that point, not to have hair.

It was also fairly early on in the process, because I hadn't figured out how to cut the wig caps so they didn't hurt, how to wear a hat so it covered the hairline and kept the wig in place, and I was still trying to keep some normalcy. Later, I would be so tired an outing to the mall like that was out of the question entirely.

Compared to last year, this was a walk in the park. I wore my hair

in a hairband, because it's still short but is growing back. The hairband looks a little immature, but it doesn't stand out like a wig does. My hair is real, and I don't feel that the other parents won't respond positively to me making polite conversation.

I'm not tired. I did purchase a diet soda at one point because I was thirsty, but I wasn't counting every minute trying not to fall asleep. In the back of my mind, I was looking forward to getting lunch, instead of wondering how long I could reasonably last and realizing it had only been ten minutes.

Hunter was different, too. Last year he was scared, clinging to me, and not really making friends with the other kids. This year he was active, running around, and I couldn't keep him with me. He was having a great time climbing and jumping and playing. Last year he seemed scared, this year he seemed free. Last year I was hopeful and scared, because I was still looking forward to 12 weeks of chemo and a surgery.

This year I'm grateful. The surgery and the chemo are behind me. It's such a different feeling this year, only focusing on watching my kid and not thinking about the cancer still living in my body. I do hope some day in the near future aggressive cancer care isn't dehumanizing. I hope we treat people without taking away these simple moments that really make life worth living.

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VALLEY VIEW from page B1

point forward, every time we caught him politicking downtown, we'd give him an enthusiastic "Boorah for Rura," which he took in stride.

Only 7 at the time, I had not yet gained untethered freedom to ride my bike around town, but my friends, brother, and I had pedaled through downtown often enough to have pasted Rura bumper stickers on our bikes. We'd speed noisily past Rura, baseball cards of hated New York Yankees like Micky Mantle, Roger Maris, Whitey Ford, Bobby Richardson and Elston Howard clothes-pinned through our spokes for a motor-like sound effect, and holler "Boorah for Rura." The faster we pumped, the louder the sound from our spokes.

Rura lost the election but remained part of the downtown fabric for more than two decades, by which time we all had driver's licenses and free-run downtown spirit. As a good friend of devilish pharmacist Billy Rotkiewicz, who ended up across the street at his own Frontier Pharmacy, Rura often found his way to that establishment's small, hidden room behind the drugstore counter and shelves watching a ballgame or preparing for a Saturday dump run in the pharmacy's old truck secreted out back.

Rura's final act in town turned out to be an act of open defiance of a selectmen's order to clean up his North Main Street property out past the Dry Bridge. Most but not all found it comical. But let's return to that later, after I'm done discussing boyhood memories stirred by that postcard, Rura's campaign only the first of many.

Brought to light in that photo were the old downtown homes nestled between Conway Road and the corner of Elm. I remember two homes there, both torn down to make room for the South Deerfield branch of Greenfield Savings Bank. One was the old Leary place, snuggled up to the pharmacy building parking lot north of the attached Suzatek's Market, then the larger Artemas Williams place on the corner of Conway Road.

Was there in my lifetime a third dwelling standing there, as shown on 1858 Walling and 1871 Beers maps? It doesn't seem so. Not in my recollection, anyway. But I wouldn't rule it out. Such insignificant details wouldn't have been important to a wayward smalltown boy following the Tom Sawyer/Huck Finn tradition.

The eBay postcard photo background isn't clear, even when enlarged, but it sure does appear to squeeze in three buildings with their gabled ends facing the road. Maybe not. I'd have to see a contemporaneous photo from across the street. That would solve the vexing mystery, which must for now remain unsolved. Does it really matter?

The postcard unveils my home-

town embarking upon a new era, one leading faraway travelers around downtown instead of through the heart. As a result, bustling hotels like the Bloody Brook Inn that burned in 1951 and the Lathrop Hotel, which met the same fate in 1875, could no longer cash in at the downtown intersection of southern Franklin County's two busiest highways.

Perhaps that's why Georgiole didn't construct another large hotel at a profitable site, dating back at least to an old-time tavern known as the "Russell Place" in the 1830s. The site became even more lucrative for innkeeping after the railroad came through town in 1846, igniting the glory years of downtown South Deerfield. By the 1950s, it was time to reinvent the downtown business district under a more local paradigm that was mined for gold by Rotkiewicz for decades.

Which brings us back to Mike Rura's much-publicized spat with the Town of Deerfield. The bone of contention was his family home and unkempt yard at the north end of North Main. I think it all started when selectmen ordered him to "spruce up" his property around the time of the 1973 Tricentennial Celebration.

Feeling unjustly targeted and singled out, Rura responded with open defiance by inviting friends and neighbors to dispose of their Christmas trees on his property. As the blue-spruce mess piled deeper and the selectmen grew angrier, the dispute found its way into the newspapers, and Rura became even more stubborn. It was his property, he argued, and he'd do with it as he pleased. Then he claimed to be creating a wildlife refuge in the spirit of conservation.

The dispute remained active and unresolved for years, turning uglier as it endured. Eventually, perhaps to the selectmen's delight, the house went up in flames during the wee hours, burning beyond repair. If I can trust my memory, in the days before homelessness became common Rura met his accelerated end as a Deerfield resident living out of his car.

Today, the old Rura lot stands vacant, and few who pass it on their daily rounds likely know the story, or even that a home stood there not that long ago. I think the town ultimately seized the property and removed what was left of the buildings.

So, in the end, affable old Mike Rura of large and eccentric stature didn't fare any better in his high-profile dispute with the town than he had in his lone political foray. Simply stated, he lost both battles - now just water over the dam, the memories washed to a distant sea. Not yet totally forgotten, I thought I'd briefly resurrect the man who absorbed our childhood "Boorah for Rura" chants with warm aplomb and a friendly smile in the hell-raising town that buried him.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Frozen Turkey; Donuts; Night Prowler; New Hose; Third Shift Bares Tunes; Black Pickup Menaces

Monday, 2/14

8:03 a.m. Report of a turkey frozen to the ice on Ross Avenue. Provided with the number for MassWildlife.

11:03 a.m. 911 call reporting two-vehicle accident on Montague City Road. No injuries reported.

5:14 p.m. Caller requesting to speak to an officer regarding a dumpster that is blocking the Third Street alleyway so that an emergency vehicle would not be able to get through. Second caller, property owner on Third Street, said he is receiving complaints regarding the dumpster. Advised of options.

9:35 p.m. Caller reporting a black pickup truck was doing donuts in the four-way intersection at East Main Street. Vehicle is now gone, but caller suspects that it will be back. Referred to an officer.

Tuesday, 2/15
3:16 p.m. Caller from First Avenue reports that his housemate's vehicle had the gas stolen out of it overnight. Referred to an officer.

5:19 p.m. Caller who had flagged down an officer earlier regarding a male party taking pictures of his property now advises that the party is on Montague City Road on a bicycle. Officer made contact with involved party; advised him of the complaint and told him to get permission to take pictures of people's property.

8:17 p.m. Caller from Third Street reporting that her downstairs neighbor slammed his door really hard. No other noises or any argument heard. Referred to an officer.

Wednesday 2/16
9:38 a.m. Checking on a vehicle that has been sitting in the Aubuchon Hardware lot for several days. Family member of registered owner is working on getting the car moved and will keep MPD updated.

4:07 p.m. 911 caller states that the downstairs tenant has her son staying with her and there has been a lot of yelling and screaming. Caller states the mom just took off and the son was yelling at her that he would get someone to kill

her. Caller states son is not on lease and shouldn't be on the premises, especially when his mom is not there. Caller feeling very uncomfortable at this time. All quiet upon arrival. Caller advised of options.

5:36 p.m. Caller states her car was just struck by an FRTA bus when trying to make a turn at Unity and Chestnut streets. Officer advising there is a traffic hazard. Citation issued.

Thursday, 2/17
1:41 a.m. 911 caller from Randall Road reports she can hear noises and a "prowler" outside her residence. Caller states she did not see what the individual looked like but could hear plenty of noise. Area search negative.

3:27 a.m. Greenfield PD requesting a check of a Third Street address for a female party. GPD states they took a call from the boyfriend of the involved female, who messaged him that she was currently being held at gunpoint at an address in Greenfield. GPD advises they checked that location with negative contact. Involved female has an address in our town. Officers advise they went to the residence; no answer at door; all lights are off. GPD advised.

7:44 p.m. Caller from Ferry Road states that there is some sort of work crew with spotlights shining into his window using a chainsaw to cut down trees. Officer advised. Fire department was trying out a new hose; will move angle of spotlight.

9:23 p.m. Caller states they are playing loud music at Hillside Plastics again. Officer advised; will call company and advise of complaint.

Friday, 2/18
1:07 a.m. Caller states that a vehicle is pulled over in a pull-off just up Federal Street with music playing loudly. Caller states this has been going on for about thirty minutes. Caller called back stating that a pickup came and both vehicles left, so the music has stopped.

5:45 a.m. Walk-in requesting to speak with an officer about an incident that happened in Springfield while working as an Uber driver. Party advised to contact Springfield Detective Bureau to make an official report.

7:44 a.m. Caller states that there is a large tree branch in the roadway near the bridge on North Leverett Road. Branch removed by officer.

10:20 a.m. Caller states that there appears to be major flooding alongside a house on Turners Falls

Road due to an overflowing brook. DPW foreman notified.

10:51 a.m. Caller from Federal Street states that there is a large tree on the retaining wall across the street from his house that is cracked and looks like it may fall into his house if it breaks. Officers confirm the tree is a hazard; it is totally broken and looks like it will fall into a transformer and then into the road if it breaks. MassDOT contacted and on scene. Two detail officer taking over for patrol officers.

4:29 p.m. 911 caller reporting two-vehicle accident on J Street. Second call advises that an involved party reports he had head and neck injuries. Both vehicles towed; both parties transported to hospital.

4:56 p.m. Caller from Turnpike Road reports that someone let the air out of one of her tires last night. Referred to an officer.

Saturday, 2/19
2:33 a.m. Caller reports that her sister took her vehicle from the residence without permission and has crashed the vehicle somewhere in Heath. Caller advises she is unsure of the exact location of the crash and her sister's cell phone is dead. Caller transferred to Shelburne Control. Caller called back and advised her sister is currently at a residence in Colrain. MSP called to inquire what charges will be pursued; at this time, Use Without Authority; other offenses pending; caller has not filled out any paperwork yet. MSP advises they are out on the scene with the female and are still looking for the vehicle. MSP called back and stated vehicle is totaled.

6 a.m. Off-duty firefighter reports a disabled vehicle in the middle of the Turners Falls Road bridge blocking the roadway completely. Officer advises vehicle will need a tow; requesting Greenfield PD block traffic off at the top of the hill. Officer later advised road could open back up.

1:34 p.m. Officers requesting DPW start treating the roads in town due to ice and snow. DPW supervisor notified.

3:54 p.m. Following a motor vehicle stop at Fifth and Canal streets, a citation was issued for operating a vehicle with a suspended license.

4:42 p.m. Officer conducting motor vehicle stop on Third Street near Canal. Summons issued for operating a vehicle with a revoked registration;

uninsured motor vehicle; and unregistered motor vehicle. Vehicle towed.

6:21 p.m. Caller reporting that she turned onto Swamp Road from Federal Street and a black mid-sized pickup truck that was very dirty and had no lights on did the same, in front of her, then pulled over and then immediately pulled out behind her and was following closely, then the truck was next to her, then behind her again and then next to her again then pulled in front of her, slammed on the brakes, then sped up then put the truck in reverse then forward then sped away and the caller did not see the direction of travel after that. Caller did not get a look at the plate as the truck was very dirty. Caller is now home but wanted to report the incident.

7:05 p.m. Caller reporting that she hit the chain link fence and the wooden fence at Unity Park with her vehicle. Inexperienced operator, pulled out of the Unity parking lot near the skate park too fast, lost control then swerved to the right through the park fence about 10 feet, knocking over the park's wooden fence marker. Damage to both headlights and bumper. Vehicle towed.

9:38 p.m. Copied over radio; TFFD toned out for a fire visible in the area of East Main Street. Shelburne Control spoke to the caller further and he states that it might be the moon that he is seeing. Officer advises that there doesn't appear to be any fire anywhere.

Sunday, 2/20
4:49 a.m. Caller reports hearing loud noises and a "boom-box" type of thumping coming from Hillside Plastics; states it is disturbing his sleep and the noise has been consistent all night. Officer checked area and spoke to staff on scene. No music noise noted outside; however, machine noises were active, and inside the building some faint music could be heard. Caller advised of options.

3:23 p.m. Caller from Third Street reporting that her downstairs neighbor slammed his door. No yelling or other disturbance observed. Referred to an officer.

6:30 p.m. Caller reports that a dog who lives on Fifth Street was tied up on the front porch and the lead was long enough to reach the sidewalk, and the dog attacked her and her dog. Neither was bitten. Ongoing issue. Call left for animal control officer.

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22222

What Does it Mean?

Angel number 22222 want you to stop blaming yourself for the mistakes you've done in the past. If you think that whatever has happened with you is because of your decisions and wrong choices, it's not right.

**#45: 2/22/22
IN MUSIC**

By **J. BURKETT** and **TROY CURRY**

TURNERS FALLS – This is a very different column from us today! Instead of our normal interview or review, we decided to celebrate some of the great music/musicians of the last 22 years. So here we go... hopefully some of you decide to check out a few of these great bands and releases!

22 Great and Overlooked Albums of the 2000s:

1. Lau Nau, *Kuutarha*. Quiet Finnish folk.
2. Id M Theftable, *Clean Houses Exude Fear*. Experimental insanity, with a beat.
3. Corsano/Flaherty Duo, *Last Eyes*. Cool free jazz; check them both out soon at the 10 Forward club in Greenfield!
4. Electric Dawn, *self-titled*. Heavy solo rock from the singer of Shrinners.
5. Ed Yazizian, *Six Ways to Avoid the Evil Eye*. Mystical, instrumental.
6. SOP, *Only Jesus Can Make Me*. Catchy, weird electronics.
7. Mouse Sluts, *self-titled*. Out there with Dan Melchior, Lambkin, and Letha.
8. Robert Turman, *Beyond Painting*. Electronic experimental.
9. Bridge Of Flowers, *A Soft Day's Night*. Cool local rock.
10. Beverly Ketch, *The Apple Race*. Magical songs from the singer of Bunwinkies, and the editor of this newspaper's Children's Page.
11. Bill Fay, *Still Some Light*. Half new songs and half old, from a UK hero.
12. Ma Turner, *Zoz*. THEE magic solo music from the Warmer Milks guy.
13. Sunburned Hand of the Man, *No Magic Man*. Psych collective, still going!
14. The Cherry Blossoms, *Mystery Meet*. Fun Southern rock insanity.
15. Bunwinkies, *Map of Our New Constellations*. Dreamy psych rock.
16. Ten Gallon Hat, *Pass the Hat*. Country-fueled improv rock.
17. Crystalline Roses, *One Man Cult*. Psych, folk, old timey.
18. Vanishing DMC, *self-titled*. Flaming Dragons-related rock.
19. Allysen Callery, *The Song the Songbird Sings*. Quiet folk with angelic vocals.
20. Peter Stampfel, *Peter Stampfel's 20th Century in 100 Songs*. He covers songs from each year of the 1900s in his unique folksy style!
21. Dredd Foole, *Songs to Despond You*. More from the modern-day free jazz Tim Buckley.
22. Clive Palmer, *Sands of Time*. Some last recordings by the ISB folk hero.

222 Overlooked Bands and Musicians of the 2000s:

There's a lot of cool stuff out there!

Shrinners. BOBB TRIMBLE. Allysen Callery. VANISHING DMC. Staubitz & Waterhouse. VIEWER PROJECT. Mazozma. WEEPING BONG BAND. Angela Sawyer. DAN MELCHIOR. Pete Nolan Family Band. LAMINATED APES. Elodie. MAJOR STARS. Frozen Corn. BELLTONESUICIDE. Stella Kola (Beverly Ketch and Rob Thomas). VOM GRILL. Warmer Milks. MAIL MYSELF TO THOREAU. Gracious Calamity. MOZZALEUM. Michael Chapman. ALTO JEFFRO. Susan Alcorn. ID M THEFTABLE. Bill Fay. LONG JOHN. Herb Diamante. ADOLF DOVE. Noah Wall. MATT ROBIDOUX. Mary Lattimore. MOUSE SLUTS. Couscous Bizarre. KNIGHT HOWLS. Dredd Foole.

KUUPUU. Social Drift. SHIRLEY COLLINS. Flaming Dragons of Middle Earth. TUCKER ZIMMERMAN. Wet Tuna. DOT WIGGINS. Federico Balducci. SAMARA LUBELSKI. Enhet För Fri Musik. MOOSE. Michael Yonkers. APIE. Lil Howlin Wolf. BOB FAY. Wizz Jones. KATH BLOOM/TOM HARTFORD. Bridge of Flowers. POLICE KITTENS. Sunburned Hand of the Man. RUTH GARBUS. Wes Buckley. BASEBALL CAMP NURSE. Arkm Foam. METAL MOUNTAINS. Jon Collin. VILLAGE OF SPACES. Kevin Dunn. SAM GAS CAN. Bunwinkies. STEAM ROLLERS, Uncle Bobby. BIG BLOOD. Peter Stampfel. LAU NAU. Glenn Jones. FRANKLINS MINT.

Sound Of Pot. HORA FLORA. Human d'Scent. FRANK HURRICANE. Delphine Dora. OWEN MAERCKS. Hung Trucker. ESTEY ORGAN PROJECT. Tom Kovacevic. CHALAUQUE. Reiko and Tori Kudo. HOLGER CZUKAY. Suzuki Junzo. ANGST HASE PFEFER NASE. Tetuzi Akiyama. SCHURT KWITTERS. Tom Recchion. SHEA MOWATT. Daniel Gay. STRAPPING FIELD HANDS. Alastair Galbraith. KAREN ZANES. The Trio. ALVARIUS B. Duronco Gumo. JOE MCPHEE. Michael Hurley. JACK ROSE. Charalambides. SONIC YOUTH. Wayne Rogers Band. GARY HIGGINS. Frost Giant. CLIVE PALMER. Smegma. PLASTIC CRIME-WAVE. Extended Organ.

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ANTHONY PASQUAROSA. Mik Quantius. ED YAZIJIAN. Raymond Dijkstra. HIROMI. Timo Van Luijk. DOUBLE LEOPARDS. Robert Turman. METALUX. Zebu. REYNOLDS. Robert Millis. 10 GALLON HAT. Leigh Gregory. WENDY EISENBERG. Unworried Birds of Some Sort. CYCLES INSIDE. Sarah Louise. CHERRY BLOSSOMS. Aaron Dilloway. OWEN MANURE. Sci-Fi Sam. HYPNOTIZING CHICKENS. PG Six. RALPH WHITE. Aaron Rosenblum. LIZ DU-RETTE. Brompt Treb. BILL NACE. Kelho. WOVOKA. Taurpis Tula. CLIPPINGS. Machine Gun. VOM-IR. Zoots Houston. GASTRIC LAVAGE.

**Montague Community Television News
Blazing Local Cable**

By **HANNAH BROOKMAN**

TURNERS FALLS – There is a new Montague finance committee meeting to view on the MCTV Vimeo page, as well as “Blazing Brass,” a concert performed by the New York Staff Band of the Salvation Army.

All MCTV videos are available on our Vimeo page, which can be found linked to the website, *montaguetv.org*, under the tab “Videos.” All community members are welcome to submit their videos to be aired on Channel 17, as well as featured on the Vimeo page.

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

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

A Letter to the World 2

Last week, I introduced you to the soul sustaining “Bestie Gnome,” created and baked in the oven from Sculpey Clay at 275 degrees for fifteen minutes. Emerging at 13 inches high, and with a one-of-a-kind smile, I invite you to accompany her as she travels to outdoor spaces we love. Do you recognize any of these locations?

**Jan Atamian
Lake Pleasant**

Answers, and more destinations, in upcoming issues!



4



5

PHOTOS AND GNOME BY JAN ATAMIAN

Last week's locations:

- 1: Leverett Pond
- 2: Emily Dickinson House, Amherst
- 3: Lake Pleasant

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24

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

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Bluegrass and Beyond*. 9 p.m.

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

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

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

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Cinemastorm*, movie double feature: *Street fight night*. Free. 7:30 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Zydeco Connection, The Bourbon Street Blasters*. \$ 7 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Professor Caveman, Valley Gals, Phroeggs*. \$ 8 p.m.

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

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

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

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

Bishop's Lounge, Northampton:

Workman Song, Snowhaus, Melatonin. \$ 10 p.m.

TUESDAY, MARCH 1

Academy of Music, Northampton: *Ladysmith Black Mambazo*. \$ 8 p.m.

Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: *Lucy Dacus*. \$ 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 3

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Corsano/Baldwin/Gelineau trio, Clear Falls, Meginsky/Tonne duo*. \$ 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *The Songs of Dolly Parton* feat *Kris Delmhorst, Zara Bode, Tracy Grammer* and more. \$ 7 p.m.

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

FRIDAY, MARCH 4

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Corsano/Flaherty Duo, Stella Silbert, Wednesday Knudsen, DJ 45 HZ*. \$ 8 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Sasami, Zulu, Dutch Experts*. \$ 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, MARCH 5

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Michael Musillami Trio*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Babe-hoven, Melatonin, EIEIEIO*. \$ 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Lich King, Stone Cutters, Toxic*

Ruin. \$ 8:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, MARCH 6

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Spectre Flux, Death Spiral, Chris Wardlaw, Disease Garden*. \$ 6:30 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: Animated movie screening, *Grendel* (1981), with a short by local animators *Opertura* preceding. \$ 6 p.m.

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

TUESDAY, MARCH 8

Treehouse Brewing, Deerfield: *Warren Haynes*. \$ 7 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9

Treehouse Brewing, Deerfield: *Warren Haynes*. \$ 7 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 10

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *James Brandon Lewis Trio*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

Palladium, Worcester: *Dark Star Orchestra*. \$ 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 11

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Patch Productions presents *The Phantom of the Opera*. \$ 7 p.m.

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

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

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

SATURDAY, MARCH 12

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Patch Productions presents *The Phantom of the Opera*. \$ 3 and 7 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Black Nash, The Musical Chairs, Goldsetter*. \$ 8 p.m.

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

Daily Operation, Easthampton: *Armand Hammer*. \$ 8:30 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.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16

Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: *Sheer Mag, Landowner, Topsy*. \$ 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 18

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Kaleta & Super Yamba Band*. \$ 8 p.m.

Academy of Music, Northampton: *The Psychedelic Furs, Royston Langford*. \$ 8 p.m.

Nova Arts, Keene: *Vapors of Morphine, Jordan Holtz*. \$ 7 p.m.

SATURDAY, MARCH 19

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Mud Season*, festival feat. *Young and Old, Dave Bulley Band,*

Love Crumbs, Cloudbelly, Eric Lee, more. \$ 11:30 a.m.

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

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

SUNDAY, MARCH 20

Four Star Farms, Northfield: *Rosie Porter and the Neon Moons*. 3 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Megan Burtt*. 9 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 24

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Adam Ezra Group*. \$ 8 p.m.

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

FRIDAY, MARCH 25

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

SATURDAY, MARCH 26

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *The Wailers, Roots of Creation*. \$ 8 p.m.

Treehouse Brewing, Deerfield: *M. Ward*. \$ 7 p.m.

Hutghi's at the Nook, Westfield: *One Master, Ritual Clearing, Subterranean Rites*. \$ 8 p.m.

TUESDAY, MARCH 29

Palladium, Worcester: *Obituary, Gruesome, 200 Stab Wounds*. \$ 7 p.m.



JOEL PAXTON ILLUSTRATION

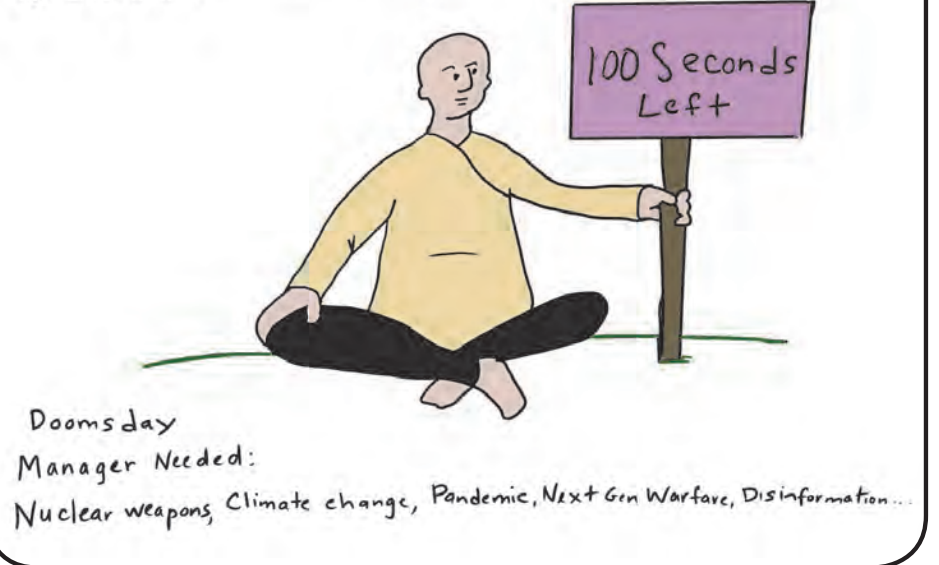
OVER THE HILL

Carolyn Clark



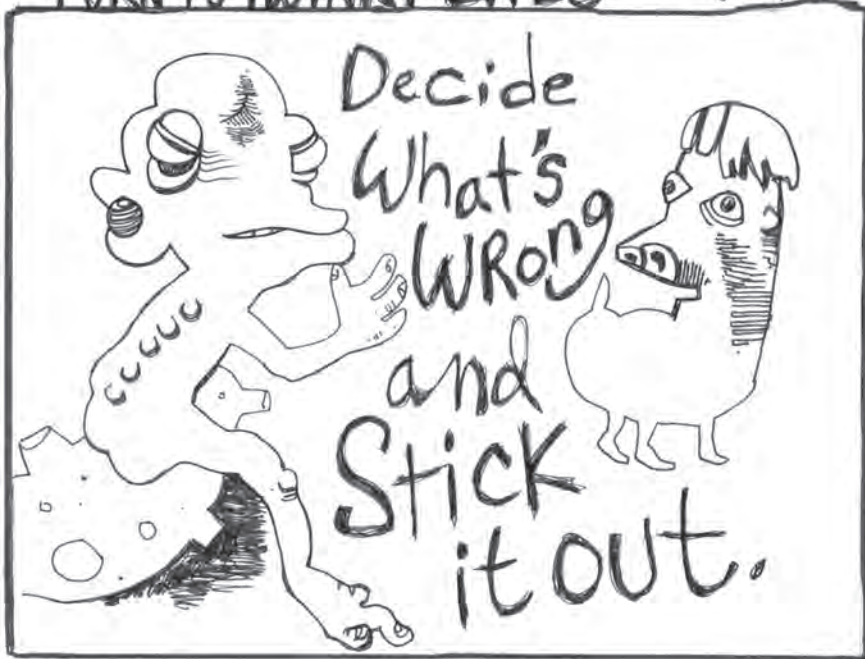
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TV GUIDES

Twists & Turns in *Superman & Lois*

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – I believe TV writers like to have twists and turns in their stories. Some of them are quite a twist, and very cool. The CW's *Superman & Lois* is a great example of that. The show's very first story was about a Lex Luthor from another Earth.

Superman always seems to have a Luthor in his story, and this show isn't without one, but this one appears to be good. It turns out that he is actually a man named John Henry Irons, and he comes from another Earth where Superman is evil – he is trying to stop this show's Superman because he thinks he is going to turn evil. It's not a bad first twist for this show to have.

The next twist they have involves the character of Morgan Edge. This villain is indeed up to something, but it turns out he's a Kryptonian – in fact, he's Superman's half-brother!

Both of these twists lead to very nice episodes of *Superman & Lois*. They probably also helped the show get a second season. John Henry Irons is still around for the second season, so that is one reason the it will be good.

The show's latest twist appeared again to be something else at first – it looked like Doomsday was go-

ing to show up. I know from the comics that he kills Superman. But it turns out to be the character Bizarro, who is a Frankenstein-like clone of Superman.

I have seen Bizarro plots done a couple of times in other Superman-related TV shows. One of them was in the *Supergirl* series on CW, where Bizarro was a pale-faced Supergirl. The other appeared in a handful of episodes on CW's Superman prequel called *Smallville*.

Smallville's was a practically perfect clone of Clark Kent – in one of the episodes where this Bizarro appeared, it wasn't revealed that he was Bizarro until the end, that's how perfect a clone it was of Clark Kent. Nobody knew that or could tell that.

It's basically the same way with the Bizarro in *Superman & Lois* – it's a perfect clone of Superman, and the way it's shown to be Bizarro is literally a reveal. Superman has to fight this creature wearing armor, so we only get a little glimpse of what he looks like – and when we see what it looks like without it, he looks just like Superman. My favorite twist so far with this show has been actually someone else, but I think this Bizarro twist is going to be really something to watch on this show.

ZIGGY from page B1

seeped in. He removed that soft wood and left a neat pile of sawdust.

I'm trying to be grateful that Ziggy removed that moist patch of wood before termites moved in. Now it must be patched before mice discover the hole, but we can't get any work done on the house while Ziggy is here, and he can't go anywhere until he recovers from giardia. Alas.

If Ziggy went to live with another family, we'd sand and repaint the damaged baseboards and window sills on the outside of the house and replace the clapboards he's chewed. I'd hang the curtains and replace the rug and put plants on low tables.

Then we'd sit in our too neat and quiet house and miss him. We'd fill in the huge holes he dug in the yard and cry when we found the bones and toys he hid. We'd donate his leashes and collars to the local shelter with a profound feeling of loss.

We'd be without a dog for the first time in our thirty-two-year marriage and we'd struggle to find meaning in all that freedom. There's no trip or weekend getaway that can take the place of daily dog love.

Yes, in spite of everything, we love Ziggy. It's not rational and sometimes I wonder if this is what an abusive relationship looks like.

He has almond-shaped black eyes and white eyelashes, a huge head, and big clumsy feet. He enjoys a scrambled egg in the morning and politely watches while I cook it. He sleeps on his back with his tongue hanging out. He raises his huge Pyr paw and asks to have his belly rubbed. He tests my patience until I'm in tears, then sits and stares, as if there was a text bubble over his head that read, *I'm sorry you are feeling sad; is there anything I can do to help?* He puts himself to sleep around eight each night. When I wake up in the morning, I can't wait to see him.

So, Ziggy Wicks Rosenblatt isn't going anywhere soon. He isn't going anywhere at all. At nine months, he is part toddler, part teenager. He's filled with energy; he gets overtired and starts looking for trouble. Ignore him and he begins to chew some part of the house, or he cries. He's pitiful, and we are not good



WICKS PHOTO

Ziggy Wicks Rosenblatt of Montague Center specializes in home deconstruction.

at waiting him out. We are too soft-hearted to be good trainers, and probably too old for this challenge.

But we've made it this far. Since we brought him home in July, we've been through housebreaking, a case of kennel cough, a poisoning scare when he ate some toxic plants (we dug them out of the yard), a misdiagnosis of mites, and now giardia.

We've let go of our yard. It's his yard now. That's okay, when it's hot and buggy out, we have little use for it.

The house repairs will get done sometime. Part of me is appalled at the destruction, another part says, let it go – it's just stuff. It can be fixed, unlike our broken hearts if we rehomed him.

I'd worry about Ziggy every day and imagine a terrible life in which one family after another gave up on him, until he lived alone and unloved, caged in some shelter. That image is worse than anything he's done.

I think. Ask me tomorrow.



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