

# The Montague Reporter

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

NOVEMBER 17, 2022

## Details of Farren Condition Emerge During Hearing

By BRIAN ZAYATZ

**MONTAGUE CITY** – The Montague historical commission held a hearing Wednesday night to consider a preservation determination for the Farren Care Center in Montague City under the recently-adopted demolition delay bylaw, in response to a request from owner Trinity Health of New England for a permit to demolish the complex.

The meeting, held at town hall and over Zoom, ended after two hours with a decision to continue the hearing after three weeks, in order to allow Trinity time to provide further documentation of the complex’s condition and of the company’s attempts to find a purchaser.

The long-term care center, originally a hospital, closed in early 2021 after Trinity moved its residents to a Holyoke nursing home, and has been vacant since then. Last fall



*Former staff said pumps must constantly run to remove water from the building’s oldest section, built before the nearby canal.*

the company announced a plan to demolish it and donate the cleared land to the town of Montague.

While this proposal has received support from the selectboard, town planner, and town administrator, some preservation and housing advocates have argued that attempts should be made to rehabilitate the structure. In May town meeting

see **FARREN** page A4

## Town Officials Eye Publicly Sponsoring Fall Festival

By JEFF SINGLETON

The agenda for the Montague selectboard’s November 14 meeting included a surprise item about a “possible continuation of The Great Falls Fest,” the well-attended October event which is being discontinued by its chief organizer, former selectboard member Michael Nelson.

Parks and recreation director Jon Dobosz told the board that when he heard that the fall festival was ending, his first thought was that “people are going to come to parks and recreation wanting us to take over the event, [but] it’s not going to happen – and if anybody calls the office, we’re not going to do it. There is no way we can do it.”

But one day apparently created a dramatic transformation in Dobosz’s thinking, as he then told his assistant Jennifer Peterson that “if we get the right people involved... I think we can probably pull this off, but on a much, much smaller scale.”

Selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz said he and town administrator Steve Ellis had “a bite to eat” with Nelson several weeks ago to understand “the logistics, and what it was that he did” to organize the festival.

see **MONTAGUE** page A7

## Leverett Polls Its Seniors, Brainstorms More Activities

By GEORGE BRACE

At their Tuesday meeting, Leverett’s selectboard heard the results of a survey on aging conducted last winter as part of the Age-Friendly Communities Initiative led by the social service agency LifePath. Representatives from the town Council on Aging, LifePath, and the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) were on hand to provide an initial summary of the survey’s findings, and talk about improving services and opportunities for seniors.

The community needs survey was filled out by people 50 and older and their caregivers in 11 Franklin County and North Quabbin towns last January. Town clerk Lisa Stratford highlighted the aging of Leverett’s population, saying that she had seen town hall data indicating that 621 out of Leverett’s 850 households included someone in this category.

The survey asked questions about housing, transportation, employment, communication, health services including telehealth, outdoor spaces and buildings, civic participation, respect, and social isolation.

Council on Aging chair Fay Zipkowitz identified three “takeaways”

see **LEVERETT** page A5

## Housing Developer, Coop Unveil Big Plan for Wilson’s



*The city circulated this artist’s rendering of the building with a restored façade.*

By MIKE JACKSON

**GREENFIELD** – “Wilson’s has long been an anchor in our downtown, and its closure certainly left us with a gap,” Greenfield mayor Roxann Wedegartner told the developers, reporters, press flacks, organizational liaisons, and members of her own office packed into an upstairs meeting room at city hall Wednesday afternoon. “The city could not let

this property remain vacant, and sought to work with any parties that wanted to go along with our vision for a livable, walkable, shoppable downtown.”

The family-owned department store, its history stretching back into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, closed its doors in January 2020. Before it had even finished up its final liquidation sales, it became public knowledge that a neighboring business

see **WILSON’S** page A2

## Greenfield Armory Bought By Deerfield Businessman

By MIKE JACKSON

**GREENFIELD** – The undisclosed winning bidder at a September 28 auction in which the Commonwealth of Massachusetts divested itself of the historic Greenfield Armory property appears to have been Mark Valone of Deerfield, owner of a dozen businesses whose focuses range from furniture to industrial real estate to cannabis.

Ownership of the Armory transferred yesterday from the state Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance to 67 Hope Street LLC, an entity created by Valone five days after the auction with the exclusive purpose of acquiring and managing the property.

The building, constructed in



*The historic armory sold at auction in September, but the buyer was until now undisclosed.*

1910 for the Massachusetts Volunteer Militia, has enjoyed a range of uses including as a military recruitment station, a shelter for those displaced by the 1936 flood, and a venue for concerts –

see **ARMORY** page A5

## LEARNING FEELINGS



*A grant to support social and emotional learning allowed Hillcrest Elementary School to install this new vending machine, which rewards students with books for reading progress. Above: Principal Sarah Burstein helps Milo Berg access a new book. Below: Pablo Bartolon Gonzalez remains calm about his new acquisition.*

## School Regionalization Board Presents Idea to Local Officials

By JEFF SINGLETON

**GILL-MONTAGUE** – The Six Town Regional Planning Board (STRPB), charged with investigating the pros and cons of combining the Gill-Montague and Pioneer Valley school districts presented a preliminary assessment Monday night to the Montague selectboard, Gill selectboard, and members of several town finance committees. STRPB members responded to questions from the committees, and from members of the public in attendance.

The presentation focused heavily on the pros of consolidation, particularly on evidence that increased enrollment at combined middle and

high schools would create more educational opportunities, and was light on the cons, including the potential loss of state aid for some towns, conflicts over financial assessment methods, and a process for closing elementary schools.

These would need to be addressed in a final regional agreement, if a consensus is reached about the need for consolidation.

The STRPB, which includes representatives from Warwick, Leyden, Bernardston, Northfield, Gill, and Montague, began meeting approximately three years ago. According to a slide presentation narrated by Deborah Potee of

see **IDEA** page A7

## Accused Montague Man Dies In Auto Garage Fire

By REPORTER STAFF

**NORTHFIELD** – News of a fatal fire at a Northfield auto repair shop Sunday night took an unexpected turn this week when the Northwest District Attorney’s office identified the victim as William Willey, a 47-year-old Montague man currently on trial on charges related to sexual assault of children.

Willey’s trial opened last Thursday in Franklin Superior Court, according to a press release from the DA’s office, and the first of his three alleged victims testified against him

before the court recessed for the long holiday weekend.

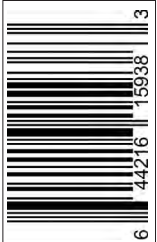
On Sunday evening, firefighters from Northfield, Erving, Turners Falls, Greenfield, Bernardston, Hinsdale, Winchester, and Vernon responded to a fire on East Street in Northfield. The garage was destroyed, and Willey’s body was discovered but not initially identified. According to the DA’s press release, he was renting the garage at the time.

The charges Willey faced included providing alcohol and cannabis to minors, one count of assault and

see **FIRE** page A5

### Walkin’ On Sunshine

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**WILSON’S** from page A1

on Main Street, the Franklin Community Cooperative, was interested in moving into the building.

The coop has come a far way from its humble origins in 1970s Turners Falls and now boasts over 5,500 members; its flagship grocery store, Green Fields Market, is by all accounts bursting at the seams. If anything, however, the Wilson’s building was too large for the coop to take on by itself: with four floors and a basement, nearly 86,000 square feet, it offered over ten times the space the Market currently occupies.

After consulting with the membership about the idea, the coop’s board of directors entered a long process behind the scenes – and reemerged onto the public scene on Wednesday, amidst a phalanx of developers.

The Wilson’s building had been sold, but to the coop. On Tuesday Kevin and Elizabeth O’Neil, through their company American House LCC, deeded the building and two abutting lots on Chapman Street over to the Massachusetts Development Finance Agency – MassDevelopment, the real estate investment arm of the state – for an even \$2.6 million.

MassDevelopment executive vice president Tania Hartford spoke at Wednesday’s press event, along with coop board vice president KC Ceccarossi and Rachana Crowley, director of real estate development at The Community Builders (TCB), a large private housing non-profit that brought the final piece of the puzzle.

Somewhere in the mix, the city of Greenfield is contributing \$300,000 in funds already earmarked for affordable housing. “This investment in Greenfield represents public-private partnership at its best,” Wedegartner declared.

Though the details are still being worked out, the current plan is that in about a year the building will be split into condominiums, with the first floor and basement sold to the coop and the upper storeys to TCB, which intends to develop “approximately 65 mixed-income rental homes.”

“It’s going to change the face of Greenfield forever, and it’s going to change what’s possible for the coop,” said Ceccarossi. “Moving to the Wilson’s building will likely double our sales floor. This means we can bring in more products at a wider range of price points, improving our accessibility to the whole community. We’ll be able to serve a broader and more diverse customer and employee base.”

Ceccarossi told the *Reporter*

that the coop has signed a purchase and sale agreement, but could not disclose the price. “We are having a member forum in January, and we will be releasing more information when we can,” she explained.

Funding for the purchase, Ceccarossi said, will come from “a mix of loans and grants and tax credits,” as well as a capital campaign that will launch in early 2023. At Wednesday’s press conference, she said the coop hopes to expand its workforce from about 100 to about 120 after the move, which could be as early as 2024.

Cautioning that the project was looking at “a mere blueprint, and a long road ahead,” TCB’s Crowley was effusive about the project’s possibilities.

“The redevelopment of Wilson’s will build on the ongoing revitalization of Main Street, and bring approximately 65 much-needed mixed income homes for families to this community,” she said. “Restoring the original building will breathe new life into the historic architecture of Main Street, and the coop’s grocery store, Green Fields Market, will have a new hub on the first floor, spurring economic activity and creating jobs and opportunities for residents.”

TCB led a major rehabilitation project at Greenfield’s 200-apartment Leyden Woods housing development that began in 1996 and culminated in an official “re-opening” in 2017.

Crowley said the residential construction is projected to take place in 2025 or 2026. In response to a question, she said she did not know how many of the 65 “mixed income” units will qualify as affordable housing. “The majority of them will be mixed-income housing,” she said.

She later clarified to the *Reporter* that TCB plans to apply for low-income tax credits, but has not yet settled on an overall model. “We try to serve as broad a range of income as we can find,” she explained. “For now, we’re just iterating.” She confirmed that the coop and TCB are the only anticipated buyers of the building, and that TCB planned to operate the rental units.

A television news reporter in the press pool asked whether there would be any road closures.

“Construction is our middle name, on Main Street,” Wedegartner joked. “We’re going to have to have the patience of everybody in Greenfield, but I promise you, it’ll be great at the end of it.”



Judith Lorei and Annie Levine of the Montague cemetery commission lead mortals on a tour of the new green burial grounds at Highland Cemetery in Millers Falls. The commission plans to open up at least 20 plots here for sale next spring, situated along paths in this wooded area. Watch for more information in our December 1 edition...

OP ED

# Destroying Our Industrial Past for a ‘Clean Slate’

By JEFF SINGLETON

**MONTAGUE** – Last week’s selectboard meeting was a major setback for the town of Montague and its history. The board unanimously voted to recommend that the town’s historical commission not impose the demolition delay bylaw on the former Farren hospital, a structure built in the early nineteenth century where generations of Montague residents were born, treated and have worked.

The bylaw could require that the Farren’s owner pause the demolition, implement a transparent assessment of the building, which they had initially promised to do, and at least put the structures on the market, which they have not done.

Instead the board, with various comments about how Trinity is a large national corporation and therefore knows what it is doing – and that a viable redevelopment proposal has not appeared, when Trinity has in fact never put the Farren on the market for such a proposal – voted unanimously to support a permit for immediate demolition.

Then the board heard assistant town administrator Walter Ramsey describe a plan for the so-called Canal District – the former industrial area between the Turners Falls power canal and the Connecticut River – that focused on the destruction of another key historic structure: the Keith Paper Company factory, now commonly called “the Strathmore.”

This building, once key to our industrial development but for two decades since abandoned by the International Paper Company and a

crumbling albatross, has fallen into the town’s lap for back taxes.

Like the Farren, the demolition of the Strathmore, proposed by a design company called Dietz last week but in fact endorsed by the town leadership before the Canal District process began, was not accompanied by a transparent structural evaluation of the complex’s current condition and what options might be available to market or preserve major parts of the factory.

Instead most of the complex, with the possible exception of one building to the southwest and another owned by a hydro company, are being replaced by trees and trails for kayakers – a “clean slate,” as one design professional called it. The main concession to history will be that the trees are to be planted in a configuration that resembles the buildings in the old factory complex.

Ramsey’s proposal was virtually identical to the one presented by Dietz and Company at a public meeting the previous week. At that meeting, covered in this newspaper, there was no written evaluation of the building by an engineer, but only comments about the terrible condition of the building, accompanied a PowerPoint presentation of the worst horror stories.

There is no doubt a good deal of truth to this, but it hardly represented a balanced structural analysis of the pros and cons of potential options for factory. One suspects that if this mentality had prevailed in the 1990s, the old factory complex that provided the venue for the Canal District meeting, the Great

Falls Discovery Center, would have been demolished.

It should also be noted that there was considerable disagreement at this public meeting over the architect’s vision for the former Strathmore, with plenty of healthy debate. There was strong support for at least integrating more of the industrial past into the new design.

None of this debate was mentioned by Ramsey in his presentation to the selectboard. Instead, a fast-track timeline was presented for destroying most of the Strathmore, using its bricks as landfill. The justification for this process is that the former factory must be demolished before state-funded bridge construction begins.

But that construction is slated for 2026 at the earliest, according to Ramsey’s timeline. That certainly leaves us at least six months for a real structural evaluation, and a discussion of options that would save more of our history.

I am not arguing that either the Farren or the Strathmore can be saved intact. The reality is that we do not know, because in neither case has there been a transparent structural analysis, a public discussion based on real numbers rather than speculation and on-the-fly horror stories, or an honest attempt to find alternatives to total demolition that preserve our history. This should be the norm for historic buildings in Montague.

Jeff Singleton lives in Turners Falls and is a regular contributing reporter to this newspaper. The opinions expressed here are his own.

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Compiled by NINA ROSSI

There will be **no paper next week!** Due to the Thanksgiving holiday we are not publishing a regular edition on November 24. Instead, we are printing out our second special Wrapping Paper Edition, with pages designed by seven local artists. Check our December 1 issue for a list of places to buy it and events where we'll be selling them.

Vendors are wanted for an annual holiday **Pop Up Shop in Turners Falls** on Friday, December 9 and Saturday, December 10. Eight to ten artisans will be selected by RiverCulture to exhibit at the Brick House, 24 Third Street, as part of the annual shopping-and-Santa evening event "It's a Wonderful Night in Turners Falls."

Send a brief description of your work and a few images to [riverculture@montague-ma.gov](mailto:riverculture@montague-ma.gov) by November 24. Notification is Monday November 28. Special preference will be given to artists who use up-cycled or recycled materials. Participation is free.

Annie Levine and I will be there, ready to wrap your purchases in pages from **our cool new Wrapping Paper Edition**. Sets of

the 2022 wrapping paper will be for sale at \$5 each or five for \$20, and the *Montague Reporter* apron will be available as well for premium donors – a great gift for cooks, and free with a donation of \$100 or more to our little newspaper!

Gill's Travel Kuz bus company is partnering with the United Way and Big Brothers Big Sisters to create "**Busloads of Blessings**" this holiday season. This community-wide event will fill a big yellow school bus with food, toys, clothing, and diapers to distribute to families in need.

Each week they focus on different items to collect. This week it is food, especially proteins; the week of November 20 is Adopt-A-Family gifts; the week of November 27 a dry goods food drive; the week of December 4 a diaper drive, followed by a final week of coat and hat collection from December 11 to 17. To learn more and participate, contact [sue@travelkuz.com](mailto:sue@travelkuz.com).

Bring the little ones to the Carnegie Library in Turners Falls this Saturday for a **Fairy House workshop!** On Saturday, November 19, at 10:30 a.m. there will be a "buffet of recycled and natural materials including cardboard, egg cartons, paper towel rolls, moss, feathers, pine cones and

more" to work with, according to the announcement. Call (413) 863-3214 for more information.

The **Greenfield Winter Farmers Market** opens this Saturday, November 19 at the Second Congregational Church on Court Square in Greenfield. The winter market runs from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. once a month, continuing on December 17, January 21, and February 18.

Learn about **recycling in Franklin County** at a talk featuring Amy Donovan this Sunday, November 20, at 11:15 a.m. at the Saints James and Andrew Church in Greenfield. Donovan is on the board of directors at the Springfield Materials Recycling Facility, and is the program director for the Franklin County Solid Waste District. Get information and ask questions at the free talk. For more information contact Ella Ingraham at [ejmail127@gmail.com](mailto:ejmail127@gmail.com).

There will be a **Friends Craft Day** this Sunday, November 20, at 1 p.m. at the Erving Public Library. The project is to use miniature seasonal items to create a scene in a tree-shaped jar, so attendees are encouraged to bring tweezers to help with arranging things. RSVP encouraged; call (413) 423-3348. Brought to you by the Friends of the Erving Public Library.

This Sunday, November 20 starting at 1 p.m., geologist Richard D. Little presents "Magnificence, Mysteries and Death," a Zoom webinar about the **geological history of the Connecticut River valley**.

Dr. Little is known for having discovered the local geological curiosity called "armored mud balls," some of which are visible in a boulder by the old bridge abutment and bike path in Turners Falls. Register at [tinyurl.com/littlegeo](http://tinyurl.com/littlegeo).

Connect more with local culture and history at the **Go Green on Black Friday Walk** along the canal on Friday, November 25, between 1 and 2:30 p.m. The walk is about three miles on the bike path, an easy stroll for adults and children ages 8 and up.

Dress warmly and bring water. Meet at the front entrance to the Great Falls Discovery Center. Inclement weather or icy trail conditions cancels.

The next **Psychic Fair** in Lake Pleasant is next Saturday, November 26 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Call (413) 345-2520 to schedule your sitting with readers. Find out more at [Spiritualallianceusa.org](http://Spiritualallianceusa.org).

The Erving Public Library's **film noir book and movie series** continues next Sunday, November 27 with the 1 p.m. screening of *Woman on the Run* (1950), based on the mystery novel *Man on the Run*.

You can stop by to pick up a copy of the story beforehand, then come back for the showing which includes popcorn and cold drinks. The program is presented by Linda Bowden, with refreshments sponsored by the Friends of the Erving Public Library.

Organizers for the annual "Moonlight Magic" holiday event in Shelburne Falls are adding a **boat parade** to this year's schedule of events. It takes place November 25, the Friday after Thanksgiving, and if you are up for decorating your watercraft with

lights and paddling around for the festive occasion, get in touch with the folks at Adventure East who are managing the parade: [adventureeast.com](http://adventureeast.com). You may even be able to borrow one of their boats to decorate!

The recent Village Neighbors newsletter has information about **becoming a Dementia Friend**. Learn how to become more skillful with those who suffer from dementia in your community by taking an interactive workshop focused on becoming more comfortable including these folks in your social life.

"Becoming a Dementia Friend" will be held on Tuesday, November 29 in person at the Wendell Senior Center, and by Zoom at 6:30 p.m. RSVP and get more information by contacting [generalinfo@villagenighbors.org](mailto:generalinfo@villagenighbors.org).

**Local writers will read** at the LAVA Center, 324 Main Street in Greenfield, on Wednesday, November 30 at 7 p.m. Joy Baglio, Tina Egnoski, Céline Keating, Jan Maher and Robert Redick read from the anthology *Dreams for a Broken World*. Contact [info@localaccess.org](mailto:info@localaccess.org) for further information.

The LAVA Center is also doing a Saturday **holiday salon series** starting on Shop Local Saturday, November 26, and continuing on December 3, 10 and 17. There will be rotating vendors, storytime with Mrs. Claus, live music, and other special surprises. Details and updates at [localaccess.org](http://localaccess.org).

The Shutesbury Athletic Club holds their **2022 Holiday Shop** on the first weekend of December, starting on Friday evening, December 2 from 6 to 9 p.m. and continuing on Saturday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. All the work is by local artists, crafters, authors, and musicians, and you may also pick up our Wrapping Paper Edition at this sale! The Club is located at 282 Wendell Road in Shutesbury.

"Certain Days: Freedom for Political Prisoners" is a **fundraising calendar** featuring radical artwork, essays, and historical dates with proceeds going to prison abolition groups. The \$15 calendar may be picked up during the Finders Collective open hours at 104 Fourth Street in Turners Falls, on Fridays from 3 to 6 p.m. and on December 10. Sales benefit Great Falls Books Through Bars.

Books Through Bars is also hosting a book sale this Saturday, November 19 at the UU church lawn in Northampton, and you can find the calendars there as well.

Shea Theater director Linda Tardiff says that "Due to popular demand and a lack of complaints **Dear Mister Ward is returning to the Shea Theater** for a second performance. The audience was so delighted with this quirky offering of real complaint letters to the Montgomery Ward Department Store that we are bringing it back."

Check it out on Friday, December 2 at 8 p.m. Zara Bode from the Sweetback Sisters will play during the show, and author Evan H. Gregg will have copies of *Dear Mr. Ward*, his book of complaint letters, for sale.

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

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ANNOUNCEMENT  
Memorial Tree Planted  
LEVERETT – On November 10 the Leverett Alliance's Reading Group dedicated a tree, a Crimson Queen weeping Japanese maple, in memory of one of its members, Paula Green, in an outdoor ceremony at the Leverett Library. A bronze plaque commemorates Green as peace builder, activist, educator, and reader.  
Dedicated to reading about vulnerable American communities, the group was established by the Leverett Alliance, which grew out of a December 2016 meeting organized by Green and other members of the Leverett Peace Commission. Green, who died in February, was a lifetime activist, founder of the Karuna Center for Peacebuilding in Amherst with projects in post-conflict areas around the world, and a leader of Hands Across the Hills, which bridged Leverett with conservative eastern Kentucky in dialogue and cultural exchange.  
"Paula was a prodigious reader and a vital contributor to our book group. She often suggested new books for us, and her incisive and  
Longtime peace activist Paula Green.  
often passionate comments deepened our discussions," said member Sharon Dunn. The group meets monthly, except for summer, when a large book is read for September.  
Current members of the group are Carolyn Anderson, John Clayton, Sharon Dunn, Pat Fiero, Susan Lynton, Jim Perkins, Mary Russo, Lisa Vittori, and the group's founder, Judith Davidov. Former members Dale Schwartz and Dona Wheeler also contributed to the commemoration.  
Among the scores of books read by the group over the past five years are Isabel Wilkerson's *Caste*, Nancy McLean's *Democracy in Chains*, Walter Isaacson's *Code Breaker*, Kathleen Belew's *Bring the War Home*, Bryan Stevenson's *Just Mercy*, Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow* and Kim Stanley Robinson's *Ministry for the Future*. The group mainly reads nonfiction, with an occasional novel, such as *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood and *The Overstory* by Richard Powers.

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**FARREN** from page A1

passed a demolition delay bylaw, giving the historical commission the authority to delay a demolition permit for up to one year for “historically significant” buildings.

The hearing began with chair David Brule explaining that the determination the commission must make requires attention to the historical significance of the building — later clarified to mean only the original 1900 hospital, and none of the additions built in the latter half of the 20th century.

Several criteria can be used to weigh historical significance, including inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places, “historical importance,” association with a person or group with historical significance, architectural significance, or being the site of a significant event.

Under Massachusetts General Law, Brule advised, the decision could not be based on a cost analysis or on the expense of a demolition delay.

Representatives of Trinity Health presented their case. Vice president of operations Eric Dana said the company’s goal is “to do what is right, not what is easy,” and summarized the case for demolition: that the building is not viable for reuse, and that Trinity has offered to salvage and donate religious and historic artifacts and turn over a safe, usable piece of land to the town.

Project manager Michael Tierney and David Galbraith, a 43-year veteran of the Farren’s physical plant, summarized the building’s condition in greater detail than had been previously shared publicly. The foundation and brickwork, they said, are both suffering from water infiltration, and would require extensive excavation for repairs and waterproofing.

They described the roofing as “paper thin” and referred to more water damage on the interior, claiming that floors and ceilings across the building would need to be replaced. Additionally, they said, demolishing the newer wings, which have not been deemed to be of historical value, could further compromise the integrity of the 1900 building and cut off its access to most utilities.

Trinity claims its independent consultants estimated a rehabilitation cost of \$27 million altogether, compared to a \$7.1 million cost for demolition. Additionally, the empty building must be heated during the winter to prevent its sprinkler system from freezing, which Dana said costs \$42,000 every two weeks.

**New Information**

Discussion was opened up first to historical

commission members, and was driven by members Janel Nockleby and Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno. Nockleby asked for more information about the extent of the water damage and suggested that photos may help communicate its severity.

Galbraith and Tierney explained that the extension of the power canal to Cabot Station changed the hydrogeology of the area after the Farren was built, leading to the elevation of the water table. Tierney said that even during a critical drought, the basement pumps must run non-stop to prevent infiltration.

“We’re at this place today because we didn’t have this information until today. I’m just taking it all in,” Nockleby responded, adding that “documentation is so helpful.”

Sawyer-Lauçanno echoed these sentiments, suggesting that such information is “normally... the kind of thing that’s provided to a historical commission to help your cause.”

Dana, in turn, reiterated that the company’s legal team advised that “it’s not our practice to share” internal studies of buildings.

Once the meeting was opened to public comment, two speakers spoke strongly in favor of a demolition delay. One, Jeff Singleton, spoke against the lack of transparency in the process of determining the building’s future. “It’s wrong to go into a meeting with a lot of verbal comments, but no documentation,” he said of Trinity, and remarked that the selectboard had “backed off” of pressuring the company for such documentation.

Singleton went on to say that he didn’t see what Trinity’s presentation had to do with a determination of historical significance, since the commission was explicitly told that a structural evaluation is not among the criteria it may use to make such a determination.

Members of the public were not allowed to ask questions directly of Trinity, but Brule directed a question to the representatives on Singleton’s behalf about the marketing of the building.

“We have a full real estate division... [that] did a whole assessment of the property,” said Dana, who asserted that a determination was made that it would not be viable to sell.

“You didn’t market it,” replied Singleton. “That’s okay, but that’s the answer.”

**Nothing But Flowers**

Several members of the public spoke against delaying demolition. Peter Hudyma, who worked in the Farren’s maintenance department with Galbraith and attested that he is “a man of the high-

est integrity,” told the hearing that “no amount of wishful thinking is gonna save that building.”

Speaking of its energy inefficiency, Hudyma proclaimed that “it should be a crime to run a building like this in this age of climate problems... I think we can honor the history without spending a lot of money and fossil fuels trying to preserve the building... An open field would be an improvement, even if it was filled with nothing but flowers.”

The possibility that the town might inherit another decrepit, high-liability building seemed to weigh heavy on the minds of several other commenters, including selectboard members Matt Lord and Rich Kuklewicz, zoning board chair Joshua Lively, and planning board and zoning board of appeals member Bob Obear.

“Do we need a better reminder of what can happen when we allow large old buildings to be purchased by private entities, with little or no experience and little-to-no oversight as to the care and maintenance of such buildings?” asked Lively.

“Trinity isn’t necessarily obligated to do any of this,” argued Obear, in reference to the company’s offer of the land to the town.

“There are a lot of sentimental recollections of that hospital,” said Kuklewicz, “but we need to be real.”

Ariel Elan, a town meeting member who serves on the capital improvements committee, suggested that it would have saved much time, money, and “grief” if Trinity had been more transparent from the beginning. She speculated that the company’s legal department fears that someone might look at the report and think, “my loved one was living in substandard conditions,” but added that she thought this was unlikely, as families were grateful for the care.

Brule eventually made a motion to continue the hearing for six weeks to allow Trinity time to provide more documentation attesting to the conditions they had reported on that evening. “As a historian, I would like to have that closure,” he said.

Commission members Ed Gregory and Chris Clawson said they would rather take a vote immediately, and were both in favor of demolition.

At Dana’s insistence that Trinity can produce the documentation more quickly than six weeks, in the hopes of moving to demolish the complex as soon as ongoing asbestos removal is completed, Brule made a new motion to continue the hearing to Tuesday, December 6, instead, which passed unanimously.



NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

# Co-Responder Program Becomes Official

By **KEITH WATERS**

On Monday night, Erving’s selectboard approved a set of revised traffic regulations they had been working on for a while. These new regulations supersede the previous regulations from 1962. The full text of the revisions is available in the agenda packet for the selectboard meeting, available on the town website under “selectboard agendas.”

The board has been making a push to approve a large number of policy updates. By state law, any new policy must be read and discussed three times at a public meeting before it can be approved.

The Blood Borne Pathogen Exposure Control Plan policy was approved. Board member William Bembury noted that this is a large policy and will require some significant staff training. Town administrator Bryan Smith agreed, and said he was planning to get the trainings underway as soon as possible.

Police chief Robert Holst reported that his force has enjoyed the electric bike they have been using as part of a test of the proposed Mounted Electric Bike policy. The selectboard gave a second reading to this policy — though the agenda

stated that it was the third — and will continue with a third reading at a future meeting.

Holst also reported that the co-response clinician program, which Erving has been participating in with several other towns, has been working very well towards its aim of reducing jail and hospitalizations. The board voted to officially approve the program, which had been in a trial period, as town policy.

In other police news, officers Linda Gordon and Matthew Ziomek were officially sworn in.

**Public Works**

Highway superintendent Glenn McCrory was present to discuss changes that will have to be made to the public works department’s waste collection practices in response to changing regulations at the state level.

The state has revised what is acceptable in terms of the size of yard waste piles and the town will have to make some changes to stay in compliance. McCrory noted that up until just a few weeks ago there were people who would come and pick up bulk yard waste from the town for free, likely for their own commercial composting, but that fuel prices have changed that and

the town will now likely have to pay to dispose of bulk yard waste.

McCrory also noted that Erving is the only local town that does not charge for e-waste disposal, and that it costs the town money.

No specific changes were made this meeting, but a change in hours at the public works department is anticipated.

The board asked McCrory if he was happy with the town’s current snow plowing system. He replied he was happy with it generally, but would like some sort of enforceable parking ban for snow events. The town does not have one, and McCrory said there are people with driveways who regularly park on the street during snow events, which makes snow removal work harder.

**Pacifist Culverts**

Speaking of changing guidelines from higher up, the state has also changed the acceptable way for a road to cross a stream. Past practice has been to put a large corrugated pipe in the stream and put the road over it, but new guidelines are more amicable to the health of the stream.

In an effort to start these new practices, town planner Mariah Kurtz applied for and won a

\$330,000 grant to replace two culverts on Wheelock Street.

**Other Business**

In regards to concerns at a previous meeting that the proposed title for a new job at the senior center, “Activities Coordinator,” is misleading, Bryan Smith reported that he had checked with many local towns, and that they all follow the same convention — that is, calling a position that is essentially an assistant administrator an Activities Coordinator.

The board thanked Smith for his work on clarifying this, laughed a little, and agreed to deliberate more on the matter.

Jackie Boyden was appointed to the town recreation committee. There is still one vacancy on that committee.

The annual town report is coming out soon, and it will need a cover. The board talked about putting out a call for proposals for its cover.

Part-time Erving workers and the town accountant are getting a nice little gift in time for the holidays this year. Holiday pay will be changed from one-fifth of a work week to one normal day’s hours, up to eight.

The next meeting will be held Monday, November 28.

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# Aquí se habla español

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



## Gente de Franklin County: Grady Vigneau

Por VICTORIA MAILLO DE AGUILERA

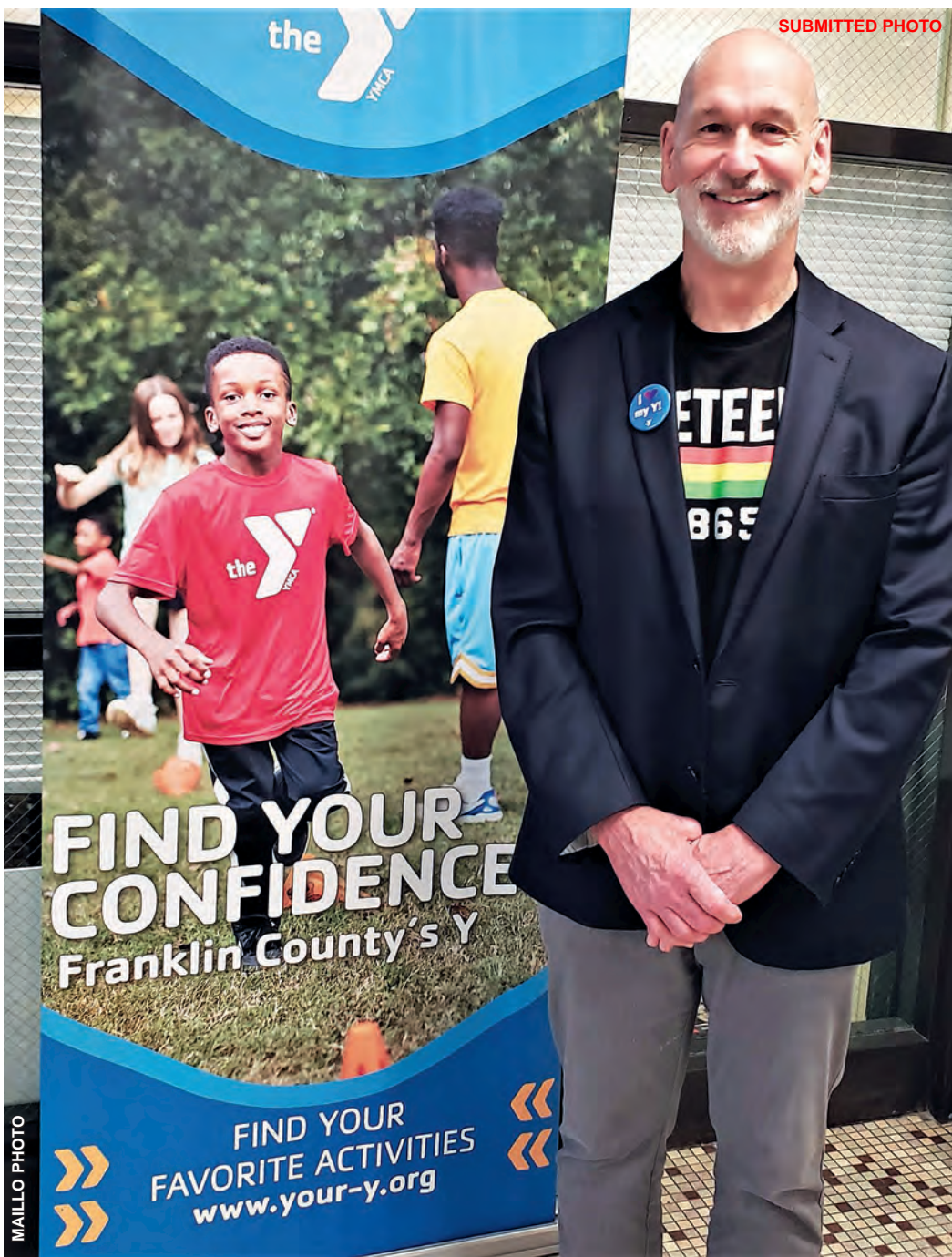
**GREENFIELD** – Hace años que soy miembro del YMCA en Greenfield. En mis primeros años en Franklin County fui voluntaria en las oficinas, he asistido a sus clases de diferentes disciplinas, he nadado en su piscina y poco a poco se ha convertido en una parte importante de mi vida ya que la actividad deportiva diaria es importante para mí.

He notado que en estos últimos años, el YMCA ha cambiado mucho, y para bien. En primer lugar, ha cambiado su nombre, ahora es “Franklin County’s YMCA.” Ha superado una pandemia y con su nuevo director al frente, Grady Vigneau, se ha enfrentado a una serie de cambios necesarios para adaptarse a la nueva población y a las necesidades de los habitantes de Franklin County.

El YMCA inició su andadura en 1889, en el edificio GAR, que es el edificio antiguo que ocupan ahora los juzgados de Franklin County. Debido a diferentes problemas, dejó de existir en esa primera etapa en 1906. En 1939 algunos miembros de la comunidad decidieron resucitarlo. Eran momentos duros de recesión entre guerras y se buscaba tener un lugar para ejercitarse. Debo recordar que en esos años no se entendía ni el tiempo libre ni el ejercicio físico de la misma forma que lo hacemos ahora.

Entre 1943 y 1969 cambiaron varias veces de edificio en Main Street hasta que en 1971 se construyó el edificio en el que se encuentra ahora. A partir de ese año hasta 2005 se realizaron diferentes expansiones para acomodar nuevos programas y aparatos de gimnasia.

Franklin County’s YMCA forma parte de la vida de nuestra comarca desde hace más de cien años y por ello he decidido entrevistar a su director.



Grady Vigneau, director del YMCA.

### Su Biografía

Grady Vigneau nació y creció en Brattleboro. Aun así, sus raíces están en nuestra región. Su madre es de Turners Falls, Grady solía comprar su ropa en Wilson’s, cuando era niño pasaba tiempo con su abuela en Turners Falls, y su juventud con sus primos en Greenfield, donde recuerda ir a ver los partidos de futbol americano cada Día de Acción de Gracias.

En los setenta, Greenfield era una ciudad enorme comparada con Brattleboro y le encantaba pasar tiempo en ella. Volver a Franklin County fue para él como una vuelta a casa.

Fue a estudiar a University of New Hampshire en Durham, New Hampshire, reclutado como jugador de futbol americano, donde obtuvo una licenciatura en Educación Infantil. Grady me dice que estos estudios le han servido para aplicarlos en diferentes circunstancias a lo largo de su vida.

Después de graduarse empezó a trabajar como entrenador de futbol americano desde 1978 hasta 1984 en universidades como Boston University o University of New Hampshire. En ese momento, con 28 años empieza a plantearse si quiere seguir dedicándose a esto mismo.

Decide dejar la carrera de entrenador que ya que no era muy realista pensar en llegar a ser entrenador principal en un año. Vuelve a la universidad para realizar un MBA en Columbia University y empieza a trabajar en una firma de consultoría bancaria en Nueva York. Vigneau me cuenta que, aunque este trabajo le permitió aprender a pensar y analizar situaciones, era muy estresante

y tenía que viajar mucho.

En ese momento esperaba su segundo hijo y sentía que estaba perdiéndose parte de su vida familiar. Le ofrecieron un trabajo en Missouri como director atlético, y con toda la familia viajó hasta allí. No estaba seguro de querer ver crecer a sus hijos allí, así que decidieron volver a Vermont, más concretamente a Stowe.

Allí, Grady y su familia han regentado por 30 años un *resort* donde grupos de escolares pasaban unos días realizando actividades al aire libre, hockey sobre hierba, futbol americano, *lacrosse*, lucha, atletismo y especialmente esquí. Vigneau y su mujer Merry se ocupaban del alojamiento, de las comidas, de vender los *tickets* para esquiar y hasta ejercían como agencia de viajes para grupos. Recibían grupos de estudiantes de Nueva York, Boston, Cleveland e incluso de Toronto. Los adolescentes podían pasar unos días al aire libre realizando las actividades que más les gustasen y también organizaban campamentos de día.

En 2008, Grady piensa que quiere hacer algo diferente y acepta una oferta como director de Bridgton Academy en Maine, un internado solamente para chicos que se habían graduado de educación secundaria, pero que por diferentes motivos no se encontraban preparados para ir a la universidad. En ese año, los posgraduados de todas partes de Estados Unidos y de otros países del mundo, pueden prepararse para alcanzar sus objetivos académicos y deportivos.

La única chica que estudió allí durante sus años como director y la primera en 180 años fue su hija en 2012, pese a la oposición del mis-

mo Grady. Vigneau intentó durante su estancia como director cambiar la cultura de un internado solamente para chicos a la antigua usanza a ser una escuela con una cultura de inclusión, de diversidad, en definitiva, a una escuela moderna con una diferente masculinidad.

### Su Visión del YMCA

Grady supo desde siempre que quería trabajar en una asociación sin ánimo de lucro, un lugar para construir comunidad. Piensa que el YMCA es un lugar donde la organización trabaja con programas para niños, adolescentes, adultos y mayores y tiene la oportunidad de crear y construir comunidad.

Me dice que aprovecha las lecciones aprendidas en Bridgton Academy, pero a una mayor escala, ya que hay miembros de todas las edades, y estos no solamente van al YMCA por un año como en el internado, sino que existe una idea de futuro, de pertenecer a esa comunidad por muchos años. Grady piensa que no debe ser importante para la dirección del YMCA solamente lo que ocurre dentro del edificio, sino también todo lo que afecte a la comunidad alrededor.

Bajo la dirección de Vigneau se han cambiado muchas de las máquinas del gimnasio para que estén al día, también la comunicación con los socios, y las redes sociales que en este momento son muy importantes, pero también le preocupa como los que nunca han ido al YMCA ven la institución. Piensa que la impresión que la comunidad tiene sobre la organización es muy importante.

El cambio de nombre se ha hecho a propósito para expresar que la institución quiere servir a todo el condado. Quiere servir a todos, niños, jóvenes, adultos y mayores; hombres, mujeres, comunidad LGBTBI+, a miembros de todas las religiones o de ninguna.

Es más difícil cambiar el nombre de YMCA ya que es una marca. La visión de Grady es crear una institución con una misión para apoyar a niños, jóvenes, adolescentes, adultos y mayores en su crecimiento personal y físico, personas que a su vez creen otras comunidades en sus pueblos o zonas en las que quieran vivir, que se sientan seguros en cada etapa de su vida.

Cada miembro del Y tiene que sentirse parte de la organización, y los que no lo son, deben saber que el YMCA quiere que formen parte de ella.

Vigneau me dice que otra de sus tareas es que las personas que trabajan en el YMCA se sientan bien en su puesto de trabajo y que esta labor les dé una estabilidad laboral y económica. A Grady le gusta delegar y que los miembros de su equipo le digan con sinceridad qué piensan, que todos participen en las decisiones puesto que todos son importantes.

Para el YMCA son muy importantes las donaciones y las recaudaciones o colectas de fondos a través de diferentes eventos como torneos de golf. Estas donaciones se usan para pagar becas para los niños de familias que no pueden pagar campamentos, ayudar familias con la membresía, o para mejoras en el edificio.

Las solicitudes de subsidio ya sean privados o del gobierno son también importantes y durante el tiempo como director de Vigneau se han cuadruplicado estas ayudas conseguidas. El YMCA tiene grandes sueños para el futuro de la comunidad y las donaciones van dirigidas a estas ideas.

Al mismo tiempo, la visión del YMCA quiere ayudar a miembros de la comunidad que tengan ideas sobre talleres o actividades que creen comunidad. Grady me habla de un taller organizado en el que Richie Farrell, escritor y antiguo adicto a la heroína, habló para las personas que se encontraban en la prisión del condado.

### El YMCA y la Comunidad Latina

Grady está muy interesado en acoger a la comunidad latina en el YMCA. Actualmente hay dos trabajadores que son completamente bilingües. Quiere que los miembros y futuros miembros se sientan cómodos hablando en español con los miembros del equipo, que sea posible hacer talleres en español para miembros de la comunidad latina, y conocer mejor las necesidades de la comunidad para poder ayudarlas.

Me insiste en que el nuevo YMCA quiere que todos se sientan bienvenidos, que la salud y el bienestar deben ser accesibles para todos. YMCA está en el proceso de traducir algunos de sus folletos y formularios a otros idiomas, especialmente español.

Vigneau me cuenta que se sintió muy orgulloso de ver a una de las trabajadoras del YMCA, Emily, hablar con uno de los usuarios del gimnasio y explicarle las normas en español.

El YMCA quiere impulsar actividades dirigidas a la comunidad latina como talleres sobre nutrición, consejos para una vida saludable, etc. y desde estas líneas quiere invitarles a ponerse en contacto con la organización. El YMCA les espera con los brazos abiertos.

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MONTAGUE from page A1

Kuklewicz said there would be “hundreds and maybe a thousand hours that goes into [planning] it,” so it would take a “community effort” and perhaps some “seed money” to get a new festival going.

Kuklewicz added that he would support that, but “would like to see us stretch [the event] up all the way to Avenue A, because I really think it is good for some of the businesses at that end.” (A primary location for the festival was never explicitly suggested.)

Ellis said that a planning committee might consider a way to create “better and more productive foot traffic” to downtown businesses through a “connected corridor between two programmatic spaces.”

Assistant town planner Suzanne LoManto, who is the director of RiverCulture, a grant-funded program to promote cultural activities in the town, noted that she had helped organize block parties on Avenue A when she first came to town in 2013, so “we do have this downtown, medium-size event thing that we have done in the past.”

LoManto said that she was interested in getting “different demographics” to visit downtown Turners Falls, but that her “plate was very full” over the next year and she was unsure how much time she could put into a new festival.

“I’m in for it for what I can do,” she said.

“Let’s set up a meeting and invite people who are interested,” Kuklewicz concluded, mentioning Nova Motorcycles co-owner Peter Chilton, who was in attendance at the meeting.

LoManto told the *Reporter* that any statement about what a new fall celebration might look like would be premature. “A smaller version of the Great Falls Festival might be

one option,” she said. “Or it might look more like the block party. We really have barely discussed this – the size and scale depend on how many people volunteer to set this up, and what they want to do.”

Hiring Officials

Ellis reported on the progress of two hiring committees, one to choose a new town planner and another to select a new director of public health. Ellis said both committees have been “actively meeting, have solid pools of candidates, and are in the process of conducting interviews right now.”

He added that both committees would be in a position to make recommendations to the selectboard for “potential hires” by November 28.

Ellis noted that the committees were performing a “screening function,” but asked “if there is a single leader or recommended individual... would you be comfortable receiving a single candidate,” probably for the planner position.

Selectboard member Chris Boutwell said he “could live with it,” but member Matt Lord responded that he “hoped we would have multiple good candidates.”

Kuklewicz said that he once sat on a hiring committee in which the candidate the group was convinced would be the best hire “didn’t work” when it came to the final interview. He said if the hiring committee felt they had two or three people who could “really do it, let’s chat with them.”

A majority of the board nodded in agreement with these comments, but did not take a formal vote.

Ellis was asked whether bringing only one candidate before the selectboard could violate the state open meeting law, as court decisions have indicated that initial “screening” of multiple candidates in non-public

meetings is allowed, but it is required that finalists be interviewed publicly.

He responded that the board clearly wanted to see multiple candidates, and that town counsel was comfortable with the hiring committees’ screening process.

Fascinating Topics

Ellis reported to the board on proposed additions to the town’s recently created financial policies manual. The additions, which were not included in the original document on the advice of the finance committee, involve the annual budget process, the capital planning process, and the regulation of various reserve funds.

The board did not take a vote on a hefty packet of new policies included in its “meeting materials.” Ellis said the current and former chairs of the finance committee would visit the board on November 28 to answer questions.

The board approved a two-year proposal for town insurance submitted by the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Agency. Responding to a question from Lord, executive assistant Wendy Bogusz said the annual cost was just under \$160,000, not including workers’ compensation costs. Ellis added that the insurance policy was not subject to state procurement regulations.

Other Business

The meeting began with an hour-long presentation and discussion of the findings of the multi-town committee evaluating the possibility of combining the Gill-Montague and Pioneer Valley school districts. The primary goal would be to increase enrollment and offer more educational options to students from those districts. (*See article, Page A1.*)

The board discussed the timing of the annual winter special town meeting. Ellis said it is current-

ly scheduled for February 23, but many officials and town meeting members may not be able to attend due to a school vacation, and the possibility of meeting on February 28 or March 2 is being floated.

Kuklewicz recommended the March 2 date because it falls on a Thursday, when “we have typically been meeting.” Ellis agreed, but said the timing might be dependent on the need for an appropriation for new screw pumps at the Clean Water Facility, which is required before applying for a federal grant.

A \$1,500 contract with Scott Dixon of Tailblock Coping Company for caulking repairs at the Unity Park skate park was also ap-

proved by the board.

Assistant town administrator Walter Ramsey said the project to fix a collapsed sewer line on Montague City Road has been delayed by a high water table, and because “they are running into additional infrastructure” including an old sewer and natural gas lines. The repair is being funded by American Rescue Plan Act money, and Ramsey said cost overruns would be covered by a “contingency” already approved by the board.

The board retired into an executive session to discuss real estate strategy. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 21.



LOOKING BACK:  
10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here’s the way it was on November 8 & 15, 2012: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

Dodge Appointed Police Chief

On November 14 the Montague selectboard interviewed two candidates for the police chief position: Charles “Chip” Dodge, acting chief for the past three months, and acting Sergeant Christopher Lapointe.

After a brief deliberation the two members present, Mark Fairbrother and chair Chris Boutwell, both voted to offer the position to Dodge, who was quick to accept the post.

Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio supported the decision. “Both candidates did exceptionally well,” he said. Dodge received the top score on the recent BadgeQuest assessment exam, and submitted a letter of recommendation from former chief of police Ray Zukowski, who retired last November.

“This is where I was born, and where I plan to spend the rest of my life,” said Dodge, who has served as a police officer for over 20 years. He had interviewed for police chief twice before landing the job.

When the board asked Dodge what he considered the “most serious mistake of his career,” he referred to his “less than desirable off-duty conduct 12 years ago,” an off-duty fight with another patrolman in May 2000. The physical altercation left him with bodily injuries and extensive damage to his private vehicle, and he was demoted from sergeant to patrolman after urging an investigating officer not to report the incident. Dodge has since attributed his behavior in that incident to “youthful indiscretion.”

Grange Turns In its Charter

The Montague Grange has sent a letter to the state Grange withdrawing its membership from the historic fraternal organization. This does not mean that the Grange Hall will close, or that dances, concerts, and other events will cease. A deed restriction assures the building must serve as “a community space and an extension of the commons,” and the corporation which owns the building intends to preserve it.

“The fraternal organization is

separate from the actual hall,” explained Grange member Becky Hollingsworth. “In Montague’s case, the hall is owned not by the fraternal organization, Montague Grange #141, but by... the Montague Grange Hall Corporation.”

Whether or not the building will be called the “Grange” is a question to be answered by the State, but members of the corporation are thinking it might just be called the Montague Hall. Membership dues will no longer go to the State – in fact, there will be no members.

Tedious quarterly reports will no longer need to be filed, and more people will hopefully want to get involved in the building’s upkeep. According to Corporation member Chris Wise, no members ever want to serve as secretary, since it meant taking on those reports.

The enterprise consists of three groups: the Friends of the Grange, a fundraising group to help with care of the building; the fraternal organization; and the Corporation of the Grange Hall, the owners. This has proved confusing to many, and may have contributed to declining membership. Ritual meetings were also off-putting to some new members, causing some to attend one meeting and not come back.

Gill Tavern Changing Hands

Laura Carboni has managed the Gill Tavern for the last four years. Now she and her husband, Chris Pietras, are poised to become the new owners of the Tavern, with the blessing of founders Alden Booth and Lissa Greenough.

“We’re selling the business to Chris and Laura because we are so confident it’s in good hands,” Booth told the Gill selectboard at a hearing to transfer the liquor license to Carboni and Pietras, who will operate the business under the moniker of Unadilla, Inc. Booth, who also owns the People’s Pint in Greenfield, said he and Greenough are selling the Tavern in part because of being “a little over my head” with other projects.”

Carboni and Pietras say they plan no major changes in the formula that has made the Tavern the go-to place in Gill for fine countrystyle dining, drinks, and camaraderie.



IDEA from page A1

Northfield which began the meeting, it has been assisted by consultants from the Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools (MARS) and the regional consulting firm Abrahams Group.

The planning committee has not yet made a decision on whether to endorse consolidation, according to Potee. “We are charged to make recommendations in the future,” she said, “but now is a time to share information.”

The information began with a strong endorsement of the benefits of consolidation by increasing enrollment at the middle and high schools. Several slides presented data on enrollment in the current districts. Pioneer’s total “attending enrollment” dropped by over 40% over the past decade, while Gill-Montague’s declined by 17%.

The presentation also showed data on school choice losses, noting that Pioneer Valley Regional School graduated 23 students last year and Turners Falls High School, in the Gill-Montague District, graduated 36.

The MARS consultants, according to one slide, “concluded that combining the middle and high school enrollments would create a more robust educational program (e.g. more robust course offerings, athletics, arts). A merged district would likely retain and potentially attract students to the District and generate a change in the school culture through expanding the range of career and course offerings. The greater breadth of programming could help the District market itself to the community.”

Another slide listed expanded course offerings – including AP courses for college-bound students and courses in business, the environment, agriculture, and foreign languages – that could come with expanded enrollment. Other slides listed examples of “greater community outreach and collaboration” with organizations in the region, better student services, more athletic opportunities, and better teaching conditions for staff, who are currently teaching courses “in isolation.”

As for the downside, the presentation quickly presented complex estimates of the potential assessment, or cost, to member towns compared with the present, and suggested that a combined district might fall immediately into the status known as “hold harmless,” receiving only small annual increases in Chapter 70 state aid

because the standard funding formula calculates an aid level lower than it received in a previous year.

The presentation did not discuss regional governance of elementary schools. STRPB chair Alan Genovese of Warwick suggested that elementary schools would “stay the same” under a combined district.

During the question-and-answer period several local residents, including Ariel Elan of Montague Center, asked about longer bus rides in a consolidated district. Genovese said there would be a longer ride for some and a shorter ride for others, but it might take “20 minutes at the outskirts.”

Elan called that “impressive,” saying that where she grew up in western Pennsylvania, “it was a half hour at least.”

The model the STRPB evaluated would place the combined middle school at the current Pioneer Valley Regional School in Northfield, and the combined high school in the building that houses Turners Falls High School and Great Falls Middle School today. The presentation said the average increase in transportation time to these schools would be 20 minutes, with a “maximum bus ride” of one hour.

The STRPB was asked who would make decisions about closing elementary schools if enrollment gets too low.

“The issue about the elementary schools was not to change anything as it exists today,” said Bill Tomb, who represents Gill on the STRPB and also sits on the Gill-Montague school committee. “We’ve decided to go with the status quo to avoid any further political developments that those things might incur.”

Genovese said that elementary school closings were “a school committee issue.”

Montague member Mike Naughton suggested that school closing policies – and a number of others, including assessment methods – were issues that “we haven’t gotten to yet.”

“It’s one step at a time,” Naughton said. “We first have to conclude that trying to make a bigger district is actually something that the towns want, because if they don’t want it, it doesn’t matter what the answers to those questions will be.”



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# *High School Sports:* Last Local Teams Eliminated in Playoffs

By **MATT ROBINSON**

**TURNERS FALLS** – On Veterans Day the playoff aspirations were dashed for two area sports teams, Turners Falls Volleyball and Franklin Tech Football.

The Volleyballers lost to Paulo Freire in the MIAA tournament, but managed to do something only one other team has done: they took a set against last year's state champions.

In football, the Franklin Tech Eagles lost in the Voc tourney to Pathfinder. The ding-ed-up Eagles, down to one viable running back, fumbled three times, but refused to punt the ball away, going for it on most of their fourth down attempts.

Speaking of football, the Minnesota Vikings upended the Buffalo Bills on Sunday, in what pundits are calling the game of the year. Buffalo's loss gives hope to all the other AFC teams vying for a playoff spot.

Also this week, the TFHS Alumni Association will induct five individuals into the TFHS Hall of Fame. On November 17, the first class of inductees in years – George Bush, Norman Gerber, Brian Marsh, Sharon Chisholm, and Gary Mullins – will receive their just deserts at a ceremony held at Turners Falls High School. The ceremony will begin at 1 p.m. in the auditorium, and is open to the public.

## Volleyball

Paulo Freire 3 – TFHS 1

On Veterans Day, 11/11, the Turners Falls Volleyball Thunder hosted the Paulo Freire Social Justice Charter School Purple Panthers in the MIAA 2022 girls' volleyball Division V state tournament Round of 8.

Before the first set I conversed with some of the regulars. “No one’s ever beaten this school,” one dad said.

"I think they only lost one set," another agreed. "They beat Frontier 3-1 last year. That was the only set they ever lost."

Blue took an early lead in the opening match, but it looked like it was going to be a long night. The ball bounced to and fro, back and forth like a pinball until Powertown got the first very hard-earned point. They kept the game close early on, but with the score 4-4 the Justices took off, eventually winning 25-14.

Part of the issue was the velocity of the ball coming over the net. The first Turners player who fielded the serve would frequently deflect the ball out of play. Blue adjusted to this as the second hitter sprinted toward the errant ball, but if it landed in the stands or against the far wall, Freire got the point.

Another reason seemed to be a lack of aces from Blue. Freire's secondary crouched down on their haunches, palms to the floor, ready to set up the second hit or make a kill.

In the second set Powertown again kept pace in the beginning, but at 4-5 the Panthers went on another run. It's not like Turners ever gave up; they kept sprinting, spiking, and tipping, fighting for every point. With the score at 24-15 and Freire needing only one more point, Blue refused to go down quietly. They narrowed the deficit to 24-18, but Purple finally scored the winning point to gain a 2-0 lead.

The third set was marked by long, multiple-hit volleys as both teams refused to give up. It was an exciting contest and Turners pulled it out, 25-23, to narrow the score to 2 – 1.

Thunder won the first point in the fourth set, just as they had done in each of the other three. But when the score was 3-3, Freire once again went on a run to go ahead 12-3. At this point in the night, it seemed that the Thunder Ladies began to relax. They were smiling and appeared to be having fun playing the game.



*Turners Falls's Steph Peterson spikes the ball over Paulo Freire defenders Victoria Solis and Shaneidy Hernandez. Peterson made two kills and three digs in the Division V quarterfinal game against the Panthers.*

they love. Freire continued to outscore Blue, won the fourth set 25-10, and advanced to the semifinal game against Frontier.

As the players shook hands at midcourt, the True Blue faithful cheered and clapped, showing that losing a game in the quarter-finals does not take away from a spectacular and memorable season.

Though Powertown did not register their usual flurry of aces, they worked hard and scored any way they could. Madi Liimatainen worked the net, making eight kills and blocking a shot; she scored six digs from the middle and served an ace from the line. Abby Holloway made two kills, four digs, and served an ace; Taylor Greene shot two kills and gave three assists; Stephanie Peterson finished with two kills and three digs; Tiana Carr Williams had two kills and an ace; and Maddie Dietz recorded five digs.

## Football

Pathfinder 40 – FCTS 6

Also last Friday, the Franklin Tech Football Eagles were ousted from the vocational playoffs by the Pathfinder Panthers, 40-6. Although the Eagles are out of the playoffs they still have one more game before they put away their cleats. On Thanksgiving they travel to Northampton to play the Smith Vocational Vikings in the annual Turkey Day dustup.

In Friday's game Tech's running game stalled out, and three of their drives were halted by fumbles. Josiah Little gained 86 yards on 21 carries and a touchdown, but that

was it. Quarterback Gabriel Tomasi, who has filled in as the backup runner, only gained three yards in four attempts. Dillon Gagnon and Nathan Sabolevski also ran the ball for Tech, but only gained five combined yards.

Tomasi's passing game fared a little better. He completed five passes for 59 yards. His receivers were Ethan Smarr, with two catches for 18 yards; Levi Halla with one for 11; and Little and Nathaniel Fuess with a 15-yard catch each.

Landen Hardy led the team defensively with eight solo tackles, while Shaun Turner and Tyler Yetter each knocked down passes. On special teams, Franklin returned seven kickoffs; Turner ran back three kicks for 23 yards; Vincent Renaud had two returns for 32; and Little returned two for 23. Tech kicked off twice – Hardy for 23 yards and Maxon Brunette for 13 – and only punted twice in the entire game. Hardy booted both for a total of 73 yards.

In high school sports, losing in the playoffs usually marks the end of the season. But not in football – for schools lucky enough to have a Thanksgiving rivalry, the games go on.

One school that does not have enough kids to field a complete football team is Turners Falls. For several years now, Powertown has been forced to send its athletes to other schools if they want to play football.

This year, four students from Turners played for the Green Wave of Greenfield. Hats off to Elliott Cox, Owen Levalley, Chris Morton, and Levin Prondecki, who traveled over the river, day after day, to play for a team that Turners used to consider our main rivals.

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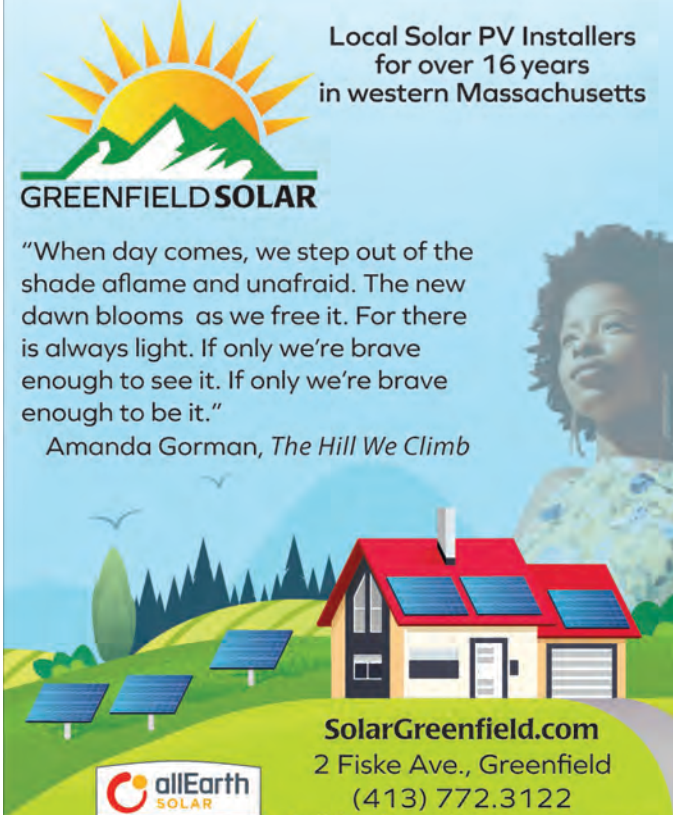
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Amanda Gorman, *The Hill We Climb*

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Above: Early Wednesday morning outside the Reporter office on Avenue A, a wintry mix.



# Got Mice?

Neighbors Share Their Advice... and Tales of Mayhem & Mischief

By KAREN GUILLETTE

**WENDELL** – A friend recently took me to the Wendell Coffee Connection, where neighbors share coffee, pastry, and news one Friday morning a month. Amid talk of problems with chipmunks and other critters I raised a question about how to deal with my new problem of mice in the kitchen. The immediate explosion of mice tales left me breathless... and overwhelmed!

“I moved into a house in Wendell surrounded by woods five years ago,” Shawn Jarrett shared. “When we were looking to buy the house I noticed that the owners had five cats. I assumed they were just cat lovers. I had decided that I would not have any more pets, but within 18 months the house was overrun. It’s a post-and-beam house and the mice were running along the beams overhead.

“These mice were definitely ninja mice that could flip over traps, safely removing the bait and boldly carrying on! They were thriving, and they were everywhere. I felt they were laughing at me.”

Shawn got so tired of traps that she decided cats were the only answer. She’s had two ever since and they do catch mice, but she’s now setting traps again too, be-

cause it’s a never-ending battle. The mice ate the wires in her old Subaru, and then while she was away visiting family they built a nest in the bottom of her gas stove, in amongst the burner, so it had to be replaced.

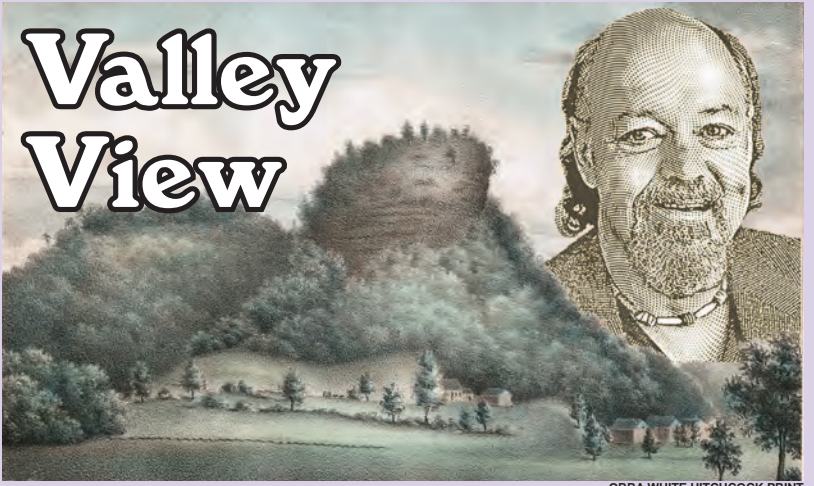
The cats are responsible for the outdoor mice, and she sets traps inside. “I catch a mouse every night,” she says. “I hate doing it; it’s so depressing. I thought of myself at first as someone who does not kill animals. I used to rehome them in the woods across the street and they’d be right back. I was so naive! Now I use more expensive traps that have a ‘killer bar’ that kills them instantly rather than the cheaper wood traps that they could drag around for days while dying slowly.”

Josh Heinemann has battled mice in his home and his car for years. He has tried various humane methods to eliminate them, with varying degrees of success. He suggested using some really strong – and expensive – mint oil, as mice reportedly don’t like the smell.

He also uses an ultrasonic device that he plugs into a kitchen outlet, but notes that you can’t let anything on the counter block the transmission of the sonic waves.

Lately, however, he has also set traps, and has caught two or three dozen mice. A mechanic friend of his also killed 56 mice by filling a bucket with water and fixing

see **MICE** page B5



By GARY SANDERSON

**GREENFIELD** – A new player recently entered my orbit, temporarily reorienting my focus about 10 miles north. Her name is Andrea Liebenow Varney, daughter of my late neighbor and friend, Sylvia Smead Gallagher.

Three years younger than me, Varney grew up and graduated from high school in Greenfield, and has lived for decades in Proctor, Vermont. She is particularly proud of her mother’s Smead lineage that links her to the original proprietors of Deerfield and its Green River district, now Greenfield. Which is precisely what led her to me – well, that and my newspaper ramblings, and my friendship with her mom.

Sylvia was a Greenfield Meadows native who grew up on a dairy farm, which burned in 1957 and died with her parents. When we met as neighbors sometime in 1997, she was a retired Pioneer Valley Regional School English teacher. She often stopped to chat in passing on her daily walks with a friend through the Upper Meadows. It was at her encouragement that I joined her for two terms on the Greenfield historical commission.

Varney reached out to me around Labor Day, leaving telephone and email messages. She was scrambling to complete a book started by her mother about the Greenfield Smeads. Her mother, who died at 88 in 2015, had been determined to finish the crowning achievement about her family’s historic landholdings. Now Andrea is tunnel-visioned to complete the job.

She thought maybe I could help her with old deeds, especially obsolete place names and landscape features. More than anything else, she was seeking geographical orientation to help her place old Smead land. Having left Greenfield 40 years ago, her intimacy with the Franklin County landscape was not sharp.

Little did she know that, by dumb luck, she had tapped the right vein. Having been immersed in old land records myself since the COVID crisis broke, I understood many issues she was battling. Some of the same hurdles had confronted me when researching old deeds from Deerfield, Greenfield, and East Whately.

Plus, I harbor a personal interest in the upper Greenfield Meadows, where I own a historic home on property first owned by important Deerfield proprietor Mehuman Hinsdale (1673-1736), followed by his son Samuel (1708-1786) and his namesake son and grandson. The moniker “Samuel Hinsdale place” has thus been permanently attached to my property.

The Hinsdales were prolific early Deerfield landowners. Mehuman, Deerfield’s first-born English child, owned more land at the time of his death – 5,600 acres – than anyone in his community. The Smeads were also among the top handful of Deerfield landowners. Plus, they were connected to the Upper Meadows Hinsdales by marriage and abutting properties. So of course I was game to Ms. Varney’s endeavor.

In fact, not long before we met on the phone, I had already tinkered with some old Green River deeds centered on East Main Street and my own neighborhood. cursory research led to Hinsdale, Brooks, Stockwell, Denio, Allen, Wells, and Willard genealogy refreshers as well.

Ms. Varney’s plea for help awakened this latent research, and ultimately helped me untangle a vexing snag I had put on temporary hold. Preoccupied by South Deerfield and East Whately, I hadn’t wanted to get distracted elsewhere, and when an interesting Green River puzzle arose, I had flicked it aside till winter.

Well, it didn’t quite play out that way. Thanks to Ms. Varney’s dogged determination, we’ve already untangled that key snag – one focused on a four-century-old dividing line between the upper and lower Green River meadow lands.

The tangle goes back to Deerfield pioneers Quintin Stockwell and William Brooks – two important 17<sup>th</sup>-century Meadows landowners with land about a mile down the road from me – and to Meadows deed references to “Brooks Brook” and “Brooks Plain,” names stricken from the local vernacular centuries ago.

Stockwell died in 1714, some 30 years after moving to Connecticut where he is buried. Brooks died in 1688, but some of his children stuck around for the

see **VALLEY VIEW** page B3

# NOTES FROM THE HEARTFELT CAFE

BY TROUBLE MANDESON

**GREENFIELD** – Why did the red junglefowl cross the road? Because chickens didn’t exist yet! *Bwak, bwak, bwak!*

While contemplating my next column, I was reminded more than once that Thanksgiving is on the horizon and millions of homes will be preparing poultry for the holiday table. It made me wonder when humans began to consider chickens and other fowl as food, and when they were domesticated for consumption.

It seems that about 8,000 years ago, the ancestor to our domesticated chickens was likely a cross between the red junglefowl (*Gallus gallus*), which still runs wild in most of southeast Asia, and the gray junglefowl (*Gallus sonneratii*).

Since *Gallus gallus* is still living, researchers have been able to study and compare the behaviors of wild and domesticated birds. They posit that once hunter-gatherer societies began to settle in one place, they needed reliable food sources like crops and animals and thus began to domesticate animals and create agricultural systems. These systems are the root of our modern societies.

Once a specific species was found to be the most useful, or the tastiest, the gene pool was simplified in or-



A roasted chicken breast can be diced, shredded, or sliced for sandwiches, for chicken salad, or as an ingredient in other dishes, or eaten as is.

der to maintain those qualities. The process of selective breeding has been refined over the generations as our knowledge of gene technology has expanded. In 2004, scientists mapped the chicken genome and used it to trace its evolution.

Once chickens evolved from their wild counterparts, humans bred them for fighting. Archeologists in Israel have uncovered chicken bones bearing knife marks dated from 400 to 200 B.C., more

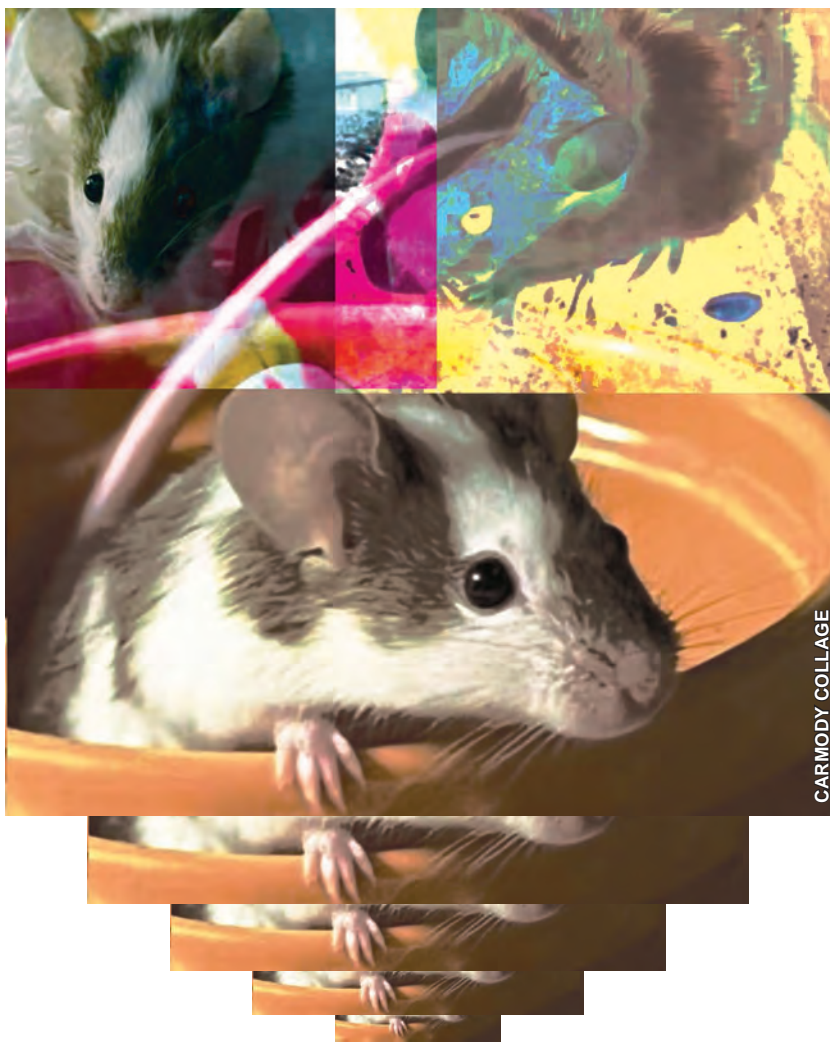
than 2,000 years ago, and with twice as many female chicken bones as male. Female chickens don’t fight, so it seems that the birds were headed for the dinner table instead of the arena.

Chickens were introduced to the Egyptians in 1750 B.C., but it wasn’t until a thousand years later that they showed any interest in eating them. At that time, they discovered artificial insemination and began to create

see **HEARTFELT** page B8



# Pet of the Week



## “SUGAR BABY”

Sugar Baby came to the shelter with her best buds Kit Kat, Butterfinger, and Sweet Tart. These mice have to go home with at least one other friend from the group as a pair, or you can adopt all four!

Watch these very cute mice scurry around their cage and play in all their little tunnels and houses! They love to spend the day cuddled up together sleeping, which is so adorable to see.

Unfortunately, these mice came from a home with an abundance of mice, so they are not used to being handled at all. With some time and patience, this group of mice will become more comfortable with being picked up and petted.

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



# Sex Matters

a sex-positive health column

by STEPHANIE BAIRD

**SOUTH HADLEY** – For this month, let’s take a closer look at vulva-related physiology. Recently we have seen the word “clitoris” in the news more than ever before, thanks to an October 17 *New York Times* article by Rachel Gross headlined “Half the World has a Clitoris. Why Don’t Doctors Study It?”

At the same time, halfway across the world in Japan, researchers were able to verify that “squirting” – a release of fluids other than vaginal lubrication – indeed can and does occur for some vulvas. Their study, called “Enhanced Visualization of Female Squirting,” was published in the *International Journal of Urology* in August 2022. We will look a little more closely at both clitorises and squirting today.

I first noticed the *Times* article via a listserv that provides updates to the Our Whole Lives sex education curriculum that we teach. How delightful to see folks sharing it with the tagline “clits in the news!” I’ll share some of the takeaways of this article.

Most of the medical practitioners interviewed by Gross noted that they learned very little about the clitoral structure in any of their training, nor do most of the anatomy textbooks devote more than a footnote. Yet folks undergoing surgical procedures in and around the clitoris can notice a reduction of orgasmic ability and/or pleasurable sensation, sometimes for the remainder of their life. This is because the full clitoral structure is much more than the tip visible at the apex of the vulva and the clitoral hood.

All embryos begin with vulva and clitoral erectile morphology. Chro-

mosomes, hormones, and chemicals send messages to these early erectile structures which can cause them to remain as clitorises and vulvas or develop into penises and testes.

In 2005 the first female urologist in Australia, Dr. Helen O’Connell, mapped the clitoral structure for the first time. Gross writes that Dr. O’Connell found that the full clitoris “extends far beneath the surface, comprising two teardrop-shaped bulbs, two arms and a shaft.” Recent researchers have discovered that the clitoral structure has far more nerve endings than the 8,000 previously estimated.

Doctors attempting to treat conditions like *lichen sclerosus vulvar*, or performing surgeries such as episiotomies, hip surgeries, pelvic mesh surgeries, and labiaplasties, can often inadvertently damage nerves belonging to the clitoral structure, introducing pain and reducing pleasure. Clitoral researchers and supporters are also indicating a “danger zone” around the clitoral area to help surgeons avoid potentially harming or injuring this essential structure, 90% of which is now known to exist beneath the surface.

All the medical practitioners cited in the *Times* article agreed that a lack of societal focus or interest in acknowledging and improving vulvar sexual pleasure is behind this lack of information about and attention to clitorises, despite the fact that “half the world has one.” When one doctor started to examine clitoral structures specifically, they found that one in four vulvas had problems with the clitoral hood sticking to the glans.

Doctors also noted that OB/GYN care is essentially focused on cervical and vaginal health: efforts to get or avoid getting pregnant, and STI prevention and treatment. Medical clitoral activists are advocating that urologists take on the care of the clitoris, and that if you are in line for any surgeries in your vulva, pelvic, or even hip region, you make sure you receive full informed consent about any procedures and ask how they might impact your clitoral health and sexual pleasure.

vas during orgasm.

It turns out several kinds of fluid can be produced during arousal and orgasm. The first kind is the well-known lubrication, intended to improve comfort during intercourse. The second fluid that can appear for most vulvas is more of a milky fluid from the urethra, produced by the Skene glands, as orgasm is experienced. Thirdly, about 5% of vulvas go on to release a large amount of clear fluid from the urethra, dubbed “squirting.”

The Japanese researchers were able to determine that the copious fluids ejaculated by this small number of vulvas contain fluids produced by the bladder – but not solely made of urine. Some of the subjects’ fluid in the recent Japanese study contained prostate-specific antigen (PSA), with both PSA and urine mixing together in the urethra before ejaculation. Researchers in France also discovered this mixture in 2015.

I have been fortunate enough to be able to ask some individuals about their experiences with “squirting” over the years. Anecdotally, most individuals who have produced this mixture – or experienced their partner producing it – note that it does not taste or smell like urine. It is often described as quite a bit of fluid, with some folks stating that it makes some sexual activity almost too slippery for them, and can certainly result in a large wet area on the bed.

Some folks I have spoken to also noted that they began experiencing “squirting” later in life, possibly after childbirth or in perimenopause.

Don’t be surprised if a vulva in your life – yours or a partner’s – experiences this at some point. As it does seem to relate to arousal and orgasm, not just stimulation, consider it a sign of intense interest in that sexual activity, maybe even a blessing of sorts. Just be sure to put down some towels before redeeming that particular Groupon for the local water park.

*Stephanie Baird, LMHC is an OWL Facilitator, EMDR Consultant and Psychotherapist, certified in Advancing Clinical Excellence in Sexuality (ACES), and encourages her clients towards thriving sexual health. She welcomes feedback and suggestions at [sexmatters@montaguereporter.org](mailto:sexmatters@montaguereporter.org).*

## Senior Center Activities

NOVEMBER 21 TO DECEMBER 2

**WENDELL**  
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.

**LEVERETT**  
Chair Yoga classes are held on Zoom on Wednesdays. Foot care clinic is held monthly. For more information, contact the Leverett COA at (413) 548-1022 x 2, or [coa@leverett.ma.us](mailto:coa@leverett.ma.us).

**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 more information please call 863-9357.

**Monday 11/21**  
10:15 a.m. Aerobics  
11 a.m. Chair Exercise  
1 p.m. Knitting & Handcrafts

**Tuesday 11/22**  
10 a.m. A Matter of Balance  
1 p.m. Chair Yoga  
3 p.m. Tai Chi

**Wednesday 11/23**  
10:15 a.m. Aerobics  
11 a.m. Chair Aerobics

12 p.m. Bring Your Lunch Bingo  
4 p.m. Mat Yoga

**Thursday 11/24**  
1 p.m. Cards & Games

**Friday 11/25**  
10:15 a.m. Aerobics  
11 a.m. Chair Aerobics

**Monday 11/28**  
10:15 a.m. Aerobics  
11 a.m. Chair Exercise  
1 p.m. Knitting & Handcrafts

**Tuesday 11/29**  
1 p.m. Chair Yoga  
3 p.m. Tai Chi

**Wednesday 11/30**  
10:15 a.m. Aerobics  
11 a.m. Chair Aerobics  
12 p.m. Bring Your Lunch Bingo  
4 p.m. Mat Yoga

**Thursday 12/1**  
1 p.m. Cards & Games

**Friday 12/2**  
10:15 a.m. Aerobics  
11 a.m. Chair Aerobics

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

Brown Bag lunch is the first Thursday of each month. Veterans Services the first Wednesday of each month. Erving van services available: Must call 24

hours in advance for a ride to any scheduled appointment. For more information, please call (413) 423-3649.

**Monday 11/21**  
9 a.m. Interval  
10:15 a.m. Seated Workout

**Tuesday 11/22**  
9 a.m. Good For U  
10 a.m. Line Dancing

**Wednesday 11/23**  
9 a.m. Cardio Low Impact  
10:15 a.m. Chair Aerobics  
11:30 a.m. Bingo

**Thursday 11/24**  
9 a.m. Core & Balance  
10 a.m. Barre Fusion

**Friday 11/25**  
9 a.m. Quilting & Open Sew

**Monday 11/28**  
9 a.m. Interval  
10:15 a.m. Seated Workout

**Tuesday 11/29**  
9 a.m. Good For U  
10 a.m. Line Dancing

**Wednesday 11/30**  
9 a.m. Cardio Low Impact  
10:15 a.m. Chair Aerobics  
11:30 a.m. Bingo

**Thursday 12/1**  
9 a.m. Core & Balance  
10 a.m. Barre Fusion

**Friday 12/2**  
9 a.m. Quilting & Open Sew

MONTAGUE COMMUNITY TELEVISION NEWS

## Instant Immortality

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

**TURNERS FALLS** – Enjoy rewatching the Linda Ronstadt tribute band The Linda Ronstadt Experience, with American Idol finalist Tristan McIntosh, from their performance at the Shea Theater on November 12. The recent Montague and Gill selectboard meetings are uploaded, as is the Montague finance committee meeting from November 7 and the GMRSD school committee meeting from October 25.

All community members are welcome to submit their videos to be

aired on Channel 17 and featured on the MCTV Vimeo page. MCTV is always available to assist in local video production as well. Cameras, tripods, and lighting equipment are available for checkout, and filming and editing assistance can be provided. And remember, MCTV is still looking for board members!

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](mailto:infomontaguetv@gmail.com).

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**VALLEY VIEW** from page B1  
long haul. Greenfield split off from Deerfield in 1753.

Late 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century local historians and friends George Sheldon (*History of Deerfield*, 1895) and Francis McGee Thompson (*History of Greenfield*, 1904) agree that Stockwell owned the northernmost Lower Meadows lot, and that it was abutted north by Brooks, owner of the southernmost Upper Meadows lot. So that establishes where the Lower Meadows ended and the Upper Meadows began. Between their two 20-acre parcels ran a then-unnamed brook first known as Brooks Brook.

Though Sheldon doesn’t try to explicitly define the brook between those two early properties, Thompson does. He claims it’s the stream we know as Hinsdale Brook. That is an unfortunate mistake that has survived and been repeated through the modern day.

In fact, judging from several clear references to the stream flowing between the Stockwell and Brooks lots, Brooks Brook is now known as Allen Brook. Hinsdale Brook forms the *northern* boundary of my own Upper Meadows property three-quarters of a mile up the road, where there’s not a whiff of evidence that Brooks or Stockwell ever lived or owned property.

There is, however, a caveat that helps to justify Thompson’s error. An 1843 flood, which Thompson does mention, rerouted Hinsdale Brook to today’s straight path from within sight of my home to the Green River. Let me explain:

Hinsdale Brook flows some four miles from the western hills of East Shelburne and East Colrain to the Green River, pulling in several sparkling upland springs along the way.

Before 1843, the stream passed my house at the base of Smead Hill and took a sharp southern turn maybe 200 yards downstream. From there it followed Colrain Road south, hugging the eastern perimeter of the North Meadows Cemetery before leaning gently east for less than a mile to its old confluence with Green River. Near the end, Allen Brook joined it for a short final run to the Green River.

The 1843 flood overwhelmed a sharp southern elbow downstream from my home and cut a new channel straight to the Green River. Today, just before passing under the Plain Road bridge at the Brookside Animal Hospital, Hinsdale Brook pulls in the tiny Punch Brook, a spring stream whose wide, deep channel it seized for a short final run to the Green River. The confluence is a half-mile upstream from the old one.

The older course of the Meadows’ dominant Green River tributary is shown clearly on the 1871 Beers Atlas map of Greenfield, as well as topo and wall maps that

used the same pre-1843 prototype which remained the standard for at least 50 years. Newer maps, of course, reflect the change.

Varney’s collective neighborhood memory told her that the Upper Meadows began around Allen Brook, and that was also my understanding. Thus the confusion surrounding Sheldon and Thompson’s “Brooks Brook” references, which wouldn’t have fit even following its historic course.

Interpreting old land records can be a difficult chore, and Thompson got burned by it, or accepted inaccurate information from someone he respected. In his defense, Brooks and Hinsdale brooks would not have been named when the Brooks and Stockwell properties were granted. These names came later. Complicating matters even more, “Brooks Brook” became Allen Brook long before Sheldon or Thompson were born. Nonetheless, Thompson has no excuse. He lived for many decades in the neighborhood where his wife was born. He should have known better.

When I first stumbled upon the Thompson error, I accepted it without seeking confirmation. I figured he’d know. That was my mistake. But I knew something was out of whack, and suspected it had to be related to Hinsdale Brook’s 1843 change of course. Being focused on other people and places, I didn’t view it as an urgent matter. I made a file. It could wait till winter.

Varney was of a different opinion. To her, resolving that snag was high-priority. She needed an immediate determination before she could accurately plot adjacent Smead landholdings. After an intense round of research, her victorious, late-night email to me proclaimed with certainty that the border stream in question had to be Allen Brook. Her bold claim set off a string of emails that ended with us in total agreement.

I have since then read the Deerfield town record granting Stockwell 20 acres of his choosing from Green River meadow lands. The grant settled a debt for boarding Deerfield’s first minister, Reverend Samuel Mather, who was here for the infamous 1675 Bloody Brook ambush and gone by 1680.

Sheldon says the Stockwell lot was granted in 1684, which doesn’t jive with the 1694 document published by Thompson. That’s irrelevant. What matters most is that the Deerfield town record locates the lot’s northern boundary as lying “upon the Hill on the north side of the Brook that comes out of the great Ash swamp.”

This headwater swamp still exists off Route 2, up the hill near Kenburne Orchards and a moccasin store. The hill named as the northern boundary also survives, supporting the long-abandoned Gorge Road to Shelburne across



The 1871 Beers Atlas seems to show a then-outdated path of the Hinsdale Brook.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

### Negative Findings; Big Bear; Aggro Phone Hawkers; Three Hit Deer; Getting High and Cranking the Music

#### Monday, 11/7

10:03 a.m. Airport manager called to report a suspicious vehicle partially blocking a driveway on Industrial Boulevard, making it difficult for trucks to pull in. School resource officer contacted in case it was a student without a parking pass. Negative findings. Manager will monitor vehicle until 4 p.m., at which time he will consider tow options.

2:58 p.m. Caller would like to speak to an officer about a woman she knows who is being harassed by her neighbors on Federal Street. Officer spoke to party; advised of options.

4:54 p.m. 911 caller states she is walking along Avenue A across from St. Kaz heading towards Food City and there was a male urinating in the bushes, stumbling on his feet. Male described as wearing a black sweatshirt that says “Big Bear.” Officer out with male party. Male taken into protective custody, then released to family.

5:06 p.m. Report of threatening/harassment on Federal Street. Advised of options.

10:20 p.m. Caller states she picked up a dog in Colrain and is bringing it to the shelter in Montague. Animal control officer also called in requesting officer meet her there. Officer advises dog placed in shelter.

#### Tuesday, 11/8

7:52 a.m. Walk-in party reporting that his wife’s white and purple Mongoose mountain bike was stolen from the shed outside of their home on Turnpike Road sometime in the last day or two. Services rendered.

8:49 a.m. While checking the area around Railroad

Salvage, an officer found damage to the foot bridge. A fence that prevents people from falling into the canal has been pushed down. FirstLight Power notified.

3:03 p.m. Caller from South Prospect Street concerned about the dog across the street, who is out loose. She is out walking her dog, and the neighboring dog attacked her dog in the past. Caller called back; she was able to get into her basement.

4:44 p.m. Multiple 911 callers reporting a structure fire on Bridge Street with flames showing. Officers requesting DPW road closure signs. Bridge Street shut down from Crescent to East Main. Officer requesting detective and CSO be contacted. Both *en route*. CPAC notified. Road reopened.

7:18 p.m. Officer reporting that a deer was struck at East Mineral and Millers Falls Roads and the vehicle left the scene. Deer moved to side of road.

#### Wednesday, 11/9

8:42 a.m. Caller reporting light smoke coming from a second floor on Bridge Street. FD notified and on the scene.

8:48 a.m. Caller from Second Street states that someone broke into his car recently and stole medication. Last night, someone threw garbage onto his car. Caller states that if the police don’t handle it, he will. Advised of options.

2:30 p.m. Greenfield PD requesting that traffic be shut

down at the canal bridge due to an accident on their side. Services rendered.

3:08 p.m. 911 caller requesting assistance with a lockout in Montague Center. Infant is in the car. Services rendered.

3:46 p.m. 911 caller reporting that she was just in an accident with airbag deployment at Avenue A and Eleventh Street. Ambulance and FD on scene. Tows requested for both vehicles. Vehicle 1 operator being transported to hospital. Report taken; summons issued.

4:10 p.m. Caller states he is at his mother’s house on Bridge Street and some damage was done to their property during a structure fire last night at a neighboring property. Caller advises the damage is consistent with a large vehicle not able to make a corner while traffic was being diverted during the fire. Damage was to shrubs, bushes, and a fire hydrant. Investigated.

#### Thursday, 11/10

5:04 p.m. Caller from Second Street states that someone damaged the front door to his apartment. Report taken.

#### Friday, 11/11

5:26 p.m. Caller from Millers Falls Road states that someone damaged her garage door while she was at work today. Report taken.

#### Saturday, 11/12

11:23 p.m. Caller states that his vehicle was struck by a deer a few moments ago when he was going to pick up his son. Caller states there is heavy damage to his vehicle from the deer, including a smashed window and damage to the door. Caller advises this happened near the tech school.

#### Sunday, 11/13

12:15 p.m. Report of a large white dog running loose in the Fourth Street area. ACO notified and responding. Unable to locate.

1:59 p.m. 911 caller from Oakman Street reporting that his lawn tractor is on fire. Transferred to Shelburne Control; PD responding.

8:26 p.m. Suspicious person report on Federal Street. Officer advises that a neighbor approached the caller’s residence and knocked on the door because she is missing a cat.

8:28 p.m. Shelburne Control advising Greenfield PD is out with some type of disturbance at Route 2 and Factory Hollow Road; GPD inquiring about background information on a prior call. Services rendered.

10:53 p.m. Caller from Federal Street reports her neighbor in the apartment next to her is playing music loudly, which is shaking the caller’s side of the house and woke her child.

#### Monday, 11/14

Caller requests officer tell neighbor to turn down the

music. Officer advises he spoke with both neighbors, who report ongoing issues between them. Options explained to both individuals.

#### Friday, 11/11

8:26 a.m. Caller reporting a silver Saturn parked in the Aubuchon’s lot for the past two days; vehicle has heavy front end damage. Report taken.

1:49 p.m. Multiple people complaining about aggressive salespeople trying to sell phones and tablets outside Family Dollar. Involved parties advised of complaint. They have permission from Family Dollar to be out there.

2:31 p.m. Officer advising of very minor accident in Food City parking lot.

6:51 p.m. 911 caller reporting a possibly intoxicated driver leaving a bar in Millers Falls and heading toward Greenfield.

Caller hung up before giving name/number. Referred to an officer.

9:39 p.m. Caller reporting that the road is flooded at Walnut Street and Montague City Road. DPW contacted.

#### Saturday, 11/12

9:13 a.m. Caller reporting four mailboxes smashed on Ripley Road sometime overnight. Report taken.

4:01 p.m. 911 caller from Turnpike Road states she has video footage of two male parties taking a dirtbike and a four-wheeler from her lawn around 7 p.m. yesterday. Referred to an officer.

9:01 p.m. Caller states someone is setting off fireworks; unsure if it is on K or L Street.

9:02 p.m. Caller from G Street states that people are being loud down the street from her and possibly just set off fireworks. Unfounded.

1:57 a.m. 911 caller reporting neighbor disturbance on Federal Street. Advised of options.

3:02 p.m. Caller states that a female was wandering around outside on Avenue A and kept pulling her pants down as if to go to the bathroom. Caller believes she might be inside at this point. Referred to an officer.

4:27 p.m. 911 caller from Keith Street states that kids are getting high and cranking the music, causing a disturbance. No noise upon officer’s arrival. Parties advised of complaint.

6:20 p.m. Report of trespassing on Federal Street. No response requested.

11:24 p.m. Shelburne Control advises FD out to Lightlife Foods for an HVAC issue and smoke in the building.

#### Monday, 11/14

2:58 a.m. Vehicle repossession on L Street.

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MOVIE REVIEW

*The Banshees of Inisherin* (2022)

By REBECCA TIPPENS

**COLRAIN** – Having spent a month in a stone cabin on the coast of County Cork one distant January, I appreciated the shots of the Irish countryside in *The Banshees of Inisherin*. The movie showed the centrality of the pub as the congregant center for the community, more essential than the pro-forma gatherings for Sunday services. Yet, after seeing this film, I wanted to warn people not to attend it. I left the theater with a depression lasting until my awakening the next day.

Film is entertainment, but I cannot say that this one is. And yet it has been more thoroughly reviewed, positively, than many others. The size of the audience at the Amherst Cinema was larger than any I have attended since the pre-COVID days, and it felt that they were primed to be entertained.

I have been trying to mull over why the positive response. In part, I believe, it is because there are some directors that critics love, and Martin McDonagh, the director of this film, is one. Others, such as Oliver Stone, are generally hated. So there is that. And this film does a bit of genre-breaking – critics find that creative.

This movie has been labeled as a “dark comedy.” In the first half of the film, clever banters drew some belly laughs of anticipated excitement from the audience I was a part of – in part, I imagine, at having returned to a cinema community. Yet, I ask, what are the stories that we are sharing with one another and seeing together?

I wish there were some manner of guild that discussed how to repair our culture through film. I am talking about something more than working to assure fair gender and racial representation, as the film community has become more aware of those issues. I am talking about having producers, directors, and writers collectively involved in a critique of the zeitgeist, and focused on a commitment to tell stories that could help us heal.

In reaction to the policies of socialist or Communist nations in the 20th century, where there was censorship of the medium, Westerners were so overly reactive that for a while, you were not allowed to create film or theater that referenced politics! However, today, we increasingly share in a global culture, one that some recognize to be on the eve of destruction. Would it not be lovely if film could inspire us – without being propaganda – to create a better world together, moving us from the edge?

We do, with our friends, reflect on

the stories shared in cinema. They become the starting point for conversation. *The Banshees of Inisherin*, however, offers no vision forward. Perhaps one could interpret it, sociologically speaking, as a critique of men’s emotionally crippled dynamics, but there is nary a sense of possibility or transcendence from this, although there might have been plot openings. For instance, women were deeply involved in the Irish war of independence and fought for equal suffrage, which they won in 1922.

*The Banshees of Inisherin* is set in County Mayo just after the Irish Civil War, at a time when skirmishes were still evident on the horizon. The dynamic it explores between two village men is perhaps a metaphor of the unresolved conflict at large. They are unable to work through their differences civilly, and the villagers are standoffish, witnessing their dynamic as a drama none are willing to help repair. This slides the viewer into a reservoir of despairing hopelessness.

There are minor supporting roles by women, and these are to my mind like caricatures: the gossip-hungry postmistress; the single fortune-telling banshee (referenced inexplicably as plural in the film’s title), who is wrong in her forecasts; the “good sister” who leaves town without telling her brother – whom she has forever lived with – that she is even contemplating such a move until after she has packed her bag and booked a ticket. This last storyline is puzzling, but convenient for the plot, and indicative of the minor and mostly canned roles played by women. I also found it very distracting that the younger women were plastered with too much makeup.

Then there is the heartbreaking violence – cover-your-eyes violence that includes the death or murder of animals, maiming, drowning, arson, and a police chief’s physical abuse of his son. Ouch! And there is no exit.

The acting of the two male protagonists is consummate. Most likely there will be Oscar nominations, which depresses me further, for more will go to see this “no exit” film.

Calling this film “dark comedy” as a means of cataloging and accepting it feels unimaginative and wrong. One might ask why we have such categories, but a larger question is *Is this the kind of film that serves us in these confusing times?*

Let us examine ourselves with some measure of context, and at least an undercurrent of possibility. Or just give me more films like *Marcel, the Shell With Shoes On!*

*At Amherst Cinema and Greenfield Garden Cinemas.*



Brendan Gleeson (left) and Colin Farrell (right) play two men locked in a pointless feud in Martin McDonagh’s new *Banshees of Inisherin*.

MONTV / MUSIK / MOUNTAIN



LV: Dan Melchior

Interview by TROY CURRY with J. BURKETT

**TURNERS FALLS** – If you look up Dan’s name on Wikipedia, this is basically all it says: “Dan Melchior is an English singer, songwriter and guitarist, often labeled a ‘garage rock’ musician.” This is true, but basically just the tip of the Melchior iceberg. There is so much more to add, starting with the unbelievable number of releases he has out.

Most indie bands have three to 10 records... he has 30 to 100! Most musicians are in a couple projects; he is in 20 or more. And while a lot of musicians mess around with doing art, he has made an insane amount of it...

And yes, he has played with some big-name folks, including Billy Childish, but he is really on his own orbit, doing things in a super DIY way. A good place to start might be one of his newer releases, or *Christmas for the Crows*, one he recommends folks to hear. Check him out, or just listen to what he says below.

**MMM:** *What are some early music memories? Did you play in school bands?*

**DM:** No. We didn’t have school bands in London, other than ones we started ourselves, but if we’d had one I wouldn’t have joined it. I never joined anything, I wasn’t in the Scouts. I’m a non-joiner, haha.

**MMM:** *What were the schools like overseas? I read the Morrissey auto-bio, and it sounded hellish!*

**DM:** I’m pretty sure my experiences were different from Steven’s. No Catholic guilt or any of that stuff. Sadly his suffering has made him a very vindictive man.

**MMM:** *What were some of the first bands you were really into?*

**DM:** I loved hip hop, especially things produced by Marley Marl. I used to get home from school and listen to pirate radio for three hours, and record it all on cassette. Those tapes are long gone.

**MMM:** *Would you like to talk about some of the dub sound systems in London, and their impact on you?*

**DM:** I had family in Brixton and friends in Balham – I come from the suburbs – so I would hear these early ‘80s sound systems in the park. I didn’t know much about it at the time, but all the delay and reverb sounded very exotic and exciting to me.

Some of that British dancehall stuff was really good. You can hear the kind of thing I’m talking about on the Soul Jazz comp *Watch How the People Dancing*.

**MMM:** *Were you into a lot of American stuff?*

**DM:** I was. The stuff I’ve always loved most is the music of the African diaspora, though. Obviously a lot of that came to fruition in the United States, but Cuban, Jamaican, etc. music is all in that category. We’d be nowhere without Africa, would we?

**MMM:** *For sure. Do you have a different impression of stuff here now that you live here?*

**DM:** No, I still love the music that happened here, but living here for 22 years has made me highly unappreciative of the health care system, gun laws, evangelical religion, etc.

**MMM:** *What was the first record you were on?*

**DM:** It was a Holly Golightly record, I think.

**MMM:** *You have an amazing sound, and I know from collaborating with you that you work very quickly with both music and art. Can you discuss your process?*

**DM:** I do things in a way that probably makes no sense. I have to make things interesting to me, so I try not to bring many preconceived ideas about how things are supposed to be done, or how I’m supposed to do them to a project.

I like things that are off kilter and incorrect. The thing that hampers a lot of music and art is the correctness/standard-ized proficiency of it, where everything is captured perfectly in whatever the prevailing fashion of the day is. Band/artist rehearsed to the point of monotony. It works for some things, but is the worst thing to do to a lot of music. Some things benefit from a more impressionistic, or even expressionistic, approach.

Having some sort of schoolmasterly type of engineer or producer is often seen as important, though, especially when there’s real money involved. I have the luxury of doing what I want, though, as my music isn’t popular. No one stands to make a lot of money off of me, so it doesn’t matter.... I often think that in the old days, I could have been a negative A&R man – as in, if I liked it, the label should definitely not sign it.

**MMM:** *What are some of your all-time favorite recordings, or current recordings you are listening to?*

**DM:** I’m in an interesting phase right now. I went home to the UK recently and picked up a load of my old records. I’m very into rock ‘n’ roll-type stuff at the moment – no backwards snoring or slowed-down bird song records. I was really enjoying The Bobby Fuller Four earlier today.

**MMM:** *We discussed Bullwackie while working on your lovely Mel-pomene LP...*

**DM:** I love Bullwackie. His production is fantastic. Very interesting to think it was done in NYC. I would put him only behind Lee Perry as a producer of reggae.

**MMM:** *We’ve also talked about Henry Flynt.*

**DM:** I love Henry Flynt’s music very much. I love the story of how he came to his own mutant hillbilly music, as I understand it. I haven’t attempted to look into his philosophy or any of that, as I’m scared it will ruin my appreciation of his work.

**MMM:** *Any favorite or memorable concerts you’ve seen?*

**DM:** I’m a weirdo, because I don’t go to many shows, and when I do they don’t tend to have that great an effect on me. Having said that, I saw a really good Home Blitz gig once. The bassist was playing this weird modern session musician bass – it might have been a five-string – that was totally bright and twangy with almost no low end. My friend Sarim was on drums, and had to stop playing to throw up at one point. Daniel DiMaggio was playing really great, angular guitar parts interspersed in a very cool way with his vocals.

It was really amazing. It was at the rooftop bar of some place in Austin.

**MMM:** *Were you influenced by any authors?*

**DM:** I suppose I have been influenced. *Masters of Atlantis* by Charles Portis and *Hunger* by Knut Hamsun are two of my favorite novels. I’ve actually tried to write a book a couple of times, but it’s beyond me. Writing songs is good, because it’s sort of slapdash and messy. You can get away with accumulated soundbites.

**MMM:** *I read about you and Graham Lambkin doing lots of really quick painting collaborations. Would you like to talk about your visual art, and your current exhibition at Mystery Train Records in Amherst?*

**DM:** That art didn’t come out very well, funnily enough. It was a bit too much of an “exercise.” You get too preoccupied with the process to the point where what you’re doing is not relatable to other people outside of the project, or interesting for anyone else to look at.

The stuff I have up at Mystery Train are portraits of musicians. That’s what I’m focusing on these days. I really enjoy doing them.

**MMM:** *Would you like to discuss any current projects, or anything important to you that we’ve missed?*

**DM:** I waited two years to get any releases out. A lot of people did. And now, naturally, they’ve all come out at once, so that everyone can use the word “prolific” in conjunction with my name. Making more than one record a year is very suspicious to traditionalists locked into some sort of Video-Album-Tour idea they got from watching MTV as a child.

I’m very happy with all the releases. The LP on Feeding Tube is probably the best thing I’ve ever done, lyric-wise. It’s called *CB Odyssey*.

**MMM:** *You’ve played in western Mass – what did you like about it?*

**DM:** I went to a good diner for breakfast. I went to a magic store and got a sticker that said “Proud Magician” on it. Those things were fun.

No one came to the show though, haha...

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# MR Wrapping Paper Edition Artist Profile #7

By REPORTER STAFF

This summer we invited people to submit design proposals for a special Wrapping Paper Issue to be printed in November. This fundraiser for the *Montague Reporter* will feature full-color designs printed on double pages of newsprint, meant to wrap presents in. Seven of these pages will feature the work of local artists, with a cover image of *MoRe* headers from the past year.

We received 34 submissions to our call, and chose seven from the proposals we received. We are so excited to bring these wonderful designs to life in this special issue, which will go to press next week!

Rochelle Shicoff proposed a painting which they believe captures the “sequence, saturation, and



## Documenting ‘The Garden Where Dreams Grow’

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

**GREENFIELD** – I came upon this idea when I went to the Greenfield Garden Cinema and found a flyer mentioning that Jon Boschen, a cinema historian, was going to do a feature-length documentary film about the history of the Garden, which opened in 1929. I really liked the idea of doing a profile on it. I learned that the title was going to be *The Garden Where Dreams Grow*.

I ended up talking to Isaac Mass, the owner of the theater, about it. Mass purchased the place on November 15, 2019. The title of the film is based on “the tagline that we added to the business in November 2019 when Angela and I brought the cinema,” he told me.

He added some of the history of the cinema: “The place was named in 1929 because it had colonial garden-themed murals. They are gone now. But we believe that the Garden is still here, and we grow dreams. Young people come to the Garden and see the world outside Franklin County and know that they can grow up to be astronauts, scientists, entertainers, athletes, business people, politicians and so much more. We think we help people grow their dreams.”

The cinema made the National Historic Registry in 1988, while under the ownership of the Western Mass Theater Company (the Goldstein family).

When I asked Mass about the film, he told me that it is going to be “sort of a history of the Garden and how it plays a role in the community.” He also gave his thoughts on the history of the place: “This has been a place where people have come together to gather,” he said. “It’s a bright and storied history at

intensity of the seasons in Western Massachusetts.” Rochelle’s studio is surrounded by windows, and creates a refreshing and peaceful feeling for the making of art.

We asked each artist the same three questions, and Rochelle answers this time:

**MR:** *What would you want your wrapping paper to say, and feel like, for the person it is being gifted to?*

**RS:** I would like my image to say, “Savor every minute of your every day.”

**MR:** *What gifts would you want to receive wrapped in your paper?*

**RS:** Wrapped separately: a pine-scented candle, a watercolor set with watercolor paper pad, and a Canon Power Shot A3100IS camera.

**MR:** *What other gifts have newspapers given you over the years?*

**RS:** Of course, news about national, international, and local events, information about cultural events, opinions from columnists whom I follow, and great photographs from photojournalists. And it’s useful for wrapping small artwork when transporting it to shows!



the Garden. It has been literally at the center of town for over 90 years, from hosting GTD union meetings to fraternal Christmas parties.”

The idea for the documentary evolved from a number of conversations Boschen and Mass had over the last several years, starting when the filmmaker filmed the couple’s grand re-opening on Small Business Saturday in 2019. Mass told me they don’t have an idea about how long it will be yet – in fact, he mentioned, most films’ run times aren’t announced until about two weeks to a month before they actually show. “Editing generally goes until the last moments,” he explained.

When I asked who exactly is going to be interviewed for this project, I learned: “We will be interviewing volunteers from the community with stories about how the theater was important to them, either for employment, entertainment, romance, or even as a business partner.” Volunteers can sign up on their website: [gardencinemas.net](http://gardencinemas.net).

Having seen *Lights! Camera! Greenfield!*, an annual film competition hosted by Greenfield Community Television, twice at the Theater, I wondered whether this film would be played there. The answer to that was a yes.

**MICE** from page B1

a dowel across the top of the bucket that passed through a can containing some peanut butter. In pursuit of the peanut butter, the mice fall in and drown.

Mice have been a bigger problem in terms of Josh’s car. They somehow shorted out the fan motor, and the heater in his car stopped working. He recounted that Ray Stone, supervisor of the Wendell Recycling and Transfer Station (WRATS), had an even worse mouse problem. Mice damaged his truck’s timing belt, ultimately destroying the engine, which cost him \$7,000 to rebuild.

I happened to run into both Ray and Josh at the WRATS this past Saturday, where more mice tales were shared by anyone who happened to overhear our conversation. It was noted by several that mice like Toyota wires because they are made with soy! Someone said Honda has started using hot pepper wrapping on their wires to deter mice.

Ray and others mentioned that they have recently been using ultrasonic devices made for vehicles to help prevent mouse damage. Eighth-inch mesh screening around the air intake is also suggested.

### Shifting Attitudes

Another participant with mouse tales at the Coffee Connection was Linda Hickman, recently retired director of the Montague libraries. She shared that she comes from a family of animal lovers – even rodent lovers! As a young girl, growing up in the suburbs in Arizona, she wanted a dog very badly but was not allowed to have one. She was, however, able to have a full complement of pet rodents, everything from gerbils and hamsters to rats and mice. Her grandmother had even brought a pet mouse on a leash to her dorm at Wellesley College back in the day!

When Linda and her husband bought their 50-acre homestead in Wendell 35 years ago they began to collect animals, and at one point they had over 100. Currently they have 11 chickens, one dog, two cats, and lots of mice.

Mice weren’t a big problem for them at first, especially with Linda’s rodent-friendly upbringing. She and her husband employed a “catch and release” approach initially. Around 9/11, however, the mice struck hard, chewing through \$1,700 worth of wires in their car. Mice also chewed through the wires to the fan of the air conditioner, and numerous cabin air filters had to be replaced as well.

Still in a pro-humane frame of mind, Linda’s husband drove a mouse they had caught a good distance from the house. When he released it, it ran back to the truck before he could get there, and jumped back up underneath the vehicle.

At that point, they turned to snap traps. In subsequent years there have been additional problems. One day, while driving home from a shopping trip, Linda glanced down and saw a mouse feasting on the quart of expensive strawberries she had bought. When she attempted to shoo it off the berries, it ran up her arm. A less cool-headed person might have driven into a tree at that point!

They had a cat living in the barn, but recently moved him into the house after a mouse almost ran over her foot in the kitchen. She fed him his cat food in the bathtub, but mice would jump into the tub to eat his food. One day she found one in the tub along with the cat. The cat took care of it after finishing its food!

Linda says she and her husband have recently caught 50 or so mice, seven in just the last week.

Although no longer into catch and release, she still does not like to see mice suffer needlessly. She cautions that although wooden traps are cheaper, they don’t necessarily kill the mouse instantly. Mice can drag them away, and you lose sight of where they die, which creates another problem. She points out that there is also a danger of getting your fingers caught in the trap if you’re not careful.

She has been recently using JAWZ traps that she feels are safer to set and to reuse. They kill the mouse instantly, most of the time. Apparently there are also electric traps that run on batteries that electrocute mice and are cat-proof.

“Set the traps against the wall,” Linda says, as mice mostly run along the walls, “and check the traps once a day.”

According to Linda, we have brown field mice here in Wendell, while Turners Falls has both field mice and dark gray-colored house mice. You may feel that your house is mouse proof, but they can squeeze through a hole in a wall the size of a dime. A female baby mouse can turn into a reproductive female in 20 days and produce three to five litters or more a year, with six to eight “pups” or “pinkies” in each litter. One small mouse can quickly turn into a tribe of rascally critters.



*This Wendell cat finished off its food, and then ate the mouse for dessert.*

### Cat-and-Mouse Games

As for my own battles, I had tried and failed to get rid of the mice in my kitchen with suggested natural remedies such as peppermint oil, ultrasonic devices, even smelly dryer sheets in drawers. I bought a “Havahart” trap and caught three mice which I released at a distance of two miles, as recommended, but then I had no success catching another mouse in it. They are apparently too smart for that.

As Shawn Jarrett noted, “The trap looks like a torture chamber – I wouldn’t go in one if I were a mouse!”

I had been contemplating borrowing my neighbor’s cat for a few days. As mentioned, it seems cats can be quite helpful, but I have since learned that there are several downsides. For one thing, cats like to bring their mouse victims, dead or alive, to show you and to demonstrate their prowess. I heard that some cats really like to bring them into bed for their owner to admire.

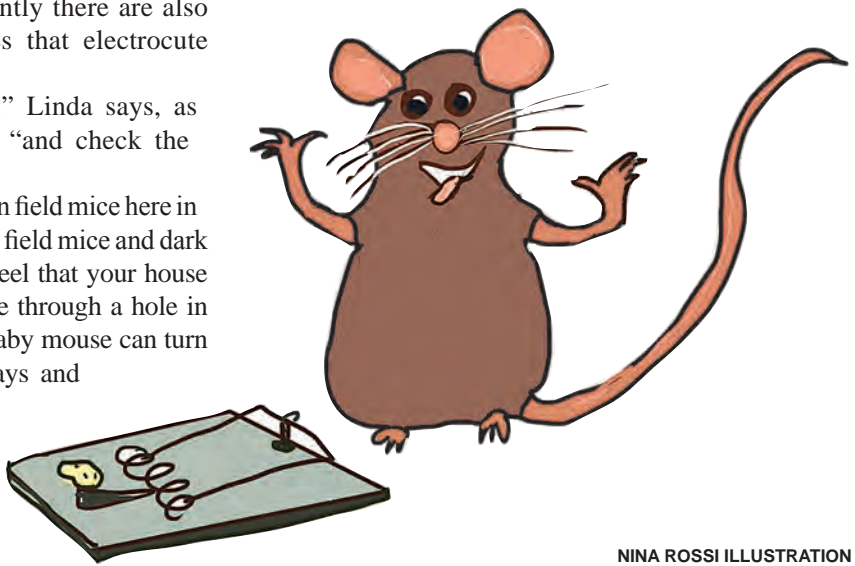
Linda Hickman mentioned something else of concern about cats and mice that I hadn’t thought of. “Mice can carry fleas, deer ticks, and intestinal parasites, and their poop can contain the Hantavirus... which causes a serious respiratory illness,” she said. These diseases apparently can be spread even post-mortem! If a cat is eating, biting, or just playing with an infected mouse, they can become infected themselves, and by extension can pass these things on to you.

According to one internet site, [seniorcatwellness.com](http://seniorcatwellness.com), cats can become ill from eating mice, so it is important to dispose of any gifts they bring you. This site recommends that you not allow your cat to play with or eat any rodents it kills, and that you remove them from your cat as soon as you can.

Interestingly, none of the mouse tales shared at the Coffee Connection included stories of poisoning, or professional exterminators. My understanding – and my fear – is that if a mouse is poisoned and then goes back to their nest in the wall to die, the smell would become most unpleasant. Cats can also get secondary poisoning from eating mice exposed to pesticide.

Linda, in true librarian form, notes that despite their annoying and unhealthy aspects, mice are an important part of the ecosystem. They are a major food source for hawks, snakes, owls, coyotes, and other predators.

Introducing poison into the ecosystem is not something my Wendell neighbors and I are keen to do. It seems the battle of human versus rodent here in Wendell will continue to provide us with many challenges... and more than a few amusing tales.



NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION

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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](mailto:poetry@montaguereporter.org)

# Our November Poetry Page

## Verse 4

Heart that never dies,  
Body that will soon pass,  
Together for a short while,  
Seemingly for grand purpose  
Yet only a glimmer of the Great Unending Spirit.

– Mark Lange  
*Amherst and Jonesborough, TN*

## Grief

She loved dreaming of funerals to come, and being ready for her own.  
Standing at the podium desperate for words.  
Conjuring again, and loving without haste, anxious companions. No nostalgia.  
Everybody’s listening and crying already into the heartbreak: memories are rotting.  
“How did I know him?” We can’t recall.  
Together we weep now.  
Grief is what hell feels like. Not just for today. It will be this way forever.  
The Buddhists will tell me I am living in hell.  
I tell you: it’s the liveliest option for a recovered Catholic.  
Make the best of the grief to which you are entitled.

– Edna French  
*Montague*

## From Scrolls of a Temple Sweeper

The moon on the horizon says I miss you.  
Can you hear it on this night outside of time?

Once, you held a lover in your arms, and later witnessed  
the passing. The taste in your mouth.  
Here we come in unknowing,  
continue in these boundless rivers & seas.

You stand by the gateway of the book and question —  
forgiveness, redemption.  
You are only a child, you say.  
You are only a scroll inside a scroll.  
Yet deep down you know all of us as we exist,  
Just as we are  
We are of the same cloth.

And one day when you were alone and lonely,  
you picked up the book.  
You were strolling the hills, or in the library,  
or maybe at home, reading  
a poem or story where you saw yourself.  
You came across a book and opened it  
as you might open a letter from an old friend  
you barely remembered.

You saw us then, and for some reason,  
these things reminded you of yourself.

– John High  
*Brooklyn, NY and Lisbon, Portugal*

## Moving to the Suburbs

Move to the suburbs when the cost of loving life in any other place is just too painful.  
It’s no joke: September’s sun is sweet; warming the cool fog. Penetrating onshore breezes.  
Developers and contractors long ago took care. No bones beneath the lawns.  
Glistening, bright grasses edged to sleek driveways.  
Insinuating: “I made it” and, so smoothly done.

\*\*\*

Kindnesses parceled out, through years before the move,  
built up her steel for what has come. It’s been a surprise.  
Quite honestly it knocked the crap out of her.  
And exactly why she loved it.

\*\*\*

We cling to love a shorter, unpaved path ahead that nobody chooses.  
How is it a surprise that “grief is the price we pay for love”?  
What all is the bonus? Fear, desire, heartbreak we remember?  
As soon as you accept the path you staked for yourself is behind you  
– and longer than the one ahead – speed up and don’t slow down.  
Speed up for what’s ahead. It is all a surprise. Go ahead.  
*Crack up behind the wheel and make the newspaper.*  
*Drive across the sidewalk into a nail salon like those reckless nuts running out of fuel.*  
Who’s been endangered by your grand self-esteem anyway?  
Your staggering ambition? Successes? The buffoons you’ve influenced?  
Gorgeous hearts you stopped just in time, fractured, repaired, and wound back up on the shelf?  
That’s a lot to like, right there. Go ahead.  
Make the best of the grief you are entitled to. Move to the suburbs.  
Enjoy sweet September’s sun, fresh clippings and prices.

– Edna French  
*Montague*

## Virtue Viper

I bare my fangs,  
and droplets of virtue glisten;  
acid rain  
in a bleak terrain  
where I lord over  
the high ground.  
I hiss  
a cold, scaly love,  
and swallow rats whole.  
No one cares more than I  
about the evils of the world.  
I lash out at them  
with forked tongue;  
French kiss embrace  
for the evils, my lover;  
the evils I must eradicate,  
and without whom I starve.  
My virtue is venom,  
hate smelling like cotton candy  
in a fun house  
of horrors,  
where everything is evil  
except myself  
and all amenable prey.

– Kevin Smith  
*Greenfield*

## Contributors’ Notes

Kevin Smith, an ex-Turners resident, now lives in Greenfield, where he continues to play the tuba, walk his dog, and be inspired by his girlfriend, Stephanie.

Edna French has lived in New England, and in the town of Montague, for years. Also a photographer, a recent focus included urban structures imprinted by human nature: “Town Without Pity” and “Town Without Pity (next door)”. Professional success includes: proposal writing and research for education, arts and community health fundraising.

John High’s newest book *Scrolls of a Temple Sweeper* will be published by Wet Cement Press in Berkeley in early 2023.

Mark Lange is a retired professor and clinical psychologist, formerly of Western Mass. He now makes his home in northeast Tennessee, among two of his three children and five of his eight grandchildren.




### WRITING THE LAND

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EMMA KOHLMANN IMAGE

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# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



The Reporter is looking for volunteers to help us curate this listing. Interested? Contact us at [editor@montaguereporter.org](mailto:editor@montaguereporter.org)!

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17**  
Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *GCC Music Department Fall Concert*. Free. 7 p.m.

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 18**  
Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *Groove Prophet*. 7 p.m.  
Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Big Destiny, Color Killer, Ezra Holloway, Granite Danes, Under the Overpass*. \$. 7 p.m.  
Colonial Theater, Keene: *Supaman*. \$. 7:30 p.m.  
Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Upstate, Mamma's Marmalade*. \$. 8 p.m.  
10 Forward, Greenfield: *Rave in Scorpio* feat. *Dialogue Talk, DJs NITU, Hedone, Bitcrusher*. \$. 8 p.m.  
Shutesbury Athletic Club: *Wild Bill & The Flying Sparks*. 8 p.m.  
Rendezvous, Turners Falls:

Adam McGrath (mem. Cave In), Willie Lane, Tony Pasquarosa. No cover. 9:30 p.m.  
**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19**  
Deja Brew Pub, Wendell: *Faith Kelly, Caswyn Moon*. Free. 6 p.m.  
The Drake, Amherst: *Qwanqwa, Zikina*. Groove from Ethiopia. \$. 6 p.m.  
Mount Toby Meetinghouse, Leverett: *Michael & Carrie Kline, Joe Blumenthal*. \$. 7 p.m.  
Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Cinemastorm*, movie double feature: *Writing Wrongs* (1986) and *Ninja III* (1984). Free. 7:30 p.m.  
10 Forward, Greenfield: *Greg Davis, Jake Meginsky & Liz Tonne duo, Matriarch*. \$. 8 p.m.  
Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Come to Grief, Barishi, False Gods*. \$. 8 p.m.  
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *DJ Paul* (mem. *Three Six Mafia*). \$. 8:30 p.m.  
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Olivia Nied*. Free. 9:30 p.m.

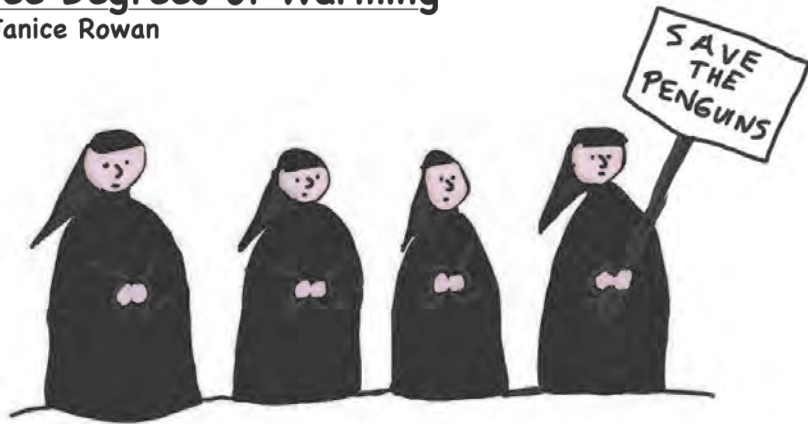
**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20**  
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Satartia, When The Deadbolt Breaks, O'K and the Night Crew*. \$. 2 p.m.  
Clark Art Institute, Williamstown: *Bill Nace, Matt Krefting*. \$. 4 p.m.  
**MONDAY, NOVEMBER 21**  
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Open Mic*. Free. 7:30 p.m.  
10 Forward, Greenfield: *Bill Nace* record release, *Lou Barlow, Hollow Deck, Kieran Lally*. \$. 8 p.m.  
**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 23**  
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Masala Jazz*. Free. 7:30 p.m.  
Race Street Live, Holyoke: *Dinosaur Jr., Man On Man*. First of two shows. \$. 8 p.m.  
Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *The Big Sway, PWRUP, Peäsänt*. \$. 8 p.m.  
**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 25**  
10 Forward, Greenfield: Book launch for Tommi Parrish (*Men I Trust*) feat. *Pussyvision, Father Hotep*, readings by Jayson

Keery, Eli Nixon, Kurt Ankeny. \$. 6:30 p.m.  
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *The Whiskey Treaty Roadshow, Sandy Bailey*. \$. 8 p.m.  
Race Street Live, Holyoke: *Dinosaur Jr., Man On Man*. \$. 8 p.m.  
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Bluegrass and Beyond*. Free. 9:30 p.m.  
**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 26**  
Nova Arts, Keene: *Rong, Space Camp, Oziem*. \$. 7 p.m.  
Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *The Big Takeover*. \$. 8 p.m.  
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *The 413s*. Free. 9:30 p.m.  
**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2**  
Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Municipal Waste, High On Fire, Gel, The Early Moods*. \$. 7 p.m.  
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Tony Trischka, Michael Nix*. \$. 7:30 p.m.  
Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Dear Mister Ward*, book reading event. \$. 7:30 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Bitchin Bajas, Wet Tuna*. \$. 8 p.m.  
**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3**  
10 Forward, Greenfield: *The B-52.0s, Big Destiny, Holy Basil, DJ Dutch*. \$. 7:30 p.m.  
33 Hawley, Northampton: *HUT 38* feat. *Greg Kelley, Lauren Horn, Ide Thompson*. \$. 8 p.m.  
The Drake, Amherst: *The Baxbys, Toxic Friends, Daniel Blair & The Forgottens*. \$. 8 p.m.  
Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *The Valley Vaudeville Variety Show*. \$. 8:45 p.m.  
**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4**  
Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Música Franklin presents a *Holiday Cheer Benefit Concert*. By donation. 3 p.m.  
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Jake McKelvie, Big Big Buildings, Hoonah, Troye Lonely*. \$. 7:30 p.m.  
**MONDAY, DECEMBER 5**  
Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Open Mic*. Free. 7:30 p.m.



**Three Degrees of Warming**  
By Janice Rowan



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By DAISY REED



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## EXHIBITS

**Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls:** *The Good Old Days*. Painter Lee Gray brings us scenes from the good old days, when the world was good and kind. Through November.

**Rendezvous, Turners Falls:** *Interotine*, mixed-media work by Turners Falls resident Desi Lowit. Through November.

**Leverett Crafts & Arts, Leverett:** *Oh! Beautiful Glass!* Group show in the Barnes Gallery of innovative glass works curated by Sally Prasch. *Roll and Fold: Books of Story and Structure*. Handmade books by eight artists showing in the hallway gallery. Both through November.

**Artspace Gallery, Greenfield:** *Inside Art VI: Photography from Inside*, work from six residents incarcerated in the women's unit at the Franklin County Sheriff's Office. Through November 30. *Figure Drawing Group Show* follows, December 4 through 29.

**LAVA Center, Greenfield:** *Healing the Heart*. Community art exhibit curated by K. Kemah Wilson. Through December.

**Looky Here, Greenfield:** *Another Person, Another Place*, gouache works by Danielle Chenette. Through December.

**Goose Divine Energy, Greenfield:** *Donna Estabrooks*, paintings. Through November 22.

**Fiddleheads Gallery, Northfield:** *Season of Light*. Member artists' holiday shop. Through January 15.

**Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne Falls:** *Josh Simpson: 50 Years of Glass*, retrospective exhibit by the local glass artist. Through December.

**Shelburne Arts Coop Gallery, Shelburne Falls:** *10 x10 Invitational Small Works Show*. Through November 21.

**Gallery A3, Amherst:** *A Look Through Two Lenses: Martha's Vineyard Spring*, by Eric Broudy; *Dockside*, by Larry Rankin. Photography. Through November 26.

**A.P.E. Gallery, Northampton:** *Missing Department*, collaborative exhibit by artist Ligia Bouton and writer Matt Donovan. Through December 10.

**Gallery in the Woods, Brattleboro:** New "Celt-edelic" paintings by Lake Pleasant artist Lahri Bond.

**Brattleboro Museum & Art Center:** *The New Herbarium*, fungus and plant images by Madge Evers; *We Feel Our Way Through When We Don't Know*, group show; *The Space Between Memory and Expectation*, large-format photographic installations by Renate Aller; *Moons and Internment Stones*, rock and moon paintings by Alison Moritsugu; and *(de) composed*, sculpture by Judith Klausner. All through February 12. [www.brattleboromuseum.org](http://www.brattleboromuseum.org).

**HEARTFELT** from page B1  
complexes for artificial incubation, freeing up chickens to lay more eggs. They built vast incubation complexes, and the egg attendants kept their methods a secret from outsiders for centuries.

The earliest recorded chicken recipe comes from Rome. Numidian Chicken, or *Pullum Numidicum*, is a chicken dish flavored with pepper and asafoetida, roasted and served with a spiced date, nut, honey, vinegar, and stock sauce.

With the collapse of the Roman Empire in 476 A.D. came the collapse of, well, chickens. They shrank to their Iron Age size of 1,000 years earlier, and geese and partridge were consumed instead. Upon Europeans' arrival in America, turkeys and ducks were found to be readily available, and chickens languished until the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the development of antibiotics and vitamins once again increased chicken production.

Today in America, we consume 80 pounds of chicken per person, per year, and we are the largest producer of broiler meat in the world – 20.4 million metric tons of it comes from Iowa and Indiana, with China coming in a close second. It's estimated that there are now 19 billion chickens on our planet, over two chickens for every human.

Because of its lower cholesterol and saturated fat, chicken meat is considered to be a healthier choice over beef and pork. Chicken eggs are now thought to be less significant in raising one's cholesterol than previously thought.

Around the world, many different parts of the chicken are eaten. In the Caribbean, China, and Vietnam, chicken feet are common fare, while in East and Southeast Asia, the buttocks and testicles are considered a delicacy. Ashkenazi Jews, like my own family, stuff the skin of the chicken neck to make a dish called *helzel* and render chicken fat into *schmaltz*, used to make chopped liver.

Besides roasting, baking, frying, and grilling, chicken can be ground into sausage, skewered for kebabs, or simmered into a fragrant soup. Some love the skin, and others remove it to lower the fat content. Some nibble around the bones and others crunch them into shards, sucking out all the marrow. My mom loved to suck the meat from the neck, claiming it was the most tender of all.

Chicken is paired with peanut sauce in Thailand, and with rice in Spanish *paella*; it's layered with

cheesy parmesan in Italy and cut into chunks for a West African stew or Cajun gumbo. You can find it stuffed into a curried Indian samosa, or simmered into French *coq au vin* or a bubbling Moroccan *tagine*. It is stirred into a dark, rich *mole* in Mexico, and covered with a spicy jerk sauce in the Caribbean.

I have found some unusual products online, including a chicken-flavored chip called "Twisties" from Fiji, Archie McFee's fried-chicken-flavored hard candy, and the unforgettable "Chicken in a Biskit" crackers.

We use chicken feathers for pillows, diapers, insulation, and padding. Chickens help us in the garden by producing fertilizer. They like to eat the insects and weeds, and aerate the earth with their scratching.

And of course, we use them to produce eggs, eggs, and more eggs.

I remember in the 1970s when, with the advent of "natural foods," my mom began to serve more chicken and fish instead of beef and pork. One of her favorite ways to cook it was called "Chicken Paprikash," a Hungarian recipe from my Grandmother's family. I share it with you and hope you enjoy its spicy flavorings. Try to use genuine sweet Hungarian paprika – it will make all the difference.

*Trouble lives in Greenfield with her wifey and energetically wrangles a farm office, loves to copyedit, write, and read, volunteers everywhere food is served, and has recently taken up painting.*



## DEE'S CHICKEN PAPRIKASH

- 2 Tbsp. pork lard or butter
- 3 lbs. chicken pieces, bone in and skin on
- 1 large yellow onion, minced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 Roma tomatoes, seeds removed, finely diced
- 3 to 4 Tbsp. sweet Hungarian paprika
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 1½ tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. fresh ground pepper
- 3 Tbsp. flour
- ¾ cup sour cream
- ¼ cup whipping cream



*Chicken Paprikash gets its vibrant color from Hungarian paprika.*

Heat lard or butter in a heavy pot, and brown the chicken on all sides. Remove the chicken and set it aside. In the same oil, add onions and fry until golden. Add garlic and tomatoes and fry for



*Chicken Paprikash goes well over egg noodles.*

three minutes. Remove pot from the heat and stir in paprika and salt and pepper. (Paprika gets bitter if scorched.)

Add the browned chicken back to the pot with the broth, and bring to a boil. Cover, reduce to medium-low, and simmer for 40 minutes. Remove chicken to a plate.

In a small bowl, stir the flour into the sour cream and whipping cream to form a paste. Stir into the sauce in the pot, whisking constantly to prevent lumps. Simmer for a few minutes until the sauce thickens. Salt and pepper to taste.

Return the chicken to the pot, and simmer to heat through. Serve over egg noodles, rice, or mashed potatoes.

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