

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 20 – NO. 46

also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

\$1.50

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

NOVEMBER 3, 2022

ERVING SELECTBOARD

Erving Looks Into Its Own Paper Mill Demolition

By KATIE NOLAN

On Monday night, town planner Mariah Kurtz presented the Erving selectboard with options for future steps toward developing the former International Papermill (IP Mill) property. She told the board the town could schedule more public engagement meetings, consider municipal reuse of the property, contract for renderings visualizing redevelopment, and take a step to attract biotechnology companies – and pay \$9,200 for an updated study of demolition costs.

At a public engagement meeting in August, Kurtz reported, there was an understanding that at least some of the former IP Mill buildings need to be demolished.

“People are split on whether it is important to rehab and keep some existing buildings,” she wrote, “but generally seemed to prefer having some kind of redevelopment there even if it meant demolishing the entire complex. Many are inspired by mills in other locations but have a hard time envisioning the IP Mill becoming as successful as those projects.”

see **ERVING** page A7

LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

New Power Lines to Fund Steady Growth In Leverett

By SARAH ROBERTSON

LEVERETT – Tuesday night’s special town meeting lasted about 15 minutes, with voters in the school gymnasium unanimously approving all the articles that were not passed over. A joint meeting between the selectboard and finance committee followed, where members agreed to ask town departments to plan for 5% budget increases next fiscal year.

The construction of an 8-by-10-foot storage shed behind the greenhouse at Leverett Elementary School can now resume after unanimous approval by town meeting voters. Work on the shed had already begun, but was halted after the recreation committee reminded the selectboard that, under an article passed at the May 2021 town meeting, any construction on the community field must be approved by a two-thirds town meeting vote.

Leverett Elementary principal Annie Foley and Leverett Education Foundation president Steve Weiss spoke in favor of the article.

“Anyone who has ever visited the greenhouse when the students were there knows there’s no mistaking their excitement and enthusiasm,” Weiss said, adding that his organization has raised \$18,000 for the greenhouse program. Gardening tools are often left leaning against the greenhouse’s outside wall, he explained, and the foundation donated money to pay for the shed to properly store them.

Voters unanimously approved see **LEVERETT** page A5

Master Plan for Canal District: Tear Down the Strathmore Mills

By MIKE JACKSON

TURNERS FALLS – “Part of the investigation was to figure out what potential uses there were for the mills as they remain in place,” architect Lee Morrisette explained last Thursday evening to a crowd gathered at the Great Falls Discovery Center. “Due to advanced deterioration, and also the difficulty of development on that particular site, they’re not well-po-

sitioned for reuse.”

“And that’s putting it very nicely,” Morrisette added. “The fact is, they’re unsafe.”

Morrisette’s firm, the Springfield-based Dietz & Company Architects, is part of a team assembled by the town of Montague to study the island between the Turners Falls power canal and Connecticut River – recently named the Canal District – and help create a see **CANAL** page A6



The town acquired the paper mill complex in 2010, and has put considerable resources into maintaining and marketing it.

Enthusiasm for This Local Terrain

By LEE WICKS

MONTAGUE CENTER – “I feel so much joy in creating art. It’s a gift to share discoveries, and interpret and communicate the wonders of the natural world,” says Jeanne Weintraub of Montague Center when we talk about her textile designs filled with images of butterflies, moths, snakes and insects.

Jeanne’s designs are inspired by her respect for the natural world, especially the ecosystem on the Montague Plains, described on the Massachusetts state website as “the largest remaining inland fire-adapted pine oak habitat left in New England.”

There could have been a nuclear power plant on the Plains, a dump, a water bottling plant, or a gas pipeline, but all were defeated by local citizens, and now, as a result of good management, wildlife is flourishing.

Whip-poor-wills, once rare, feed their young by the light of the moon. They lay their eggs according to the moon’s cycle so that the sky will be brightly illuminated for feedings. An animated image on Jeanne’s blog shows a whip-poor-will opening and closing its beak to pick tiny moths out of a bright night sky.

“Animation is a cool way to communicate the see **PLAINS** page A5



Montague Center artist Jeanne Weintraub shows off a tea towel with an illustration featuring interspecies planting.

High School Sports: Fall’s Final Few

By MATT ROBINSON



A clean sweep: the Turners Falls Thunder celebrate their three-set victory over the Lee Wildcats in the PVLAC Western Mass semifinal last Friday at Turners.

TURNERS FALLS – This week, I finally resumed my pre-pandemic 16 to 20 hours of sports coverage. It was so nice seeing old friends again. I was greeted by parents, teachers, coaches, players, and even scorekeepers, and at the field hockey game I reminisced with one of the officials.

It was a good week to come back, as the playoffs were ramping up. I witnessed the Small Vocational tournament and the Pioneer Valley Western Mass playoffs, and the MIAA state tournament is underway.

In the course of the week, Franklin Tech Volleyball were knocked out of the small-vocational playoffs, but bounced back against Matignon in MIAA Division V playoffs and will travel to Lee for the second round.

see **SPORTS** page A4

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Emergency Meeting Called After Collapse Of Sewer Line

By JEFF SINGLETON

At a previously unscheduled meeting on Tuesday, November 1, the Montague selectboard allocated \$165,000 to repair a collapsed sewer line on Montague City Road and address the impact of that collapse on the downstream sewer line and the town’s Clean Water Facility.

The town received a waiver from the state that allows a quicker and more limited emergency bidding process, and the repair work was awarded to the Greenfield company Clayton Davenport Trucking. According to its website, the trucking company also specializes in a wide range of construction activities, including excavation, bridge construction and repair, and bioengineering and slope repair.

In the absence of vacationing town administrator Steve Ellis, assistant town administrator Walter Ramsey reported that on October 25 the department of public works (DPW), in response to reports of sewer “backing-up issues in the neighborhood,” had discovered a “collapsed sewer pipe” near where Montague City Road meets Rastallis Street in southwestern Turners Falls.

The department was able to retain the liquid flow heading to the town sewer plant, Ramsey said, but “solids were reportedly backing up.” The line is currently being monitored and cleaned, even on weekends, he said.

Ramsey said the sewer line, which is made of clay, is too deep in the ground for a DPW repair, so the job, which involves replacing see **MONTAGUE** page A7

Will Strong Early Voting Mean Higher Total Turnout?

By JEFF SINGLETON

FRANKLIN COUNTY – Final voting in this year’s midterm elections will take place this Tuesday, November 8, and while voter participation in “midterms” is always lower than in Presidential years, local town clerks we spoke to have been busy with the new world order of early in-person voting and mail-in ballots.

Montague town clerk Deb Bourbeau told us that nearly 30% of eligible voters may have voted by mail this election, and that in her view this may be the reason why in-person early voting at the town hall annex has been sluggish.

“People are taking advantage of the opportunity [to vote by mail],” said Erving assistant town clerk Betsy Sicard, who reported a similar

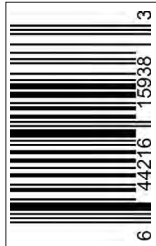
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A REPRINT

Flowing Downhill

This editorial first appeared in our March 29, 2018 edition.

Montague town officials – and many others – are nervously watching Southworth Paper’s Chapter 11 bankruptcy proceedings. The company abruptly shut down its Agawam and Turners Falls mills last summer, as well as operations in Seattle, laying off over a hundred workers in a single morning.

On Monday, Southworth sold the Agawam facility to investors based in Adams, MA and Tyler, TX for \$1.9 million. According to the *Republican*, 15 workers continue to make envelopes in the building, and may continue to do so. Southworth settled the roughly \$140,000 bill it owed Agawam.

The sale bodes well for Montague. Earlier this month, town administrator Steve Ellis estimated the company owed the town around \$320,000 in back taxes and sewer fees. An auction of the Turners plant was slated for this Saturday, but is now expected to take place sometime next month.

Included in the auction will be Southworth’s inherited rights to water from the Turners Falls power canal: 113 cubic feet per second (cfs) of water from the canal, less than 1% of its capacity.

What could be done with that much water? It depends on the distance it falls. Documentation from FirstLight’s federal relicensing program mentions that Cabot Station operates at 60 feet of head, and Station No. 1 at 44 feet; the Turners Falls dam is 35 feet above bedrock. If the “Southworth Paper Hydro” wheel has just 35 feet of head, 113 cfs could *theoretically* produce a maximum of 450 horsepower of mechanical energy, or 355 kW.

Southworth had an agreement with FirstLight to only take in water when the canal is full to the brim, and then to only use about 6 cfs, according to a discharge permit application the company filed with the EPA in 2007. About a tenth of that was diverted into a cooling loop, but the rest, at least as of that year, was in fact passing through a wheel to generate electricity onsite.

The water rights for the building were granted in 1928 by the Turners Falls Power and Electric Company to the Esleek Manufacturing Company. Ninety years later, the canal is ultimately owned by the Canadian government, as part of a pension portfolio for civil servants and Mounties, and the mill by an entity that has officially

been bankrupt for six months.

To the west, the White Bridge over the Connecticut River has been deemed obsolete by the federal government and is scheduled for replacement.

To the south, the county housing authority is leaving its offices this spring, and a craft cidery hopes to rehab the building; beyond that lie the burnt-out rubble of the former Griswold cotton mill and its small warehouse annex, handed last year to a developer who hasn’t yet bothered to remove the prominent “F--- Society” graffiti from its door.

To the east, the canal can be crossed by two condemned pedestrian bridges and a grotesquely buckling bridge for vehicles.

And to the north lies the sprawling and crumbling Strathmore complex, which the town owns, and is now sizing up for “selective demolition.” Beyond that are the foundations of a former coal-burning power plant taken under tax title by the town two years ago.

Southworth is a bankrupt mill, surrounded by undevelopable public land, surrounded by power company land, surrounded by water. The town is doing all it can to study, troubleshoot and market the “Canal District,” but at the end of the day the entire landform is simply a gigantic, outdated machine, a way of stretching out the energy of the Great Falls and selling it.

Only the first few lots were ever sold to mills, and their decline began when hydromechanical power was surpassed by hydroelectricity. The machine is controlled by the power company. It profits by selling the Falls’ energy, but stands by watching while the machine excretes its ruined brownfields, one by one, into public ownership.

REFLECTION

As these two past editorials show, we have been very pessimistic about the prospects for reinvestment in Turners Falls’ “Canal District.” It was difficult in 2018 and 2019 to imagine the level of state and federal investment in infrastructure we see today. We’re not sure what the right decisions are regarding “the island,” but one thing we do notice is a shift toward a grant-based municipal funding model that appears to replace local democratic control with notions of stakeholder input. A new theme, perhaps, for us all to keep an eye on...

NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION



Doug Honeycutt of Turners Falls is in his second year as custodian at Gill Elementary School. He says he loves being a part of the school, and he is treated as a team member there rather than just as a custodian – sometimes he helps out in the classroom with the kids.

Letter to  the Editors

Remembering a Friend

This is prompted by the death of Peter Gallant, who died October 15 and whose obituary was in last week’s paper. He and Pam were and are longtime friends of ours.

In 1996, Susan and I were hoping to move from the remote woods of Bear Mountain, where we’d lived almost two decades, into “downtown.” There was a place we were eyeing on the common. We’d bought ads in *Mother Earth News*, the *Boston Globe*, and the *New York Times* in a fruitless search for a buyer of the little house and homestead we’d built as a family.

Then I thought of *Yankee Magazine* and the House for Sale feature it ran at the time, containing photos and descriptions of unusual properties. I contacted the editor, the idea bore fruit, and our home was featured. The article included a picture of Susan and me sitting on a low wall in front of the stone house, with a cartoon “country mouse” seated beside us.

This bit of journalistic schlock somehow worked. It brought Peter and Pam out to our place, and ultimately into the life of the community.

The transaction that enabled us each to buy the respective homes we wanted had a distinctly Peter-Gallant touch: Peter handed me the amount of the down payment for our present home in cash – somewhere around \$15,000, as I remember. Peter said his attorney almost had a stroke at this simple country deal that saved money and paperwork.

Peter’s character had all the elements his resume suggests: the swordfisherman, the free spirited one, the therapist, the man who loved his home. His insight, humility and bluntness seemed to combine to create an opportunity for even a wary and vigilant one like me to break free and grow. For me it was a life-changing privilege to be his friend.

Jonathan von Ranson
Wendell

AND ANOTHER REPRINT!

In The Hole

This editorial first appeared in our July 11, 2019 edition.

In the late 19th century, the Turners Falls Company, by digging a canal, created an island. Whatever market value was lost in the land’s reduced accessibility was more than made up for in potential energy: the island was tilted; the water on one side was higher than on the other.

The company sold strips of land on the island, together with rights to use certain volumes of the falling water, to other private interests.

In the early 20th century, as the age of hydromechanical power gave way to hydroelectricity, the company extended the island, and then merged with Amherst Power into the Turners Falls Power and Electric Co. (TFPEC).

Since the company’s island was progressively more tilted toward its southern end, the relative economic value of the water was higher there. The company didn’t sell this land, but instead used the water there to generate power, which it sold.

The island project was passed along by merger. By the 1940s it was WMECO’s machine, and by the 1960s, Northeast Utilities’. Rail access was removed, and those chumps who’d bought upstream lots went belly up, one by one.

Landlocked inside the Turners Falls Project, which concentrates energy two miles to the south, these properties are all *negatively economically valuable*, as a direct result of a series of decisions undertaken over the last century and a half by the Project’s owner.

And so, one by one, they are being assigned to the local owners of last resort: the Inhabitants of the Town of Montague.

The federal government permits the river to be transformed, topologically speaking, into a donut; its energy generates profit for the private entity that owns and controls this donut, while pollution and liability accumulate inside the donut’s publicly owned hole.

Montague and Massachusetts are preparing to remove poisonous materials from that hole, in an effort to restore positive economic value to the property, so the private sector will again want to own it. *Under what system does this make sense?*

Published weekly on Thursdays.
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Compiled by NINA ROSSI

The Turners Falls Water Department sent out notice that semi-annual **water bills were mailed** Monday, October 31 for water usage from approximately April 1 through September 30. This bill is payable within 30 days, and any portion unpaid thereafter gets a \$20 late charge.

Ladies: sort your closets! The Gill Montague Senior Center is holding a **seasonal clothing swap** this Saturday, November 5 from 9 a.m. to noon. Drop off clean used clothing, shoes, and accessories this Friday, November 4 from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Center, located at 62 Fifth Street in Turners Falls.

Everyone is welcome to bring items that no longer fit, and then bring home a new-to-you wardrobe. There will be coffee and pastry and fun. Any leftover items will be donated. Call (413) 863-9357 with any questions.

Head to the Great Falls Discovery Center for **Lee Gray's art reception** this Saturday, November 5 from 1 to 3 p.m. Gray's painting series is called "The Good Old Days," and shows slice-of-life scenes of what those times were like.

Also at the Discovery Center, from November 5 to November 8, enjoy a **self-guided story walk for kids** featuring the book *From Apple Trees to Cider, Please!* by Felicia Sanzari Cherneskey. It's great for young readers ages 4 to 8, and everyone who loves the harvest season.

That story walk is in conjunction with the **CiderDays events** happening this weekend.

There is no large central gathering this year as in past years, but tours, tastings, and workshops will be held throughout the county, and

even into Hampshire County and southern Vermont. Check out the cider trail at www.ciderdays.org.

Local glass artist Sally Prash has again mounted the annual knock-out show "**Oh! Beautiful Glass!**" at the Barnes Gallery at Leverett Crafts & Arts for the month of November. Oh! Beautiful Glass! presents the innovative work of 18 local glass artists. (See our Exhibits listing on Page B3 for a full list of artists.)

The reception for this comprehensive exhibit is this Sunday, November 6 from 4 to 6 p.m. There will be refreshments and music, and the chance to meet and greet the artists. Admission is free. The LCA is at 13 Montague Road in Leverett, and is open on weekends from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. For inquiries, call (413) 250-3405.

Interested in a new career? The MassHire Hampshire/Franklin Career Center is sponsoring a **virtual recruitment day** next Wednesday, November 9 from 9 to 11 a.m. for Mativ, a plastic and resin manufacturer and the owner of SWM in the Greenfield industrial park.

Benefits include a \$3,000 sign-on bonus, a "competitive rewards program," career advancement, and tuition reimbursement. Pre-registration is required by emailing bizteam@masshirecareers.org.

Free training in culinary arts available this winter at the Smith Vocational High School, also through MassHire. The program is for unemployed and underemployed residents of Hampshire or Franklin counties who can pass a background check and are 18 or older. The six-month training, Monday through Thursday evenings, starts January 17.

Information sessions will be held on November 16 and December 14 from 4 to 5:30 p.m.; contact Lorena

Turner at (413) 587-1414 x 353 if you are interested in attending.

The **town of Montague acquired Highland Cemetery** on Millers Falls Road, on the approval of town meeting members, in May 2021. Cemetery commission members Judith Lorei, Annie Levine, and Mary Kay Mattiace are excited that this acquisition will allow for the opportunity of natural, green burial in a wooded section of the property starting in 2023.

Anyone interested in this alternative to conventional burial will be able to learn more of the details in an onsite informational tour lasting 45 minutes, rain or shine, next Saturday, November 12 at 11 a.m.

The Nolumbeka Project presents a **Full Beaver Moon Gathering** on Saturday, November 12, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Great Hall of the Discovery Center. The guest presenter is Mashpee Wampanoag artist Robert Peters, whose "Peskeompskut" painting was recently purchased by the town of Montague.

Admission is free, and all are welcome. There will be live music by Lily Rakia-Chandler and a raffle drawing of items donated by Pocumtuck Homelands Festival artists. For more information, visit nolumbekaproject.org.

The Gill historical commission is sponsoring a pop-up museum of items from **Robert Darr Wert's** local Country Prints Studio (1949 to 1970) at the second floor of the Gill town hall next Saturday, November 12 from 1 to 3 p.m.

Bring your own Wert items, and stories or experiences related to Wert and his products, to this informal sharing event. Peter Mars and other consultants will share "Werthy" information and answer questions. For more information, contact ghc@gillmass.org.

Shelburne glass artist Josh Simpson celebrates 50 years working in glass this fall with exhibits at the D'Amour Museum of Fine Arts in Springfield and Salmon Falls Gallery in Shelburne.

The Shelburne exhibit, "**Dark Matter**: The Unseen Work of Josh Simpson," opens this Friday and

runs through the end of the year, and an opening reception is scheduled for next Saturday, November 12 from 2 to 4 p.m.

Simpson, largely self-taught in his field, is famous for his one-of-a-kind glass planets. He is married to NASA astronaut Cady Coleman, a veteran of two Space Shuttle missions. He also has a new book out, and is signing at the gallery in the hour before next Saturday's reception.

Interested in **winter sowing, for a jump start on spring planting?** The Greenfield Garden Club will host a free event, open to members and the public, on Thursday, November 17, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Gill Town Hall. Pamela Lester will explain how to germinate seeds under milk jugs and other containers outside. RSVP to greenfieldgardenclub@yahoo.com to ensure enough handouts and chairs are available.

A **free COVID-19 and flu vaccine clinic** will be held at the Montague town hall annex on Friday, November 18 from 3 to 5 p.m. Sign up at www.frcog.org/covid. Be sure to bring your health insurance card.

Regular and high-dose flu vaccines will be available, as well as the primary COVID vaccine series for all ages. If you got your last shot over two months ago, you can get the Omicron (bivalent) booster.

The Massachusetts **Registry of Motor Vehicles** has finally caught on to that little hack of going to get your car inspected the month after the sticker expires!

Effective November 1, vehicles with an expired inspection sticker will receive a sticker with the number of the month the vehicle inspection was originally due, not the month it was inspected. Vehicles with stickers that expired in a previous calendar year will receive a sticker from January of the year it is inspected, no matter the month.

Another change is that you will no longer get a printout of your inspection; you will now have to go online to mavehiclecheck.com to see the results.

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ELECTION from page A1

trend of high mail-in voting perhaps reducing in-person early participation.

Wendell town clerk Anna Wetherby called the 30 early voters at the town office building on Morse Village Road "a small number, but good for Wendell."

Early in-person voting ends in Montague the day of this edition's publication, Thursday, November 3, at 5:30 p.m., as it does in Gill (4 to 6 p.m.) and Leverett (9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.). Wendell, meanwhile, has extended early voting into Friday afternoon, from 3 to 5 p.m.

Voting on November 8 in Montague will take place primarily at the Franklin County Technical School, where Precincts 2, 3, 4, and 6 will

vote. Precinct 1 will vote at the Montague Center fire station, and Precinct 5 voters in downtown Turners Falls will vote at the senior center on Fifth Street, though the block the senior center sits on was actually "reprecincted" into Precinct 4 this year.

Voters in other towns will head to town halls or, in the case of Wendell, the town office building on Morse Hill Road.

As reported in a previous edition, the ballot includes elections for representatives in the national congress, the governor and attorney general, state senators and representatives, the regional district attorney, and the Franklin County sheriff. The race for Governor's Council, an obscure board dating back to the colonial

era which plays an important role in confirming judicial appointments, has attracted a surprising amount of attention this year.

There will also be four ballot questions, including initiative petitions to regulate dental insurance and expand the number of liquor licenses one business can hold; a constitutional amendment to impose a 4% tax on income above one million dollars; and a vote on an existing law, passed by the state legislature this summer, expanding the ability of those with limited citizenship documentation to earn a driver's license.

There is also a non-binding referendum endorsing a carbon fee, a levy on the use of fossil fuel based on its carbon dioxide emission.



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SPORTS from page A1

The Turners volleyball team made it to the Western Mass finals, but lost the championship game to the top-rated Mounties of Mount Greylock. Blue has had a wonderful, hard-fought regular season which got plenty of respect from the MIAA. They are ranked fourth in the state, and have a bye before hosting the Cape Cod Regional Technical Maroon Crusaders this Friday.

Meanwhile, the Franklin Tech Field Hockey Eagles won the Western Mass championship and have qualified for the MIAA playoffs. Fortunately, they won't have to take the ferry to their next game.

Volleyball
TFHS 3 – Lee 0
Mt. Greylock 3 – TFHS 0
Norfolk 3 – FCTS 0
FCTS 3 – Matignon 1

Last Friday, October 28, the Turners Falls Volleyball Thunder defeated the black-shirted Lee Wildcats in the PVIAC Class D semifinals.

I could only stay for the first match before heading to the Tech football game. The Black Cats managed to stay with the Thunder for the first 12 points, but with the score 6-6, Blue went on a run to double Lee up, 20-10. The Wildlings pulled a mini-endgame rally, but in the Powertown held on to win the match 25-18.

Turners would go on to sweep Lee, winning the second match 25-9 and the third 25-15, and earned a spot in the championship game.

On Saturday the Thunder rolled down to West Springfield in a bid to unseat the favorites, the Mount Greylock Mounties. Grey took a 5-point lead early in the first match, but after a Powertown timeout, Blue managed to pull within a point, 10-9. The Mounties pulled away, but Turners fought back and again managed to pull within a point, 21-20, and it was Greylock's turn to call time. A couple of mental errors by Turners gave Greylock the opportunity to mount another rally, though, and they carried the first match 25-21.

The second match was more of the same. Both teams mounted long rallies, but Turners again found themselves playing catch-up ball. The Mountaineers maintained a 4- to 5-point lead throughout the second match and took it 25-19.

Blue came out roaring with a 5-0 lead in the third, and now it was Greylock who had to play catch up. They did catch up, but could not pull away; the score see-sawed back and forth until it was tied at 23. But Greylock managed to score the last two points of the contest, winning the match and completing the sweep.

Powertown gets back on the court this Friday, November 4. The Thunder is currently ranked fourth in the MIAA Division V, and will host Cape Cod RVT.

Meanwhile, across Millers Falls Road at Franklin Tech, the girls' volleyball team played in the Small Vocational playoffs. They were knocked out of the semifinal on Saturday by the Norfolk County Agricultural Rams, 25-19, 25-17, 25-22.

But their season did not end there – they're still alive in the MIAA private/public tourney. On Wednesday the Spiking Eagles beat the Matignon Gold Warriors of Cambridge, 3-1.

I didn't see any fans from Matignon at the game, but the players on the court made up for it. The 17 girls from Matignon were louder than the entire home crowd. In fact, they were louder than most basketball crowds. Throughout the matches

they screamed, cheered, and laughed so loudly that their chants echoed in the rafters. Even after losing the first two matches by landslides, the smiles never left their faces.

But they couldn't match the Eagles in skill. Tech scored kills, blocks, and aces, hit their marks like workmen, and didn't allow the other team to get into their heads.

The first match was a server's paradise. The Warriors served first and piled on four straight points, then Tech came to the line and went on a 15-point run. The teams traded points, but with the score 17-7, the Birds got the serve back and scored 8 more to take the match 25-7.

The second match was no better for the visitors. Tech began spiking sharp serves, barely clearing the net, and Matignon had difficulty reacting. As a result, Franklin took the second match 25-8.

The third match was marked by long volleys and players from both squads dove for balls, putting their bodies between the ball and the floor. The Techs, who had grown a little complacent, never led, and the Golden Warriors held on to win 25-16.

In the final match Tech got down to business. Matignon kept it close but Tech finished out, winning 25-19 and earning a spot in the next round.

On Wednesday Faith Smith made eight kills, two blocks, and three aces; Lea Chapman had nine kills, three blocks, and five aces; Cordelia Guerin had three kills and dove for two digs, and Shelby O'Leary hit 12 digs and gave two assists.

This Friday the Lady Birds travel over the mountain to challenge the Wildcats of Lee in the second round of the Division V playoffs.

Field Hockey
FCTS 5 – Hampshire 0
Pioneer 3 – TFHS 0
FCTS 2 – Pioneer 1

The Class D PVIAC field hockey tournament is not complicated. Only the top four teams were invited: Pioneer, Franklin Tech, Hampshire, and Turners Falls.

Last Thursday the fourth-ranked Turners Falls Thunder traveled to Northfield, where they were shut out 3-0 by the Pioneer Black Panthers. Unfortunately, this was the last game of the season for Powertown. As the team finished below .500, they'll have to hang up their sticks.

For Tech, however, the season goes on. The Field Hockey Eagles defeated the Hampshire Regional Raiders 5-0 in the Class D semifinals last Thursday. Kenzie Sourdiffe-Masse scored a Texas hat trick in the win, putting four shots into the net.

But she didn't do it alone. All through the game, flocks of Eagles kept pressure on the Raiders' defense. Their passing game was exceptionally good. Players would hit the ball upfield toward a spot not covered by either team. An Eagle would be sprinting toward that unoccupied section, and take the pass on the run. This kept the Raiders off balance, and after one, Tech was up 2-0.

In the second quarter, Hampshire was forced to commit corner infractions as Tech began taking potshots inside the circle. Sourdiffe-Masse scored her third goal, and Hannah Gilbert added one of her own. Early in the fourth Sourdiffe scored again to give Tech a 5-0 lead, and at that point both coaches cleared their benches so all the kids could play.

The win earned Tech a trip to Northfield to play the top-seeded Panthers on Halloween. On Monday the underdog Eagles defeated Pio-



Franklin Tech running back Josiah Little breaks away for a first down, closely pursued by the Athol Bears' Shea Brennan. The Bears prevailed in overtime against the Eagles.

neer 2-1 in overtime to win the Western Mass championship, earning another pennant for the gym. Lilly Ross and Hannah Gilbert scored goals and Kate Trudeau gave an assist.

But the Franklin Tech Sticking Eagles cannot rest on their laurels. This Sunday the sixth, they take on the Nantucket Gray Whalers.

During the Hampshire game, one of the officials spoke to me about the "new and improved" MIAA state brackets. "I've had to go to both Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket," she lamented. "We used to take a plane, but now we have to ride the ferry." That would have been a long trip either way, but because Franklin Tech is ranked one rung higher, it is the Whalers who have to cross the water.

Football
Athol 34 – FCTS 28

Last Friday the Franklin Tech Football Eagles lost a heartbreaker in overtime against the Athol Red Bears. It was a very cold night – so cold people were bundled under blankets, the hot cocoa was flowing freely, and even most of the coaches were wearing long pants.

The game started on a positive note. Tech ran 10 plays, and were facing fourth down. They ran a quick kick, pinning the unsuspecting Bears in their own Red Zone.

The Eagles' D forced Athol back toward their own end. The Bears made some ground back, but on fourth and 16 on their own 7-yard line, they were forced to punt the ball back to the Eagles. Franklin took advantage, and at 2:52 of the first quarter Ethan Smarr caught a touchdown pass from Gabriel Tomasi. Tomasi banged into the end zone for the conversion, and Tech led 8-0.

The Birds scored again five seconds into the second quarter as Tomasi ran a keeper into the end zone. The 2-PAT was again successful, and the Birds went up 16-0.

Athol, however, is not the type of team to give in. On their next series they threw into the far-side flats. The ball was caught near the sideline and the receiver flanked everybody, xrunning down the line for 56 yards and giving Athol its first score of the night, though the PAT attempt failed.

Tech answered on their next drive, but were also unable to convert, leaving them with a 22-6 lead.

At the very end of the first half, with seconds left on the clock, Athol put another six points on the board. The damage was limited because they failed to get the 2-PAT, so at the half the margin was 22-12.

For most of the third quarter, Tech only ran one offensive play. It was a fumble. Athol took advan-

tage, not only scoring a touchdown but also finally converting a PAT to pull to within 22-20. Tech is not the type of team to give in either, and at 9:17 of the fourth, Tomasi scored on another keeper.

Now it was all up to the extra point attempt: Tech had increased their lead to 8 after the touchdown. If they converted, they would be up by 10, and Athol would have to score twice to win.

But the 2-PAT failed, and Athol discovered their second – or tenth – wind. With only 15 seconds left in regulation, they scored again to make it 28-26, and now it was up to Tech's goal line defense to prevent the tie. Red persevered, sending the game into overtime.

Tech got the ball first in OT, but couldn't score. Everything once again was down to the Eagles' D, but the Bears managed to score, winning the comeback in overtime.

It was a wonderful, entertaining, and heart-rending game, and I wouldn't take anything away from either team. Neither Athol nor Tech let up, and it simply came down to the last team to score wins.

Under center, Tomasi completed four passes in nine attempts, for 58 yards and two touchdowns. He also carried the ball nine times for 56 yards, and caught a pass on a flea-flicker play. In addition to his touchdowns, he converted two 2-PATs, for a total of 16 points.

As usual, Josiah Little led the rushing attack for Tech, running the ball 23 times for 129 yards and scoring a touchdown. He also completed a 5-yard pass on the flea-flicker. Smarr caught three passes for 45 yards, scored a touchdown, and carried the ball once for 5; Shaun Turner made a catch for 13 yards; and Nathan Sabolevski ran the ball once and got back to the scrimmage line.

On special teams, Dillon Gagnon returned a kickoff for 20 yards, Jacob Martin made one return for 3, and Landen Hardy kicked off five times for 196 yards and booted a punt 24. Defensively, Hardy made 12 tackles while Turner had nine; Charlie Boyden made one sack, and Nathaniel Fuess and James Pekar-ski combined for another. Vincent Renaud, Boyden, and Josh Lynde all caused fumbles, with Lynde coming up with one loose ball.

The loss sends the Eagles into the non-qualifiers' postseason. They travel to Webster this Friday to take on the Bartlett Green Indians.

According to Coach Joe Gamache, the Eagles will also compete in the Small Vocational State Tournament later this month.



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LEVERETT from page A1

using available funds to pay two bills received after the close of the 2022 fiscal year: \$747.63 for yard work and truck parts for the highway department, and \$1,531.77 for hauling costs at the transfer station.

With no debate, voters agreed to pass over two other articles: a request to pay \$13,396.53 for road salt used by the highway department last year, and a request to use available funds to pay bills from the prior year for the town clerk.

Five Percenters

A selectboard meeting began minutes after the special town meeting concluded. Town administrator Marjorie McGinnis began a discussion about the draft budget guidelines by highlighting a significant source of new growth in the tax base: new power lines constructed by Eversource. The town expects the new construction to allow the town’s levy limit to increase by \$225,000.

“That’s huge new growth for us,” McGinnis said. “It means that, should we choose to, we could tax a lot more.” McGinnis said Leverett expects \$1 million in excess levy capacity this year, which will help keep the town well beneath the cap set by Proposition 2½, and noted that this excess capacity has grown over the last decade.

Finance committee member Nancy Grossman cautioned that Eversource might challenge its current tax assessment, as the company has done in other communities. Other fin com members warned that economic inflation, overvaluation of property values, and increasing energy costs could threaten the town’s budget stability.

“The transfer station is over budget, and has been off for a while,” McGinnis said. “We are not keeping up with their increases.” Selectboard member Patricia Duffy said that plastic recycling has become significantly more expensive for the transfer station, and that the station’s budget should be adjusted accordingly.

Selectboard and fin com members debated the practicality of asking each department to submit multiple draft budgets in anticipation of different projected budget increases, or meeting with each department head separately to discuss budget priorities. They decided against either option.

After some discussion, selectboard members voted unanimously in favor of instructing town departments to prepare draft FY’24 budgets with a 5% increase in mind.

Development Work

It was Duffy’s birthday, so midway through the

meeting the town administrator presented two small cakes and everyone present sang “Happy Birthday.” (Disclosure: this reporter accepted and consumed a piece of cake.)

McGinnis reported that two grant applications to the state were approved: \$130,000 from the Rural and Small Town Grant program to redesign Dudleyville Road, and \$75,000 for a consultant to conduct a comprehensive community plan. These announcements were met with applause by the town officials present.

Repairs are ongoing around a culvert on Shutesbury Road, McGinnis said, a project financed 75% by the state. “Many, many things were not done correctly,” she said, adding that additional work is being done to correct the errors.

Field Building

After the fin com adjourned, planning board member Richard Nathhorst presented an update on the Field Family Museum building, which is owned by the town and managed by the private non-profit Leverett Historical Society.

“There has been no consensus on what exactly we can and cannot do on the property,” Nathhorst said of the *ad hoc* committee to discuss the building’s future.

In order to build a septic system and give the building modern plumbing, the property cannot be located on wetlands, as the MassDEP delineation suggests it is. “If people want to be contentious about this, and in my experience that might be the case,” he said, “someone might challenge MassDEP’s assessment of the wetlands.”

“It’s a little building, and we basically have to just move it,” Nathhorst argued. “And there’s a group of people who want to keep it there and have the town keep pouring money into it.... Then the 501(c)3 group wants the town to give it to them for one dollar, and the only way to find any consensus between the groups is by hammering out these details.”

To settle uncertainty over any future proposals for a septic system, Nathhorst recommended the town pay for a professional land survey. The survey would outline the topography of the one-acre site, state-drawn wetlands boundaries, and other characteristics affecting any future building. The survey would be recorded in the Registry of Deeds.

Selectboard members voted to allocate Community Preservation Act funds for the survey, which Nathhorst estimated could cost between \$3,500 and \$4,500, but a final decision on these funds must be voted at the spring special town meeting.





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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Downtown Turners Falls Winter Emergency Parking Regulation

The Montague Selectboard will hold a public hearing on **Monday, November 7** at 6:45 p.m. in the Selectboard’s meeting room at the Montague Town Hall, One Avenue A to hear public input and finalize the regulation. Optional Remote participation details at www.montague-ma.gov.

Text of proposed regulation:

- The Superintendent of Public Works is authorized to declare a Winter Emergency whereby no overnight parking is allowed on streets in downtown Turners Falls or the Patch neighborhood between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.
- A winter emergency may include snow and/or ice events and can be in effect for multiple days, at the discretion of the Superintendent of Public Works.
- The Town of Montague website (www.montague-ma.gov) shall be the official record of the winter emergency status.
- Vehicles may utilize parking on downtown streets during all other times including during overnight hours, provided a winter emergency is not in effect.
- Public Parking during a Winter Emergency is available at the municipal lots on 1st Street, 3rd Street, the Discovery Center, Canal Street, 6th Street, and on the odd-numbered side of L Street between Prospect Street and 5th Street. The Department of Public Works is authorized to publicly post, in each parking area, parking restrictions to allow for lot cleanup following a Winter Emergency.
- The townwide winter parking ban remains in effect for all areas of Montague outside of the downtown area as shown on the map published at www.montague-ma.gov.
- The Montague Police Department is authorized to enforce this regulation.

Richard Kuklewicz, Chair

PLAINS from page A1

dynamics of nature, movement, and energy,” Jeanne tells me. “I am having a great time creating simple animations showing how lotus flowers create heat for beetles, sunflowers follow the sun, and whip-poor-wills snatching moths from the sky.”

Her enthusiasm for this local terrain translates into fabric designs, her website, and numerous blogs that teach and entertain. Her “Treasures of the Montague Plains” de-

sign features more than 30 species of plants, moths, birds, and animals.

“Since habitat restoration, the Plains have become a hot spot for birders to see whip-poor-wills, prairie warblers, brown thrashers, indigo buntings, and other uncommon birds,” says Jeanne. “It’s also a place to spot moths with cool names like slender clearwing sphinx, frosted elfin, and other rare moths, along with Eastern box turtles, hognose snakes, and tiger beetles.”



Weintraub incorporated more than 30 species native to the Montague Plains into this design, which she has made into a 500-piece jigsaw puzzle.

Her enthusiasm is contagious, and suddenly I can see myself at dawn, armed with binoculars and a smartphone, delving into this diverse habitat literally walking distance from my home. A free app called iNaturalist can be loaded on a phone; the user simply points the camera at a plant, bird, or insect and gets instant identification.

Jeanne has a new challenge ahead. Her work helping rescue lamprey eels, which get stuck below the fish ladder at Turners Falls, has raised her interest and sympathy for these somewhat formidable creatures, and she will soon incorporate them into her designs.

It won’t be easy. They are associated with biting and blood sucking – they have been called the vampires of the ocean. But they go to rivers to spawn and do not bite any other fish during this time, and they help clean the rivers, and add nutrients to the water when they die. “We need to reevaluate our aversion to animals like the sea lamprey,” she says.

In the future, she also hopes to produce a number of new designs inspired by the Sawmill River. She plans to walk the full length of it next spring, from Leverett to where it joins the Connecticut River, capturing images of plant and animal life along the way.

Jeanne is also interested in local Native American culture, and recommends that everyone take advantage of the Peskeompskut Self-Guided Audio Tour along the canal in Turners Falls to hear Native voices explaining their local world. At the second station Rich Holschuh, an Abenaki, leads a meditation explaining what it means for Native people to belong and be spoken to by the land.

In a physical representation of Native philosophy regarding all life as interconnected

and interdependent, Jeanne created an illustration called “The Three Sisters” that shows corn, beans, and squash growing together, entwined, supporting each other, and providing shade and essential nutrients according to each plant’s needs.

Like those plants, Jeanne’s art is entwined with our local history and environment.

“It takes a lot of thought about which designs work best on different objects,” she says. “The most elaborate design, with more than 20 plants and animals, will go on wrapping paper and puzzles; smaller, less complicated images work best on cards, coasters, or small prints.”

You can view some of Jeanne’s designs at msgreenjeannedesign.com, and read her blog posts. Next Saturday, November 12, Jeanne will host a pop-up shop on her front porch. People going to the Fête Noel holiday fair at the Montague Congregationalist Church can easily drop by – it’s right next door.

On the day we meet, she is wearing a tunic made from fabric she’d designed. It is comfortable and lovely, and while Jeanne says she loves the idea of producing wearable and would like to be able to sell them, she is finding that it is a delicate balancing act to be an artist, a naturalist, and an entrepreneur. The economics of making and selling clothing are something she’s still figuring out.

Meanwhile, Jeanne lives in an environment that nurtures creativity and awe, and it’s a gift she is able to share through her art. Her blog posts are filled with information about the ecosystem of the Montague Plains, and her designs bring our attention to subtle beauty that might otherwise go unnoticed.



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CANAL from page A1

Master Plan for the town’s approach to the de-industrialized territory.

Three major parcels, once the John Russell Cutlery factory, the Keith Paper mills, and the Griswold cotton mill, are now publicly owned, and the town has struggled to interest investors in their redevelopment. Built in the 19th century in an effort to make the kinetic energy of the Falls exploitable by rail, the district is plagued in modern times by accessibility and utility challenges.

The Cutlery factory in the northern part of the island was brought down in the 1960s; its bricks and sharpening-stones still lie in heaps upon the riverbank. A coal-fired co-generation plant took its place and was dismantled in turn. Only an empty coal silo is left standing.

Further south, the cotton mill was reused as a discount department store, and after that fell victim to disrepair, collapse, and fire. The federal Environmental Protection Agency completed a demolition and cleanup of the site last year.

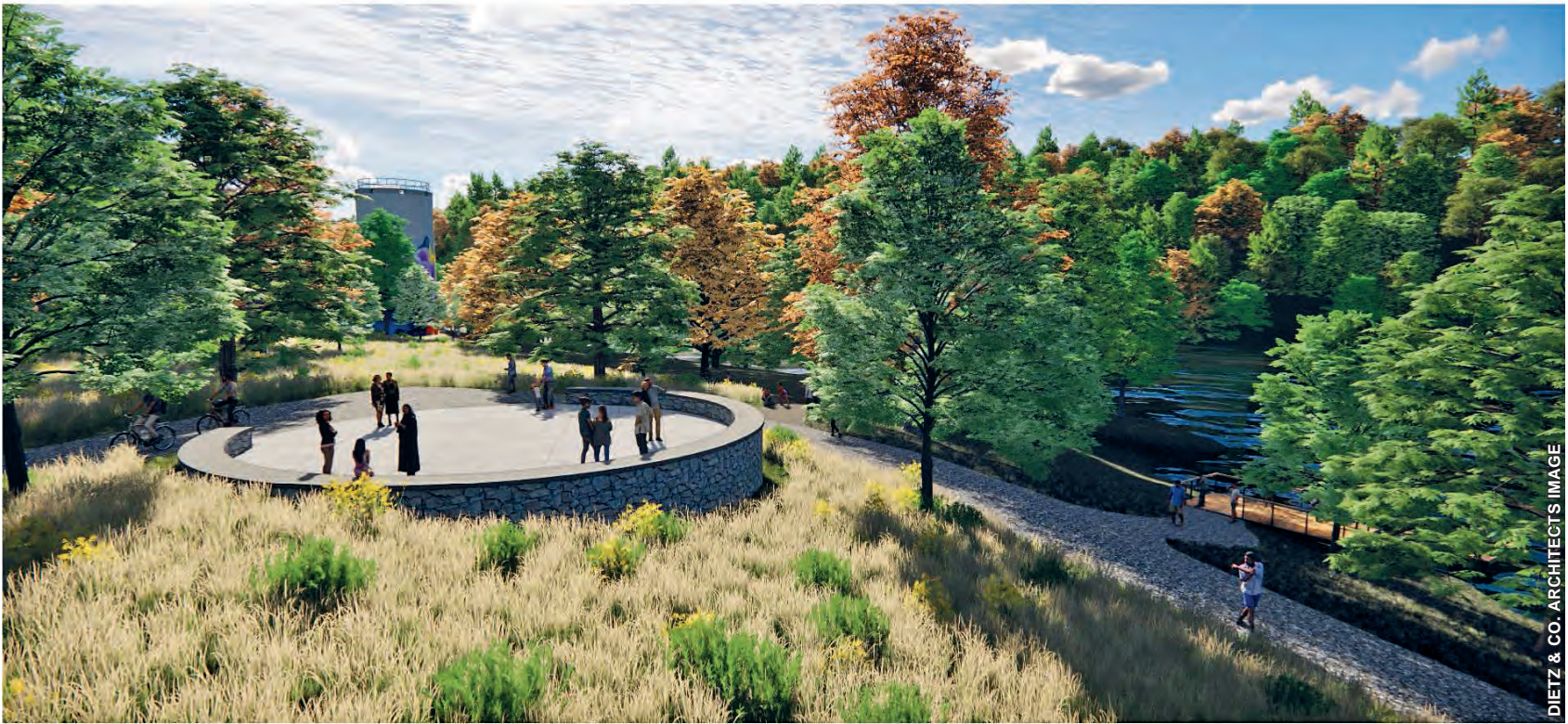
Two smaller buildings are privately owned – an empty warehouse and a proposed cidery – and one large paper mill, Southworth, closed in 2017. Its current owner has been dismantling the paper works and intends to lease the building for cannabis cultivation.

In the middle of it all is former Keith mill complex, known today as the Strathmore, town-owned since 2010 and an icon of both the village’s past and its present conditions.

For over a decade Montague has attempted to maintain the Strathmore complex and market it to developers, but the tide appears to be turning. As more state and federal money becomes available to municipalities to pursue long-postponed projects, town officials have been grappling with the idea that it may simply be too late to save the Strathmore.

“The biggest takeaway from this plan,” assistant town administrator Walter Ramsey told the *Reporter* this week, “is that through the study we’ve determined, based on market research and extensive site feasibility analysis, that the Strathmore mill is no longer viable for adaptive reuse. We need to come up with a plan for not having it burn down: demolishing the mill, and finding a way to reuse the site.”

A factor precipitating the decision, Ramsey said, has been the state Department of Transportation’s recent announcement that it plans to



In the “Visioning Phase” section of its final Master Plan Study presentation, Dietz & Company Architects of Springfield included a number of renderings of the Canal District’s envisioned public uses after the demolition of nearly the entire Strathmore complex and the construction of a housing development on the Railroad Salvage lot. At top: “A spot for contemplation and remembrance... a place for not just the industrial heritage to be recognized, but also the cultural heritage of the site,” according to principal architect Lee Morrisette. Below: The firm’s plans included a kayak and canoe launch, as well as this location where inflatable rafts could be put in below the dam.

put an estimated \$56 million into replacing three bridges to the island – the canal crossings at Fifth and Sixth streets, and the White Bridge that crosses the river at Fifth.

“They’re going to be bidding the project in 2027 – we might see construction start in 2027 or 2028,” Ramsey said. “I’m guessing it will be about three years of construction.”

While a recently discussed plan to bring a large, mixed-income housing development to the Griswold property is now looking toward the early 2030s, Ramsey said,

“the consultants – and MassDevelopment specifically – are recommending that the town pursue the demolition of Strathmore Mill prior to the construction of the new bridges, just for the logistics alone of getting materials in and out of the site.”

In a timeline of “Next Steps” presented at last Thursday’s forum, consultants placed two objectives for 2022 – “complete Turners Falls Master Plan study” and “seek demolition / Phase I funding.” The “Phase I work and demolition” was suggested for early 2023 through early 2024.

Freezing and Thawing

Last Thursday’s event at the Discovery Center was the third of three planned public “workshops” on the Master Plan study, following two held at planning board meetings in May and July.

Project leaders from Dietz & Company, the state agency MassDevelopment, landscape architects PLACE Alliance, economic development consultants Camoine Associates, and civil engineers SLR Consulting spent an hour running through the final slideshow of their study’s findings, then took questions from a very interested audience.

The slides included a number of elaborate renderings of proposed public spaces that would take the place of the Strathmore buildings. A map split the district into five “zones”: the first comprising the northernmost part of the island, once the site of pulp and paper mills; the second, the Cutlery and

Indeck parcel; the third, the majority of the Strathmore; the fourth, the Strathmore’s free-standing Building 11; and finally, the former Griswold site.

In the first zone, the renderings showed a pedestrian road, meandering around a circular concrete “remembrance space” and down to the river where there were canoe and kayak access points. The consultants explained that part of this vision rested on the assumption that under its next federal hydropower license FirstLight Power, which owns the canal, will be required to leave more water flowing in the river.

For the second zone there was a suggestion for a platform overlooking the Indeck foundations, and a

mural decorating the coal silo. “We thought about how we could integrate the site to help still tell the story of what the site was, but repurpose it for the community as a whole,” Morrisette explained.

The architect showed a number of photos of the interior of the Strathmore as evidence of its advance disrepair. “The buildings have deteriorated to a substantial degree,” he said. “These load-bearing brick masonry walls are the structure of the building.... As that exterior wall begins to break apart from weathering, it jeopardizes the structural integrity of the whole building... You see the wythes of the brick, the layers of brick, peeling off, because water is

see CANAL page A8



IMMERSIVE RENDERINGS of a POSSIBLE FUTURE:

Last week’s Master Plan Study presentation prepared by Dietz & Co. Architects included these three QR codes, which transport smartphone users into 3D space.



A “remembrance space” is envisioned for Zone 1, the northernmost section across the canal footbridge.



An “overlook” of the Indeck foundations is proposed in Zone 2, once the John Russell Cutlery.



Zone 3 is the current Strathmore complex. A “walking path” after its demolition.

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MONTAGUE from page A1

340 feet of the “fragile” piping with “modern plastic pipe,” will need to be contracted out. The town applied for and received an emergency waiver from standard procurement requirements from a state agency called the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) and solicited bids from three companies, of which two responded.

Ramsey recommended the low bid, from C.D. Davenport Trucking of Greenfield, with an additional 25% for “contingency” and \$10,000 for cleaning sewer lines and the sewer plant, for a total of \$160,000.

“I think it’s pretty much self-explanatory,” said selectboard member Chris Boutwell. Member Matt Lord asked who had recommended replacing over 300 feet of piping, and Ramsey responded that it was the DPW.

The board voted to award the contract to Davenport and, after Clean Water Facility superintendent Chelsea Little requested an additional \$5,000 for a more extensive cleaning of the plant’s “headworks,” voted to allocate \$165,000 to the project from the town’s federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

DCAMM is part of the Executive Office of Administration and Finance, the Governor’s financial arm. The agency’s primary responsibility is “capital planning, public building construction, facilities manage-

ment, and real estate services for the Commonwealth,” but it also certifies companies for bidding on certain public construction projects, and approves bidding waivers in emergencies.

Ramsey told this newspaper that the identification of the sewer crisis on Montague City road was “independent” of a study of the system currently being implemented by the engineering firm Wright-Pierce. That study is designed to produce an updated map of the town’s sewers, and conduct an evaluation of their condition using a robotic camera.

Other Business

After the sewer discussion, the board quickly endorsed changes in a petition to the legislature for an all-alcohol license for the El Nopalito restaurant at 196 Turners Falls Road. The changes, recommended by the state legislature to a petition passed at last May’s annual town meeting, require that all alcohol be served inside the premises, and that the business act on the license within one year rather than two.

“They typically make these small changes every time we send them a petition,” observed selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz.

The next selectboard meeting will be on Monday, November 7.



ERVING from page A1

Some of the future uses suggested at the public meeting included mixed use, manufacturing, housing, transitional housing for the houseless, artist incubator space, biotech lab space, municipal use, and conservation land.

In 2015, consultants Tighe & Bond, Inc. completed a study that included demolition estimates under five different reuse scenarios. They made another study in 2017 with estimates of demolition needed for two redevelopment concepts, and a third in 2020 which gave cost estimates for demolition of five specific buildings.

An updated study would give new estimates for the costs of demolishing every building on the site, all of the buildings except two, and then various groups of the buildings. Kurtz said it was important to have up-to-date estimates to present to developers, and that the town’s \$600,000 MassDevelopment grant could pay for demolition of at least some of the buildings.

Selectboard member Scott Bastarache said he was not optimistic that \$600,000 would be enough for the demolition. He asked for a “breakout of the dollar points” for tearing down different sets of buildings, to inform the town’s decision.

The board asked Kurtz to ask MassDevelopment whether the grant could be used as partial funding for total demolition at the site, since the original grant application specified only partial demolition.

“The end game for the site is demolishing,” said selectboard member William Bembury. “I don’t see any other way to get around it.”

The board voted to approve a \$9,200 proposal from Tighe & Bond to update the previous estimates.

“In most towns, town hall is in the center of town,” resident Kelly Loynd commented. “Are the townspeople going to get a say?”

Selectboard chair Jacob Smith assured her that any major building project would be discussed in public meetings, and would need town meeting approval.

Kurtz recommended contracting for renderings – “pretty drawings” – of a redeveloped IP Mill site. She added it would be helpful “to point to something – to say, ‘it would look like this.’”

Jacob Smith indicated he was supportive of the idea.

“Conceptual drawings do help,”

agreed Bastarache, “and I would encourage that we do something like that.”

Bembury said that because the current town hall is too small, Erving should consider building a new town hall at the former mill. He said townspeople want development steered toward commercial business, senior housing, and a new town hall, and asked Kurtz to “bring them together” in the rendering.

Kurtz said she was optimistic that the five-town Complete Neighborhoods grant could fund the approximately \$2,000 for artist renderings of a future completed development at the former IP property.

Kurtz also reported that she had applied for BioReady status with the Massachusetts Biotechnology Council, which rates towns on their readiness to host biotechnology facilities, based on the community’s zoning practices and infrastructure.

The board encouraged Kurtz to hold additional public engagement meetings, and she recommended holding the next one in January. Bastarache suggested that the meeting be very focused.

Historical Commission

Historical commission members Sara Campbell and Philip Johnson asked the board to provide a letter of support to the Massachusetts Historical Commission as part of the process for applying for a grant.

If awarded, the grant would fund an inventory of historical structures, which could be used to apply for a National Register of Historic Places designation.

Campbell said the cost of a consultant to conduct the inventory would be approximately \$30,000 to \$40,000, with half paid by the grant and the remainder matched by the town. She said an inventory conducted many years ago focused on downtown Erving Center, and that a new inventory would cover the entire town.

According to a memo from the historical commission, “An initial area of interest may be to expand the current designation that was achieved in Millers Falls in Montague with the understanding that Erving’s side of the village is significant to the history of the area. The same inventory product that would be used for such an application would also be important to seek such a designation in Farley and in Erving Center.”

The board supported the application, and approved sending the letter of interest.

Activities Coordinator

The board reviewed the draft job description for a senior and community center activities coordinator, a job involving scheduling and organizing activities, coordinating volunteers, and “general administrative and customer service support.”

Bastarache commented that the job as described sounded administrative, and beyond the duties of an activities coordinator.

Bembury suggested changing the title to “activities coordinator/administrative assistant.”

Town administrator Bryan Smith told the board he would revise the job description, and clarify the functions of the job.

Other Business

The board made progress on a number of town policy updates currently under review. They gave final approval, without comment, for the draft No Smoking policy.

The Police Co-Response Clinician policy, Police Mounted Electric Bike policy, Pregnant Workers Fairness Act policy, Fraud Prevention policy, Whistleblowers Protection policy, Workplace Violence Prevention policy, and Domestic Violence Leave policy were all reviewed for a second time. These will be reviewed for a third and final time at the next selectboard meeting on November 14, after which they can be voted upon.

The board asked for a revision to the Police Community Services Cadet Training policy, to emphasize the goal of cadets eventually becoming Erving officers, and then approved the policy as amended.

The board also asked for further revision to the Blood Borne Pathogen Exposure Control Plan, and asked Bryan Smith to forward the draft to relevant town departments.

Revised Traffic Regulations were given a second reading, and the board made suggestions about revising the table of regulations and fines.

The board declared a 2010 Ford 550 and an Air-Flow truck body surplus, to be put out for public bidding at highest price.

Surplus stacking chairs, folding tables, and air conditioners will be offered to townspeople in the *Around Town* newsletter.



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LOOKING BACK:
10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here's the way it was on November 1, 2012: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

'Throwing Money Down a Rathole'

“The last thing anyone on the EDIC would want is that the building become unsalvageable because we haven’t acted,” newly appointed Montague Economic Development and Industrial Corporation member Don Valley told the Montague selectboard on Wednesday, referring to the former Cumberland Farms building at 38 Avenue A.

The building has been deteriorating, with leaks in the roof, mold in the wallboard, and interior decay so pronounced that the town’s own board of health building inspector issued mandatory 30-day remediation orders to the EDIC in March.

No remediation of the mold or roof has taken place, primarily because three nonprofit and civic organizations put together a proposal to take the building off the town’s hands this past spring for a nominal fee, in return for a promise to invest between \$80,000 and \$100,000 to renovate the building into studios for Montague Community Television, and offices for Turners Falls RiverCulture and the Montague Business Association.

In May, town meeting set aside \$32,000 to repair the building in case that deal fell through. MCTV board president Michael Muller assured that meeting no town funds would be required for the rehab if the building was transferred to his organization. The EDIC seemed to endorse that approach in August, when they agreed by a unanimous vote to sign a purchase and sale for the building with Montague Community Cable Inc.

But no progress has been made since, as the EDIC board fell into a period of inertia, legal quibbling, and resignations. The three members present at Wednesday’s selectboard meeting admitted they did not even have a chair person at this point, or a board secretary to take notes at meetings.

Valley said he was unaware that the EDIC had voted unanimously to approve the purchase and sale.

EDIC board member Lyn Reynolds decried the prospect of spending town money patching up a building that the three organizations had proposed to renovate entirely at their own expense, but offered no immediate solution to the impasse. “I really don’t want to throw money down a rathole,” she said.

Whipps Lee Strikes at Andrews at Bowling Alley

Republican challenger Susanah Whipps Lee, chair of the Athol selectboard and co-owner of local sewage treatment equipment company Whipps Inc., went after first-term incumbent Denise Andrews (D-Orange) in the last debate for the candidates for 2nd Franklin District state representative.

The center of political gravity for the district, which used to include Greenfield, has shifted east toward Athol and Templeton, and the French King Bowling Alley offered a chance for the candidates to address voters in towns at the western edge of the newly-drawn district, Gill, Erving, and Wendell.

Whipps Lee began by saying voters would choose between candidates on November 6 who had “nothing in common.” She noted she had grown up and spent her working life in the district, in contrast to Andrews, who worked at Proctor and Gamble for 25 years before returning to her native Orange to start up a consulting business with an emphasis on corporate inclusion and diversity awareness.

“I don’t throw money at government agencies with no accountability,” Whipps Lee said. “I believe in open, transparent government.”

This was another swipe at Andrews, for her early vote against recording committee votes and requiring 24 hours’ notice before legislative votes are scheduled. Andrews has said she made that vote during her first week in office, and would vote differently if the matter came up again.

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Above: The leaves turn along the power canal in the Patch.

ARTIST PROFILE

Helping Us See With New Eyes

By K. CAMARA

TURNERS FALLS – Back in July, on a tip from a friend, I found my way to the website of John Nordell, Greenfield artist and professor at American International College (AIC) in Springfield. I was immediately captivated by a short blog post titled “Plein Air: Watercolor Painting on the Water Using Ocean Water,” describing a fresh, immersive experience on a summer’s day.

Allowing a childlike license to create, Nordell had experimented with painting while sailing, actively including resources from the environment to create his watercolor. By focusing on the process, consciously including the environment as collaborator and remaining curious, a simple watercolor had emerged that seemed to me to even give the wind that moved the boat a voice in his creation. Three beautiful photos accompanied the brief text in this post.



Nordell’s abstract-realist painting, *Sea Sand and Sky*, is on view at the Worcester Art Museum this month.



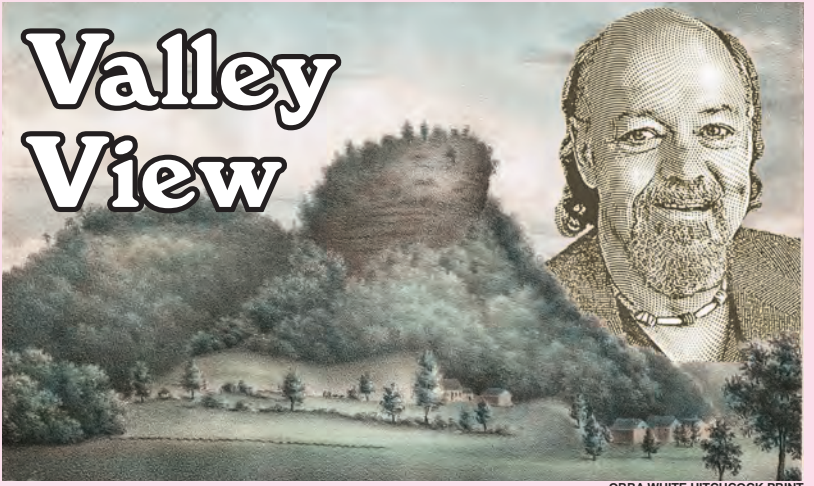
A Zentangle drawn by Greenfield practitioner and teacher John Nordell.

I felt delight in viewing and reading it, and continued to explore his website.

There I discovered an upcoming online “Zentangle” class, described as “an easy to learn and relaxing method of creating beautiful images from structured patterns” and to be taught by Nordell, a certified Zentangle instructor. I signed up, and a few hot July nights later found myself sitting at my kitchen table along with four other online participants listening to Nordell’s calm and clear instruction.

No artistic skills were required, and our only tools were pencil, pen, and a 3.5”-square paper tile, with each of us essentially following his lead and copying the same lines onto the corresponding location on our own tiles. As I listened and followed I found any resistance to the process begin to dissipate. No worries. Just this. No need for much thought. No mistakes. One line with the pen, and then another. Some curving. Some straight. Some filling in of spaces. Looking. Listening. Copying. Watching as the design grew to fill the surface of the tile.

see **NEW EYES** page B8



By GARY SANDERSON

GREENFIELD – What does it mean to be connected to a place, to have a sense of a place... and how does it change over time?

I pondered that question during a recent daybreak walk along the shoulder of a lonely, gray, Upper Meadows road in Greenfield. Since then the thought has reappeared, darting through my consciousness like one of those gray squirrels, tail raised high, that darts out in front of your car, comes to sudden halt, and scoots back in the nick of time to live another day.

The impetus for that initial thought may have been the frosty air entering my nostrils. It cooled my throat, expanded my lungs, revved my gait, and got my wheels spinning.

Down the road a piece, the fluid thought train only intensified. Running a bit late as I turned west for the homestretch, I was greeted by flaming orange maples illuminated along the western ridge by the first rays of sun peeking over the eastern horizon. Ten or 15 minutes makes a huge difference at that time of day.

What a glorious sight. Right place, right time. It so moved me that the thought lingered all the way home and reappeared throughout the morning and sporadically over ensuing days.

I suppose at the root of it all was the deed research in which I’ve been hopelessly immersed for the past three years, ever since the COVID scare began. Piecing together the genesis of South Deerfield, my path has also meandered through East Whately, Greenfield, and Montague, all connected by the same founding families, from some of which – Arms, Allen, Allis, Catlin, Hawks, and Williams – I descend. What better way to occupy a retired man’s time and energy than exploring land records dating back to the beginning of Franklin County’s colonial settlement?

Thanks to 21st-century digitization, these records can now be reviewed in the comforts of home. What a grand luxury. A far cry better than passing through courthouse metal detectors to page through large, cumbersome volumes in the Registry of Deeds library.

But be forewarned: home deed research can become an obsession.

The problem is that one search leads to another, all of them with dangling threads of inquiry to pull and see what unravels. And that’s just the half of it, leaving out entirely all the unexpected “peripherals” leading down into enticing rabbit holes.

Newbies will struggle to learn how to navigate through the on-line database, but once that’s accomplished, it’s all downhill and captivating.

I suppose diligent researchers who pursue all leads could be in danger of learning far more than they need to know. But, really, is that possible? Can one ever learn *too much* about anything?

Late, esteemed English philosopher Alfred North Whitehead would say no. He favored focused, specialized learning over a liberal education that bombards students with a little bit of everything. In his classic essay *The Aims of Education*, he dropped a critical hammer on modern education by opining that “a merely well-informed man is the most useless bore on God’s earth.”

Those who favor the modern standard of a well-rounded liberal education and standardized testing will likely take issue with Whitehead’s assessment, but the line has stuck with me since reading it five decades ago as a student under UMass journalism professor Howard Ziff.

It’s not that Whitehead couldn’t tolerate an introductory liberal education for elementary students. He just believed that specialization must be the goal, and that it can’t come too soon. That’s where he bucked modern educational trends.

Which circles us back to the sense-of-place narrative: that is, choosing a place to inhabit – and learning everything there is to know about it.

I remember well my days on the road as a professional fundraiser, living briefly in strange places I did not know. Having grown up isolated in small-town South Deerfield and gone to college in nearby Amherst, I was ready to explore new places. Life on the road was exciting at first, but then became disorienting. It was six weeks here and six weeks there, with interesting stops in Colorado, Wyoming, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Delaware, see **VALLEY VIEW** page B4

Notes From a Heartfelt Life

Part III: Parenting... Without Kids



Auntie Trouble the Baby Hogger, loving on someone else’s kid.

By TROUBLE MANDESON

GREENFIELD – This might just be one of the most interesting topics I’ve written about: experiencing close relationships with children as a non-parent. Now in my 60s, I find myself an auntie to several kids and it has opened up a whole new world for me.

In my own childhood, I dreamed of adopting a large tribe of rainbow children, or perhaps fostering them in my later years. I never felt the urge to give birth or to be a mother, and I had very little experience being with children throughout my life. Neither I nor any of my siblings or first cousins had children, and I never had many friends with kids.

Within a couple of years of moving to Greenfield, wifey and I met and became part of what we referred to as our Tribe, a fun-loving group of people, all committed couples, some with kids, gay, straight, and transgender, ranging in age from 8 to 50. The two 8-year-olds, now in their early twenties, became family to me – and I officially became Auntie Trouble.

One such memorable occasion that surely wouldn’t have happened without kids in my life was a 16th birthday party where we played a life-sized version of Hungry Hungry Hippos, lying prone atop skateboards,

see **HEARTFELT** page B2



“KINDER BUENO”

Kinder Bueno is just one of the super cute members of his candy trio. He and his brothers have been with us since the end of May. He was one of the many Guinea pigs who came in to us with ringworm.

He and his brothers are happily spending time in foster care where his foster mom gave him a glowing recommendation, saying “Kinder is just the sweetest! He just loves attention and is one of the first boys to

greet me at the cage opening. I love that he is always so happy and calm, and really loves to snuggle.”

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

HEARTFELT from page B1

scooping up balls and laughing hysterically.

When one of the teens started her period she called her Auntie Trouble, who threw her a Red Tent party complete with red food and drink, red decorations, and a sharing of period – and menopause – stories from her older aunties. When she lost her virginity she called me before her parents, and when leaving for college, I gifted her a care package I’d made in a cigar box filled with condoms, period panties, a small vibrator, \$100 in mad money, and a few other important items that I felt a young woman out on her own would need. It felt special to bestow my adult wisdom and guidance onto a younger person.

Fast forward to today, and the Tribe continues to share camping trips, birthday parties, poker games, concerts, vacations, weddings, birth, and death. Some members moved away, and others were absorbed into the group. Our youngest member, at 5, has unknowingly given me the best gift of all: the opportunity to have a front-row seat watching and interacting with him as he makes his way through the world.

I can’t get enough of this amazing tiny being who gave me so many “firsts” in my life. I’d never sung a baby to sleep, or watched one crawl for the first time. The fact was that I didn’t know any kids who knew me back, and as I watched him grow, so too did our bond of friendship. At 5 he still launches himself at me and hugs my legs when we meet, and my heart just bursts with love for this simple recognition that I am someone important to him.

A funny footnote about my attachment to this particular tyke concerns one of our Tribemates, who accused me of being a “baby hogger,” as I



Refrigerator artwork on display in the author’s kitchen, made during an afternoon hanging with her five-year-old bestie.

never passed up an opportunity to hold him. I suppose I may have been a bit pushy when it came to cuddling him. I don’t think she meant it as a compliment, but I thought she hit the nail right on the head, and now I just might have to get it as a tattoo because I think it’s so right on.

I believe that it’s vital for children to interact with people outside of their own households. I believe kids need to learn that every family is different, that different things happen in other families, and that life is made up of a great many variables. I believe that as children are exposed to more of the world around them and more experiences, they are likely to gain a better understanding of themselves and how they might fit into that world.

I may not have my own children to educate and guide, but as a citizen of the world, I feel it is my responsibility to contribute to the well-being of those I share it with.

From the 8-month-old foster baby of my work colleague who I watch as often as I can, to the

9-year-old pal with whom I have a sleepover planned this month, I’m honored to be invited to share in the lives of these new humans, watching as they grow and learn and being able to inspire them.

It’s a privilege to be trusted with other people’s children. In fact, I’m so invested in spending time with the kids in my life that I even have my own car seat and baby carrier for whenever I’m called up to perform auntie duties. I did not foresee that my life would be fundamentally changed by holding a new baby, but it has, and I’m so very glad about that. It’s true, I’m proud to be a baby hogger.

Trouble Mandeson lives in Greenfield with her wifey and energetically wrangles a farm office, loves to copyedit, write, and read, and volunteers everywhere food is served. Notes From a Heartfelt Life was a special three-part supplement to her monthly food column, Notes From the Heartfelt Cafe.



Senior Center Activities

NOVEMBER 5 THROUGH 11

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.	12 p.m. Bring Your Lunch Bingo 4 p.m. Mat Yoga Thursday 11/10 1 p.m. Cards & Games Friday 11/11 10:15 a.m. Aerobics 11 a.m. Chair Aerobics
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 .	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.
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. COVID test kits are available. For more information please call 863-9357.	Monday 11/7 9 a.m. Interval 10:15 a.m. Seated Workout Tuesday 11/8 9 a.m. Good For U 10 a.m. Line Dancing Wednesday 11/9 9 a.m. Cardio Low Impact 10:15 a.m. Chair Aerobics 11:30 a.m. Bingo Thursday 11/10 9 a.m. Core & Balance 10 a.m. Barre Fusion Friday 11/11 9 a.m. Quilting & Open Sew
Saturday 11/5 9 a.m. Women’s Closet Swap Monday 11/7 10:15 a.m. Aerobics 11 a.m. Chair Exercise 1 p.m. Knitting & Handcrafts Tuesday 11/8 <i>Call ahead: probably closed for Election Day. – MR Eds.</i> Wednesday 11/9 9 a.m. Foot Clinic 10:15 a.m. Aerobics 11 a.m. Chair Aerobics	

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Clothing and Textiles Banned From Trash!

FRANKLIN COUNTY – As of November 1, 2022, clothing and other textiles will no longer be allowed in the trash in Massachusetts. New state “waste ban” rules require textiles be kept out of the trash so they can be reused or recycled.

Residents should place clean, dry clothing, textiles, and footwear in a plastic bag and bring to a textile drop-off location. Never place textiles in a recycling bin.

What is banned from the trash and accepted in textile drop-off locations? Textiles are defined as anything from clothing (shirts, sweaters, pants) to footwear (sneakers, sandals, cleats) to accessories (bags, belts, hats) to linens (sheets, towels, fabric, and more). These items can be torn, stained, out of style, or missing a mate, but they must be *clean* and *dry*. Items that cannot be reused or sold in thrift stores are sorted, baled and sold to recyclers who make insulation, padding, and wiping cloths.

To see a longer list of accepted items, please visit franklincountywastedistrict.org/p/68/Textiles.

To retain their reuse value and avoid mildew contamination, all textile donations must be clean and dry. Keep them dry by placing in a plastic bag and tying it up. Textiles contaminated with mold, bodily fluids, insects, oil, or hazardous substances may go in the trash.

There are many local drop-off locations. Textile drop boxes accept the widest range of items; smaller, independent resale shops may be more restrictive in what they want. Some organizations will even pick up from your home.

Every municipal transfer station in Franklin County hosts a textiles drop box for their residents or permit holders. Some might require access fees or annual permits. These 19 transfer stations are in: Ashfield, Bernardston, Buckland, Charlemont, Colrain, Conway, Deerfield, Greenfield, Heath, Leverett, Montague (Turners Falls), New Salem, Northfield, Orange, Rowe, Shelburne, Warwick, Wendell, and Whately.

In addition, textile recycling is now accepted at local Salvation Army Thrift Stores. Greenfield residents may bring bags of clean and dry textiles to the Hartsprings

truck parked at the Chapman/Davis municipal parking lot in downtown Greenfield on the second and fourth Saturdays of each month from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The 2030 Solid Waste Master Plan by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) aims to reduce solid waste disposal statewide by 30% over the next decade, from 5.7 million tons in 2018 to 4 million in 2030. MassDEP is expanding the state’s current waste disposal bans by adding textiles to the list of materials banned from disposal or transport for disposal in Massachusetts. See the list of banned materials at www.tinyurl.com/wastebans.

Clothing and textile products amount to 6% of all material going into US landfills and incinerators... that’s 230,000 tons annually in Massachusetts alone! 95% of all used clothing, footwear, and other household textile products can be reused or recycled, yet only 15% of reusable textiles are currently recovered from the waste stream.

Trash disposal capacity is extremely limited in Massachusetts. Diverting recyclable or compostable material from the trash conserves our limited landfill space, and saves money. The few remaining landfills in the state are scheduled to fill up and permanently close within a few years. Most of the “waste-to-energy” trash incinerators in Massachusetts are operating at full capacity. Earlier this year, the two waste incinerators in western Mass went bankrupt and closed; that trash is now being sent to landfills in faraway states such as Pennsylvania and the Carolinas. Disposal is expensive for municipalities and waste haulers, and due to longer travel distances, trash costs are rising.

Close the loop: the next time you are planning a purchase of a new item of clothing, please consider visiting local or online secondhand clothing stores before buying new.

For more information visit franklincountywastedistrict.org, email info@franklincountywastedistrict.org, or call (413) 772-2438. MA Relay for the hearing impaired: 711 or 1-800-439-2370 (TTY/TDD).

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Montague Community Television News

Canal Programs Are Up

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

TURNERS FALLS – A great new batch of videos have been added to the MCTV collection. Go to our Vimeo page to find the discussions of the Canal District Revitalization Plan; the premiere of *The Genesis of Turners Falls*, a documentary about the history of the canals; live music from the Juggler Meadow String Band; and the Brick House Spooktacular!

And as always, we also have the most current selectboard meetings from both Gill and Montague, as well as 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 infomontaguety@gmail.com.

MR Wrapping Paper Edition
Artist Profile #5

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 on Thanksgiving week!

Julia Mongeon has proposed a colorful painting of humorous dogs on a bright, floral patterned background for her wrapping paper. We asked each artist the same three questions, and Julia answers this time:

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



JM: I would love for the wrapping paper to make the recipient feel warm and special! I hope it brings a smile to their face.

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

JM: My pup Allie is my best friend, so I would love to receive lots of treats and toys for him.

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

JM: Newspapers have given me so many great stories, and many fun crosswords!



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. Opening reception this Saturday, November 5 at 1 p.m.

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

Leverett Crafts & Arts, Leverett: *Oh! Beautiful Glass!* Glass artists Marta Bernbaum, Dominique Caissie, Tommy Elder, Wesley Fleming, Beth Hylen, Jeremy Sinkus, Mary Giehl, Liliana Glenn, Colleen Grebus, Mark Gottlieb, George Kennard, Sam Myers, Sally Prasch, Annukka Ritalaahi, Tomo Sakai, Marianne Shepardson, Wayne Stratman, Caterina Urrata Weintraub, and more. Through November; free to the public in the Barnes Gallery. Opening reception with refreshments and music this Sunday, November 6 at 4 p.m.

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 27. Opening reception this Friday, November 4 at 5:30 p.m.

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: *Sticks & Stones*. Artists interpret the whimsical theme of sticks and/or stones in sculpture, mixed media, mosaic, fiber art, and more. Through November 6.

Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne Falls: *Josh Simpson: 50 Years of Glass*, retrospective exhibit by the local glass artist. Through December. Opening reception next Saturday, November 5, at 2 p.m.

Shelburne Arts Coop Gallery, Shelburne Falls: *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. Opening reception this Thursday, November 3, at 5 p.m.

A.P.E. Gallery, Northampton: *Missing Department*, collaborative exhibit by artist Ligia Bouton and writer Matt Donovan. November 11 through December 10. Opening reception Friday, November 11 at 5 p.m.

Gallery in the Woods, Brattleboro: New "Celt-edelic" paintings by Lake Pleasant artist *Lahri Bond*. Opening reception this Friday, November 4 from 5 to 8 p.m., during Brattleboro's Gallery Walk.

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.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Attic Adventurers; Pitbull Puppy; Non-Horrific Shirt; Woman Maybe In Maze; Man In Black; Sign Put Back

Monday, 10/24

5:32 p.m. Caller from Randall Road states that she is having issues with her neighbor harassing her and videorecording her. Caller called back stating that her neighbor is standing outside of her window, recording her. Advised of options. 6:52 p.m. Caller states that a vehicle almost hit her while she was in the crosswalk at Avenue A and First Street, then an older male party got out of the car and started yelling at her for being in the crosswalk. Referred to an officer.

8:36 p.m. Officer conducting vehicle stop in the Montague Elks parking lot. Registered owner, a 61-year-old Turners Falls man, arrested on a straight warrant and also charged with unregistered motor vehicle, uninsured motor vehicle, attaching plates to a motor vehicle, and operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license.

9:39 p.m. Caller from Faren Avenue states that there are two females in his attic who came up from the second floor apartment. Officer advises that parties have either left or are in a different crawl space. Caller will call back if he hears anything.

Tuesday, 10/25

7:30 a.m. 911 caller states he was driving down the alley between Third and Fourth Streets when a dog ran out in the street. Caller states he doesn't believe he hit the dog, but a woman was yelling that he did. Caller states a male has also come out of the building and assaulted him by punching him multiple times. Investigated.

9:24 a.m. Caller would like it on record that just before 9 p.m. last night, someone was banging on the door to her home on I Street.

Advised to call right away next time.

1:45 p.m. Report of several needles and pills along the sidewalk on Eleventh Street. Officer advises he picked up the items.

Wednesday, 10/26

6:06 a.m. Caller from Faren Avenue states there are females in his attic again; requesting K9 be sent to smell that they were really there, because it's such a small space that officers might have trouble getting in there. Nobody located in attic. Caller states he will board it up himself.

7:30 a.m. Caller from Third Street states that a pitbull puppy has been left outside all night and no one is answering the door where the dog lives. The dog has pooped all over the porch. ACO notified. Officers arrived just prior to ACO arrival and made contact with dog owner. Dog appears in good health.

11:39 a.m. Caller from N Street states that the upstairs neighbor called her a vulgar name and she feels threatened. No answer on callback.

5:40 p.m. Party into station looking to speak with officer about harassment and bullying at the middle school. Advised to speak with school resource officer.

Thursday, 10/27

12:06 a.m. 911 caller from Keith Apartments reports that a male party in the apartment next to her is continually hitting the wall and causing her door and items in her house to rattle. Caller states male also made a negative comment to her friend earlier today. Officer advises male refused to open door; however, he was advised of the noise complaint. Caller advised of options.

8:45 a.m. Parks and rec-

reation director reporting heavy vandalism to Unity Park overnight. Report taken.

10:16 a.m. Caller reporting that an entire box of trash stickers has been stolen from Town Hall. Caller later notified dispatch manager that the box was found in another office and was taken by mistake.

11:35 a.m. Owner of The Gun Rack reporting an incident involving an unwanted person. Advised of options.

12:02 p.m. Caller flagged down an officer on Power Street about the discovery of a shirt she found in the woods several years ago. Caller was advised that the shirt was mostly likely a lost item and not connected to anything horrific.

12:12 p.m. Walk-in would like it on record that her neighbor secretly recorded a phone conversation she had while in her apartment. She learned of this after she came outside and the neighbor began playing back the recording very loudly on her phone. Reporting party felt violated and intimidated. Services rendered.

2:25 p.m. Report of minor accident at Avenue A and Third Street involving empty school bus. Operator of pickup truck admitted fault; very minor damage.

Friday, 10/28

8:11 a.m. Caller from Fourth Street states that a female who lives nearby slashed his car tires and keyed his car because he wouldn't give her a cigarette. Involved female located outside; she has been read her Miranda rights. Report taken.

3:43 p.m. Caller stating that one of their buses was involved in a minor accident on Franklin Street; due to children being on board, they need an officer to respond. Officer confirmed no injuries; advises other involved vehicle, a white SUV-style vehicle, has left and would have minor front end driver side bumper damage. Officer advises that the bus company manager was on scene with a mechanic and OK'd the bus to leave. Also, the bus driver was at fault. Bus company will provide a list of student names and updated insurance information via email.

Saturday, 10/29

10:33 a.m. Caller from K Street states that his elderly mother left yesterday morning from her residence and was driving her 2019 blue Subaru Legacy to Somerset, MA to go to a family member's house. She never arrived and has no cell phone with her. Dispatch advised Somerset PD, who will issue a be-on-lookout order. Overdue motorist mes-

sage sent out in Open Fox to MA and RI. Involved female entered as missing person in NCIC. Call later received from a party stating he believes he saw the involved female at Mike's Corn Maze on 10/29.

11:23 a.m. Walk-in party reporting seeing a male swinging a small dog around in the air while walking the dog on Montague Street. Unable to locate.

1:27 p.m. Walk-in party from Third Street reporting ongoing harassment towards her and her dog walker from a neighbor.

4:51 p.m. Caller stated that 16 feet of her mother's fence line is damaged on G Street; not sure when it occurred.

Sunday, 10/30

2:38 a.m. Caller reports that a male party dressed all in black is walking in the center of the roadway on Federal Street heading southbound. Officer checked entire length of road from Montague Center to Millers Falls; unable to locate anyone walking.

12:46 p.m. Report of male with beard carrying a dog up Montague Street by the collar. Officer spoke with male, who was carrying the dog by the harness.

1:10 p.m. 911 caller reports a loose tan boxer dog in Unity Park. He will hold on to the dog until the owner is located.

2:07 p.m. Small black and white dog with one eye found on the bike path. Dog transported to shelter.

3:24 p.m. Caller stated she is at Aubuchon Hardware going through video footage with the employees of someone charging items to her account with the store. Summons issued for larceny under \$1,200.

4:27 p.m. 911 caller stated that two dogs were fighting on the bike path. During the call, the owners were able to get the dogs separated, and one of them got in their vehicle and left.

4:50 p.m. Caller found a loose dog over near the bike path and would like to bring it to the shelter. Related to previous call. Officer advises that volunteers at the shelter looked the dog over; injuries do not appear to be life threatening.

5:05 p.m. Caller states that she saw a male party wearing jeans and no shirt pull the stop sign out of the ground at Old Stage and Sunderland Roads, then run to the nearby driveway. Officer advises stop sign still in ground. Officer made contact with male matching description; he states he pulled the stop sign out but then put it back.

7:48 p.m. A 47-year-old Turners Falls man was arrested on a probation warrant.

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VALLEY VIEW from page B1
New Jersey, and all over southern New England.

Those were wild times for a young, single man speeding the interstates to new places and living out of a suitcase in Sheratons, Holiday Inns and worse. I ate in restaurants, drank in bars, and felt like an outsider. I spoke a slightly different dialect than the locals and most often felt like a rudderless ship navigating swirling, unfamiliar waters. I eventually tired of the destructive lifestyle and returned home, marrying my current spouse in 1979.

Before I tied the knot, I quit the fundraising game and took a temporary job as a laborer for the Montague DPW. Then I got a break when my Uncle Ralph called me from his second home in Charlemont. He knew I had studied journalism and wondered if I wanted to get my foot in the door at the *Greenfield Recorder* – a classic who-you-know, not-what-you-know job opportunity.

It just so happened that the *Recorder* editor of the day spent a lot of time at my uncle’s Berkshire East ski chalet, and was looking for a part-time sportswriter. My uncle promised he could plug me into the job if I wanted it. The rest is history. I worked in that newsroom for 40 years until retirement, working my way up the ladder as far as I dared.

MOVIE SPOILERS

TÁR (2022)

By REBECCA TIPPENS

COLRAIN – The American writer, director, and actor Todd Field, who also directed the thought-provoking and psychologically nuanced films *Little Children* and *In the Bedroom*, working respectively with the great actresses Kate Winslet and Sissy Spacek, has created in *TÁR* possibly one of the most intelligent and intellectual films ever made in the US. This latest film, which Field also wrote, stars Cate Blanchett – on screen for most of the film and giving, in my mind’s eye, the greatest performance of her lifetime, or indeed of any actress: move over Meryl!

The film tells the story of an American woman, Lydia Tár, who becomes the conductor of a Berlin symphony orchestra. The film feels like a documentary, as many real characters and events are woven into the story. Scenes anchoring this sense include an interview with Tár by the actual Adam Gopnik, novelist and staff writer of *The New Yorker*, and videos of her watching her tutor, Leonard Bernstein, speak on the importance of classical music for children, suggesting her original love and impetus for the music.

Indeed, Blanchett had to learn not only how to conduct but also to play the piano and other instruments, and conducted the Dresden orchestra in real time for the filming. She is extraordinarily powerful doing this work. For another scene, in which she is angered and driving through the streets of Berlin as aptly as a racecar driver, she trained on actual race tracks. All you can say about her performance is: *Wow*.

In the *New Yorker* interview at the outset of the film, Tár shares that her work occurs in rehearsals; she comes to performances practiced, without surprises. When dealing with

The pay was meager, the hours chaotic, the holidays few. My first full-time sportswriter paycheck was 185 bucks a week – less than I made as a DPW laborer, and a lot less than I made on a good day as a fundraiser. No lie. But at least I was home in a place that I knew and wanted to know better. That was important to me, and that’s why I stayed, bought two homes, and raised a family here. I didn’t want to bounce around from paper to paper, city to city for more money. Been there, done that. Place was important to me.

By the time I rose to sports editor in 1986, a position I held until my 2018 retirement, I was probably best known for my weekly column, *On The Trail*, which appeared each Thursday. Its backbone was hunting and fishing, but its soul was local history and place. Think of it: how do you separate place and local history from topics like flora and fauna, woods and waters, fish and wildlife restorations, hunting harvests, stocking reports and fish migrations, cellar holes and decaying maple-sugar camps on abandoned roads? Truth is, it can’t be done. Not if it’s done right.

So here I sit, retired and still writing about the same stuff, now for a weekly paper in the same general community. Over the years I’ve read thinkers like Gary Sny-

der, Wendell Berry, Robin Wall Kimmerer, and many others who believe in place-based living and narrative. They all advocate setting roots in a place, and spending a lifetime learning about it. That means wading its rivers, braving its swamps, walking its faded trails, following its stone walls, walking its ridgelines – and always paying heed to the whispering winds.

Deed research has only deepened my understanding of this place, while strengthening my personal connections through my father’s gene pool. His ancestors and mine were here in the Connecticut Valley for the first wave of colonial settlement. Of that, I have been proud for decades, and less so about my maternal grandmother’s ancient Acadian roots in Nova Scotia, which to me is still foreign ground.

Now, a sobering fact – one that speaks to the temporal insignificance of colonial settlement here. Franklin County deeds only date back some 350 years. That’s at least 12,000 years *after* Native Americans arrived here.

No matter how you slice it, that’s a harsh reality. On those terms, I am reduced to a mere squatter – a clueless brother from another mother who will never understand this place like they did.



Cate Blanchett is on screen for most of the film’s run time.

her work, the film focuses on these rehearsals, revealing her precision and what she is striving to interpret as conductor. The viewer learns a lot about the art of the conductor, and for me, relatively unschooled in classical music, a lot about the genre, too. It is in part because of these woven-in lessons that I called this one of the most intelligent and intellectual films of our time.

We see Tár rehearsing the first movement of Mahler’s *Symphony No. 5*, called the Trauermarsch (or “funeral march”), which may be a foretelling of her own trajectory. While featuring Tár’s consummate professionalism, the film is also a reverse *#MeToo* story in terms of its plot, as its look at her personal life ultimately reveals a pattern of grooming, and then using, younger musicians.

The plot develops into how Tár deals with the revelations of these sordid relationships, after one ended relationship leads to a suicide and inflammatory articles begin to appear in the press. We witness her reactions to the accusations and loss of professional support, originally denying them, moving to concerted efforts to cover them up, graduating to acts of raging madness, and finally escaping to a distant land.

The film shows Tár not only as a director, but also as a teacher, man-

ager, publicist, hirer, and firer, trailed by assistants who carry out her every bidding. As a sense of her grooming behavior evolves, she comes to audition a feisty young cellist from Russia, and hires her on. The audience feels that this was a correct decision, for the cellist is indeed incredible – we hear her playing compared to others, and agree that she is a true prodigy – but we also learn of the boundaries Lydia is not inclined to keep in relationship to younger artists. Yet, one should not mess with strong Russian women!

In another foretelling of what is to come, there is a scene of Tár teaching at Juilliard, where she comes down on a student who refuses to play Bach because of the composer’s misogyny. She argues ferociously against them, insistent that the work of the artist must be separated from the ideology of contemporary identity politics. She shows no grace in this lesson.

Later in the film, a video of this interaction spreads on social media, edited to make Tár appear to be racist and anti-Semitic. It is a distortion of her original message, but the edited video includes footage of her touching the student in an attempt to tame their nervous knee tic, cited as evidence of her sexually predatory nature. The propaganda works, sending her to the gutter of those canceled.

ARTIST PROFILE

Donna Estabrooks



COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

The Angels Hovering Around, painting by Donna Estabrooks.

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – The next artist whose art I liked the looks of enough to do a profile on is named Donna Estabrooks. She has her own gallery, called Estabrooks Studio at 139 Main Street in Florence, where her art is present. She also sells her art online on her website. She calls her paintings “Art to Heal, Transform and Inspire.”

I learned from the site that she also has what she calls a “creative workshop” that people can take in Mexico. Besides the paintings, she also makes painted tables.

“I started doing the tables because Judie’s Restaurant asked me to do special tables for them,” she explains, “and they said they are popular.”

Estabrooks went to the University of Massachusetts in 1982, and worked as an art resident for nine years. “I have been showing in New England area for decades,” she says. She opened her studio in 1991. She lives in Montague.

The portfolio on her website consists of art with many different themes to it, such as spiritual, animals, floral, and abstract. The spiritual ones feature angels, and different shades of blue. Some of the abstract ones feature a peace sign and spirals. One of the abstracts is, in fact, called *Peace Train*. Sometimes some of

them have sayings on them, like “You are the one” and “Dream big, start small.”

“The sayings are ones that inspire me,” she says. One saying explains the artist’s connection to the garden and love in a self-portrait.

When I talked to her, I ended up getting the story behind one of her paintings that I really liked, which is called *The Angels Hovering Around*. She said she was working on a commission, and “it took on a life of its own. It was inspired by a song that I kept singing in my head. It’s from a singing group I know.”

Estabrooks’ art is popular enough to be in many galleries. Besides her own studio, it is also at the Art & Soul gallery in Ogunquit, Maine, Total Image Salon in Wilbraham, Danco Modern in Hatfield, Hayley Marmelstein’s acupuncture studio in Amherst, and Goose Divine Energy in Greenfield.

The owner of Goose noted at their reception that her sister enjoys Estabrooks’ work. Goose will have her art on display until next year; their website is goosedivineenergy.com. The rest of her paintings at that gallery are very nice as well.

Estabrooks told me that, when it comes to how popular her art is with people, “I have been able to make a living at it.” Her website is www.donnaestabrooks.com.

Abandoned in the West, Tár escapes to what in the film is called “the East,” filmed in Thailand. Exhausted, she at one point enters a massage parlor, and is asked to choose a girl to work with her. In that moment she comes to realize the predatory nature of her past relationships. But she carries on with her music.

The film’s finale of the film shows her conducting in a relatively small theater, and tellingly, the camera focuses on the audience dressed in cosplay costumes – this is a Monster Hunter Concert, a live performance of video-game soundtrack music. Lydia Tár has come a long way from her days as one of Europe’s supreme conductresses. The finale offers a commentary on her devolution from high to low culture, but also reminds the audience that one can work to keep one’s passions alive.

TÁR is also, in its sex-role reversal of the *#MeToo* movement, a suggestion that we need to explore beyond our quickly made judgments. The film portrays Lydia Tár as a

person of talent, ego, and entitlement, and indeed perhaps even perversion, but one whom we see in her fullness as a worker, partner, and mother. This same story could not be so aptly told, as a commentary on this social-sexual issue of our times, had the main character been a man. (I also wonder if a man could have brought all the emotional subtleties to the role that Blanchett has done).

It was brilliant of Field to have understood this, in sharing this story that works to advance our social discourse on this subject: he has placed the final responsibility for interpretation of Lydia’s character in the viewer’s lap. He simply shares the story. I suggest going with friends, and having a glass of wine afterwards as you to begin to digest together the meanings and implications that you will continue to reflect on for days.

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Save Money This Winter With a Smart Thermostat

By RYNE HAGER

TURNERS FALLS – Smart thermostats might seem complicated, but they’re a fantastic way to save money this winter in the face of probable rising fuel prices.

“Dumb” thermostats operate on a very simple principle: When the temperature measured by either a mechanical or electrical device drops below or rises above a certain threshold, the switch that controls a given system is flipped on or off.

For heating, this means that when the thermostat measures a temperature below what you’ve set it at, your thermostat tells your heating system to do its thing. Your furnace flips on and starts burning fuel and pumping hot air or hot water, and your home gets warmer. When the temperature then rises above that setting as measured by the thermostat, it tells the system to turn off, and everything stops. Heat is then lost to the outside – hopefully slowly – and later, this whole cycle happens again to maintain a comfortable climate.

To keep things from just oscillating back and forth right around the pre-set temperature, there’s usually some level of *hysteresis* on the thermostat’s end – a sort of buffer that

makes sure there’s at least a couple degrees between the “on” and “off” temperatures.

It’s a really simple system, and it sounds like that does everything you’d need a thermostat to do, right?

But there are some key factors a “dumb” thermostat can’t take into account, ranging from the weather that day to whether or not anyone’s home. Sure, there are programmable thermostats that you can configure to specific temperatures at different times and days of the week, but they are annoying to program and adjust, while also being not granular enough – should every day, or even every week, have the same exact schedule?

Enter smart thermostats. These have the same basic functionality as a standard thermostat, paired with the ability to take other details into account. First, and perhaps most importantly, they can factor in the outside temperature and upcoming weather.

Think about it: if your house retains heat pretty well, and it’s going to be 64 degrees on a given afternoon, your heating system probably shouldn’t waste a ton of gas or oil trying to hit that temperature at noon – it can just wait, and nature will take care of it. Let’s say your thermostat gets hit by the sun in the

afternoon, throwing off its measurements and leaving your bedroom on the other side of the house freezing by the time you crawl into bed. Some models, like the Nest Thermostat, can figure out if there’s a daily pattern to the temperature they observe that might be tied to sunlight, and do their best to tune it out.

You can also often tie them to secondary sensors in other places if you don’t like where your thermostat is. For example, I have a thermostat in a pretty awkward location, next to my heat-generating computer. Rather than just accept that the zone will behave awkwardly, I’ve got a wireless sensor in another room that the zone’s thermostat uses, no extra wires required.

They also learn your preferences. Do you turn the thermostat down at night, or crank it up when you’re watching TV in the evening? You can try to program these habits into a more advanced thermostat manually, but a smart system can learn these details just through observation as you change the temperature yourself. Some models can also infer whether or not you’re home and adopt entirely different schedules.

For sustainability advocates, systems like Nest can also take into account the times of day when your energy supply is greenest – proactively cycling your heating or cooling system can reduce how much the grid needs to compensate for dirtier fuel sources at peak times. This won’t help with, say, an oil-fired furnace, but it does for electrical heating or cooling. And if you have a solar array, it can try to bank extra heating or cooling during sunny hours and work around any prohibitive “time of use” schedules the power company might impose.

Like any other gadget, there’s a learning curve to using a smart thermostat, but I do have a few key pieces of advice from my own experience.

For one, you can’t treat the thermostat setting arbitrarily. If you’re the sort of person to think “it’s too hot in here” and turn your ther-

mostat down by 20 degrees just to cycle it off, you’ll teach your smart thermostat bad habits – you’re essentially telling it at random times of day you want huge temperature swings. Set the temperature to what you *actually* want it to be, and it’ll build a high-quality schedule of your preferences.

Second, if you have an older HVAC system, you may need to do some extra work. While many smart thermostats claim wide compatibility, that’s not always true, and you can run into problems without a C-wire for power, like your furnace cycling more often than required for heating to keep the thermostats charged. This actually burned out the rather dated controller on my own furnace.

Third, you’ll need a stable Wi-Fi connection in every location where you’ve got a thermostat. If you have trouble spots or dead zones, it’s time to invest in a mesh router system to better reach those corners.

Smart thermostats aren’t even that expensive anymore, either. Google’s cheapest Nest model is \$120, and Amazon’s is just \$60. Other names like Honeywell, Ecobee, and Wyze also make them. (Since software updates will be important, I recommend sticking with a company that has software experience, like Amazon or Google.) Studies I reviewed of cost savings for smart thermostats range from 4% to 15%, so savings will vary, but you should be spending less money on fuel in the long run.

There are up-front costs to consider in hardware, and some folk won’t have the know-how to do a self-install – though if you have a C-wire, it’s usually pretty easy. Even taking all that into account, with heating costs speculated to increase by as much as 17% this year, you could start saving money before the spring thaw, and long-term, you’ll be spending less to stay warm – or cool.

For more questions about consumer technology, how gadgets work, or which doodad to buy if you need X, Y, and Z, shoot me an email at deviceadvice@montaguereporter.org.

SCENE REPORT

Sunday in the Park, and Beyond...

By J. BURKETT

TURNERS FALLS – So maybe you didn’t hear about this one... or maybe you did! A cool festival took over Turners Falls on October 30. While you were working on your Halloween costume, getting a pizza downtown, or stopping by the Voo, you may have glanced out the window and seen some out-of-town folks carrying instruments around, or noticed a strange commotion or outer-space sounds or something at Pesky Park.

The festival, co-organized by Mystra and Ketch Productions, was connected to many similar events out here in western Mass, usually a combination of local performers and out-of-town friends. The earliest of these were the Wickermania fests of the early and mid-2000s, and more recently the Ooze fests that have taken place on the Amherst common and more recently the Shea Theater. (Full disclosure: The author of this article organizes the Ooze fests, helped out with this one, and plays in Frozen Corn and Tarp.)

Who knows – maybe these events will help some folks realize there are a lot of really cool and visionary people making music right now... and they might be playing down the street from you!

Here is a rundown of the folks that played on Sunday, and a bit of background about them. Most are on Facebook or Instagram. If you missed this fest, too bad... but there will be more! Special thanks to all the performers and venues, and to Mother Nature, who provided the best performances of the day: the

amazing weather, and beautiful dancing oak leaves.

Neonach is solo local musician Craig Douglas, who combines electronics with found sound and vocals. He opened the fest with a great “in-between music worlds” set that blew minds in a subtle-yet-building-in-intensity kind of way.

Thirst and the Liver is usually a duo of Joel Paxton and Shannon Ketch. They are local folks from Turners Falls, but also equally from far away, and better planets. This time they were mostly guitar and abstract vocals, but they had the help of two other artists on fiddle and flugelhorn! Picture someone howling in a werewolf mask, conducting a free jazz quartet.

Wednesday Knudsen is a solo artist from upstate New York, and plays in the band Pigeons. Her live sets lately have been solo saxophone, but she has many other sounds at times, and her newest recordings include synth and vocals. We highly recommend her newest release on CD-R and cassette, *Soft Focus: Volumes One and Two*. Her set this year was legendary: haunting solo sax, played the way that only she can.

Xamxax Goom is a local duo, who used to live in Wendell! They play synths, and seem to like to dress up as witches and warlocks. (They might actually be, so watch out!) They have proven to be really interesting synth players over the past few years, and didn’t disappoint this time, with unusual mid-tempo moves and aural curveballs all around.

Buffer, the Arkm Foam and Stella Silbert duo, is two-thirds of the great new band Playbackers with

Neil Cloaca Young – check them out if you can, totally mind-melting, and check out their other bands and solo stuff. For this act, picture more of a noise kind of duo, with cut-up samples, all sorts of beats, and unexpected sounds.

The Mountain Movers, from New Haven, have gotten a lot of attention in the last year or two, and rightfully so. Their balance of songwriting and guitar shredding makes them one of the best rock bands around. Check out their newest LPs, and online live footage – by the way, their guitarist lives up here now, and is also in Junk Orbit. Sunday’s set was more on the mellow side, with slower songs that showed their subtle side, but they still rocked out too!

Parashi is the solo project of Mike Griffin of the 2000s noise-rock band Brunt Hills, hailing from Albany. While this is a solo project, it sounds at times like a hundred musicians! Though fully in the “noise” camp, his stuff is unique and very listenable, in its own category really. Sunday’s set was a real mental scrambler in the best way.

Frozen Corn is an all-acoustic trio, two banjo players and one guitarist, plus vocals. Though we usually only do songs from the ’30s and ’40s, we’ve been working on our second full-length LP, covering songs from two Doc Watson/Clarence Ashley records from the ’60s.

Spectre Folk is basically just Pete Nolan from the band Magik Markers, but lately he has also gotten members of his family involved. This weekend he had his two daughters with him, doing a very different and great set. It started in a real



MIKE JACKSON PHOTO

free-jazz kind of way, with feedback and cymbals, then had some hushed songs. Overall it was pretty tranced out, and was a really unique set.

Gastric Lavage, a duo of Chris Dooley and Sam Hadge, brought a hardcore punk element, mixed with free jazz and more. Extra points for their robot drummer costume.

Id M Theftable, a solo performer from Maine, is truly unclassifiable. He has tons of releases, and always confounds and blows the minds of everyone who sees him. He joked online before the set about doing an all-dance set, and it did start with a beat, but quickly spiraled into some intense and insane sounding stuff – in the best way – with the kind of vocal acrobatics that only he can do. His set also involved sweeping leaves and bending signs, and using his table full of strange gear to its best effect.

Stella Kola is a newer local collective, based around Bev Ketch and Rob Thomas. I think they are one of the best bands around – Bev’s songs and vocals are truly haunting, and bring to mind the best stuff from the ’60s and ’70s. You could say they are somewhat folk-rock, but also sound like no one else around. Keep your eyes and ears out for the first LP, coming soon. For this set the festival moved up the street to the Harvest

Restaurant’s window space.

Liam Grant, who also played inside Harvest, is a solo acoustic guitar player hailing from Tennessee, and an up-and-coming name. His playing brings to mind the late, great Jack Rose – I’ve heard he is on a recent compilation dedicated to him.

Tarp is a local group I’m involved in. It’s usually a duo, but was actually a quartet this time – all local synth players – which we called the **Tarp Big Band**. We played in the back part of the Voo, where there was an active bar scene, and an outdoor tent with an additional 20 patrons who might have been pretty confused if they came in while we were playing. (Check out the 2012 documentary *Behind a Hill* online to get more of a background about Tarp, and a bunch of other interesting New England bands.)

Noise Nomads, one of the longest-going and best noise acts around, is a solo project of Jeff Hartford. He has done so, so many great sets, albums, and art... and hopefully there is much more to come. We are so lucky to have Jeff and so many other great players around. Jeff also played at the Voo, and definitely turned some heads, even though the bar was even louder by the time he played. What a great ending to a fun day.

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FRONTIERS

Clinical Trials Leave Questions Unanswered

By SPENCER SHORKEY

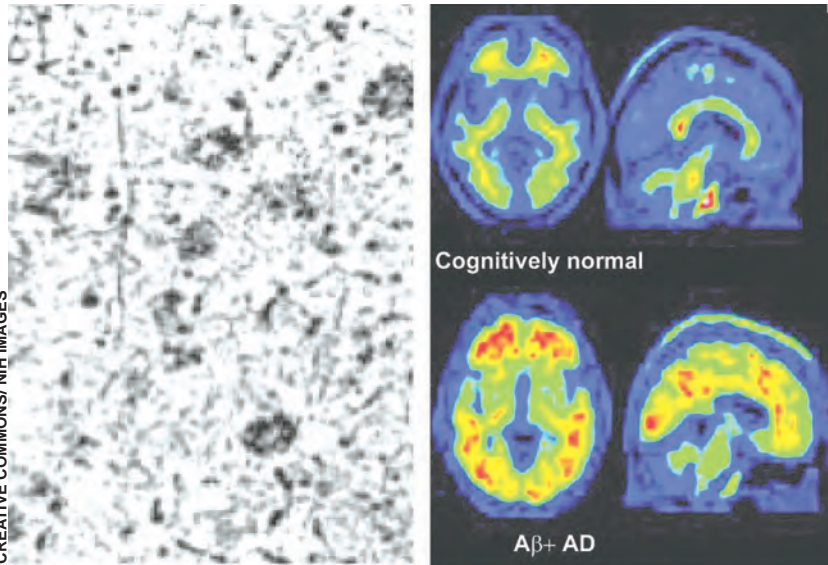
MILLERS FALLS – Over six million Americans are living with Alzheimer’s disease, a number expected to keep growing in the coming decades as the US population ages. Alzheimer’s and other dementias are neurodegenerative diseases, where the billions of neurons that make up our brains progressively die off and lose connection with each other. Seniors diagnosed with Alzheimer’s experience higher mortality rates than seniors without the disease, and one in three seniors in the US will die with a neurodegenerative disorder.

The only therapy currently approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for treating Alzheimer’s disease is the antibody Aduhelm, which received conditional approval in the summer of 2021. Aduhelm was approved through the FDA’s “accelerated approval pathway,” which allows drug approvals in situations where trials may not show a clear clinical benefit, but the benefit is expected because a factor associated with the disease shows improvement. This has been widely criticized by scientists as a bad decision by the FDA, because there is contention as to whether the factor or “biomarker” used as a surrogate is actually responsible for Alzheimer’s disease progression.

Alzheimer’s disease first got its name from the German doctor Alois Alzheimer, who in 1906 conducted an autopsy on the brain of Auguste Deter, an early-onset dementia patient who had died at the age of 55. The autopsy revealed the presence of proteinaceous “amyloid plaques” and “neurofibrillary tangles,” seemingly aberrant phenomena which have been consistently observed in the brains of Alzheimer’s patients in the years since.

In 2011, the FDA approved a diagnostic tool called *florbetapir*, a tracer molecule that can be used with positron emission tomography – PET scans – to non-invasively image amyloid-beta ($A\beta$) levels in patients. Alzheimer’s patient brains found to contain $A\beta$ plaques upon post-mortem autopsy almost always tested positive in florbetapir $A\beta$ imaging while the patient was alive, indicating that the florbetapir PET scan can accurately assess the presence of $A\beta$ in the brain.

The “amyloid hypothesis” is the assertion that these amyloid plaques are inherently toxic to neurons in the brain, and that preventing them might therefore prevent neurodegeneration. Despite the clear correlation between amyloid plaques and Alzheimer’s diseased brains, the “amyloid hypothesis” – the theory that these plaques actually



Left: Microscope images of silver-stained proteinaceous plaques found in Augusta Deter’s brain. Right: florbetapir positron emission tomography (PET) scans of amyloid-beta in normal and Alzheimer’s brains.

cause the disease – is considered unproven in the eyes of many leading neuroscientists.

There has been significant evidence over the years both for and against the amyloid hypothesis. A substantial number of patients test positive for $A\beta$ in florbetapir scans, but have no sign of dementia. Mutations impacting gamma-secretase, an enzyme that breaks down a certain “precursor” protein and produces $A\beta$, seem to be correlated with Alzheimer’s risk, but drugs developed to target gamma-secretase failed to show clinical benefit.

This brings us to Aduhelm, one of a number of antibodies that target $A\beta$ plaques to remove them from the brain and hopefully slow Alzheimer’s disease progression. The interpretation of the Aduhelm clinical trial results is worth looking at in detail.

Aduhelm was originally developed by the Swiss company Neurimmune and licensed for clinical investigation by the Massachusetts company Biogen. Biogen conducted two identically-designed phase III clinical trials named EMERGE and ENGAGE, each including placebo (no treatment), low-dose, and high dose groups.

The results in all trials showed a clear, dose-dependent reduction of $A\beta$ levels in patient brains. After 18 months of treatment, florbetapir-PET measurements of $A\beta$ levels showed 71% and 59% decreases in the two high-dose groups.

The question of whether this yielded a clinical benefit, however, was much more contentious.

The primary measure of clinical benefit in the Aduhelm trial was the Clinical Dementia Rating (CDR), a clinician-administered exam of memory and other categories of normal function on a scale of impairment from none (0) to questionable (0.5), mild (1), moderate (2), and severe (3). In the

CDR sum of boxes (CDR-SB), six categories of function are added together, yielding an overall scale of impairment from 0 to 18.

The CDR-SB results in the Aduhelm trials were a bit confusing. At the start of the study, the trial groups had average CDR-SB scores ranging between 2.4 and 2.51. Over the course of 18 months, the average scores for all groups increased to around 4, with some subtle differences. Following baseline adjustments, scores for the low-dose EMERGE and ENGAGE groups were 0.25 and 0.18 points lower than placebo, a small but consistent difference. In the higher-dose groups, CDR-SB scores for EMERGE were 0.4 points lower than placebo. However, the ENGAGE scores were 0.03 points *greater* than placebo.

Although some of the groups showed a beneficial difference in CDR-SB, the overall clinical benefit was statistically insignificant. Even if the marginal benefits were real, they amounted to only a few months’ difference in cognitive decline.

Given these results, in late 2020 the FDA’s Peripheral and Central Nervous System Drugs Advisory Committee recommended against FDA approval. However, the FDA surprised everyone by granting Aduhelm conditional approval in June 2021, following a highly unusual reanalysis of clinical data. Three out of the 11 members of the FDA’s advisory committee resigned in protest of the decision, and both the FDA and Biogen have faced criticism by the scientific community.

“I think this is one of the worst FDA decisions I have ever seen,” wrote Derek Lowe of the “In The Pipeline” blog featured by *Science*, “because – like the advisory committee that reviewed the application, and like the FDA’s own statisticians – I don’t believe that Biogen really demonstrated efficacy.”

MEDICINE

Preventing Dementia

By CATHERINE DODDS, M.D.

TURNERS FALLS – We all hope we will not forget, or be forgotten, and as we age, our memories become precious links to our past. It is no surprise that a major concern for many of my older patients is dementia. They fear they are already beginning to have it, or that they will get it, particularly if they’ve seen a loved one struggle with dementia.

It can be distressing to have to search for our car keys, or not remember what we walked into the kitchen for, or forget a conversation we had a few days ago. However, these are nearly universal experiences, generally due to distraction or inattentiveness rather than dementia.

Dementia is a broad term for changes in how our brain works that are severe enough that we become unable to function in our day to day lives. Memory loss is involved, but dementia may also include difficulty communicating or making decisions, and even personality changes.

Alzheimer’s disease is the most common specific cause of dementia, responsible in 60% to 80% of cases, but not all dementia is Alzheimer’s. Dementia can also result from strokes or decreased blood flow to the brain (multi-infarct or vascular dementia), or be seen as part of Parkinson’s disease (Lewy Body dementia). Other rare causes of dementia such as frontotemporal dementia completely change one’s personality and can occur at early ages, as young as one’s 20s.

In a medical system where the latest and greatest pill or injection or device gets all the attention, it can be disheartening to explain that for dementia – at least here in 2022 – there is no fast and easy treatment to reverse the brain damage.

Many things, ranging from high doses of various vitamins to fish oil to ginkgo to apoaequorin (Prevagen), are advertised as slow-

ing memory loss. While these products come and go as fads, none of them have been proven in medical studies to prevent or treat dementia. Trying these should be approached with caution – do not waste much time or money on them, and stop them if any side effects occur.

There are great ways to prevent dementia, however. They involve healthy doses of self-care and common sense. The best time to start preserving your memory and brain function, no matter how young or old you are, is now.

The key to avoiding dementia is to stay active. Daily physical exercise keeps your body active. Reading, hobbies, and puzzles entertain and challenge your mind. Maintaining close relationships with friends and family and being engaged in community activities keeps you socially active. Bottom line: keep moving, keep learning, keep engaging.

Other illnesses can increase your risk of developing dementia. If you have high blood pressure (hypertension), high cholesterol, or diabetes, keep these well-controlled to reduce your dementia risk. If you smoke, quit as soon as possible.

For those who have already been diagnosed with dementia, we use prescription medications such as donepezil (Aricept) or memantine (Namenda) to try to help maintain function and remain safely at home. Current medications for dementia are not as effective as we would hope and can be quite expensive. You may have seen stories about the recently-approved but very expensive Alzheimer’s medication called aducanumab (Aduhelm), priced at \$56,000 per year.

Even after a diagnosis of dementia, having consistent caregivers and a safe, familiar environment makes far more difference than pills. If you are concerned about dementia, please discuss the best course of action for you or your loved one with a healthcare provider.

In the year since, public and private insurance institutions alike have refused to cover Aduhelm’s \$56,000 annual price tag, and the controversial drug has failed to generate more than a few million dollars for Biogen.

There is not a whole lot of hope left for significantly impacting the progression of Alzheimer’s disease by targeting amyloids. However, Biogen and its partner Eisai will be presenting data on a phase III trial of lecanemab, another anti- $A\beta$ antibody therapy, at the end of this month. If there truly is a clinical benefit to the anti- $A\beta$ approach,

scientists hope that it will be unambiguously revealed by this trial.

Current thinking on Alzheimer’s pathology is that truly transformative treatment will not come from targeting amyloids, but from using better disease models. Alzheimer’s studies in recent decades have often used models of the disease based in mouse brains, which differ substantially from the brains of aged humans. Better model systems that use human neurons are now possible, which will allow researchers to better reproduce, study, and understand Alzheimer’s disease pathology in the coming years.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 4

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Drew Paton*. Free. 6 p.m.

Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *The '60s Experience*. Free. 7 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Backworld, The Infinity Ring, Cradle of Judah*. \$ 7 p.m. *Zebul, Sky Creature, Time Life Magazines*. \$ 10 p.m.

Nova Arts, Keene: *Qwanqwa, Fiddle Madness*. \$ 7 p.m.

The Drake, Amherst: *Kaleta & Super Yamba Band*. \$ 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Dear Nora, Omeed Goodarzi, Holy Taker*. \$ 7 p.m.

Bombyx Center, Florence: *Livinston Taylor*. \$ 7 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *The Outerspace Band*. \$ 8 p.m.

MASS MoCA, North Adams: *Soccer Mommy, Lightning Bug*. \$ 8 p.m.

Nova Arts, Keene: *Gold Dust, Ned Collette, Big Trash*. \$ 7 p.m.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 6

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *The Baxbys, Tysk Tysk Tysk, Spiralhead, The Upstairs District*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7

Mystery Train, Amherst: *Ned Collette, Jeff Gallagher, Big Trash, Andy McLeod*. Free. 5 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Falltown String Band*. Free. 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10

Palladium, Worcester: *Ceremony, GEL, SRSQ, Chronophage*. \$ 6 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *New England Repertory Orches-*

tra open reading: Amy Beach's *Gaelic Symphony*. \$ 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11

Epsilon Spires: Short films with live soundtracks by *Sunburned Hand of the Man, John Bohannon & Ryley Walker*. \$ 6 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Jeffrey Gaines*. \$ 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *John Scofield*. \$ 7 p.m.

Bombyx Center, Florence: *Victor Wooten Bass Extremes*. \$ 7 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *The Linda Rondstadt Experience*. \$ 8 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *New Monuments (mem. Borbetomagus), Lemeul Marc, Owen Manure, Byron Coley*. \$ 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 13

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Rosali, Gold Dust*. \$ 8 p.m.

Race Street Live, Holyoke: *Amigo the Devil, Brother Hawk*. \$ 8 p.m.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *NRBQ, Kris Lager*. \$ 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 18

Colonial Theater, Keene: *Supaman*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Upstate, Mamma's Marmalade*. \$ 8 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Special Interest, Lucie R., DJ Gus*. \$ 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19

Mount Toby Meetinghouse, Leverett: *Michael & Carrie Kline, Joe Blumenthal*. \$ 7 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.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 23

Race Street Live, Holyoke: *Dinosaur Jr., Man On Man*. First of two shows. \$ 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 25

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *The Whiskey Treaty Roadshow, Sandy Bailey*. \$ 8 p.m.

Race Street Live, Holyoke: *Dinosaur Jr., Man On Man*. Second of two shows. \$ 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 26

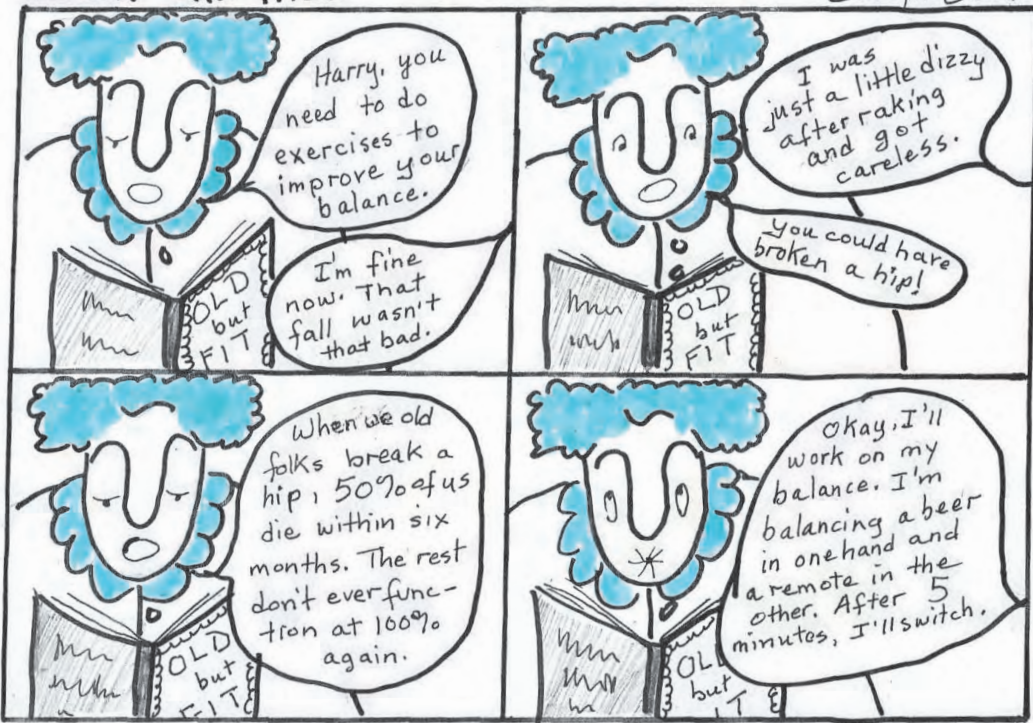
Nova Arts, Keene: *Rong, Space Camp, Oziem*. \$ 7 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *The Big Takeover*. \$ 8 p.m.



OVER THE HILL

Carolyn Clark



JAN ATAMIAN ILLUSTRATION

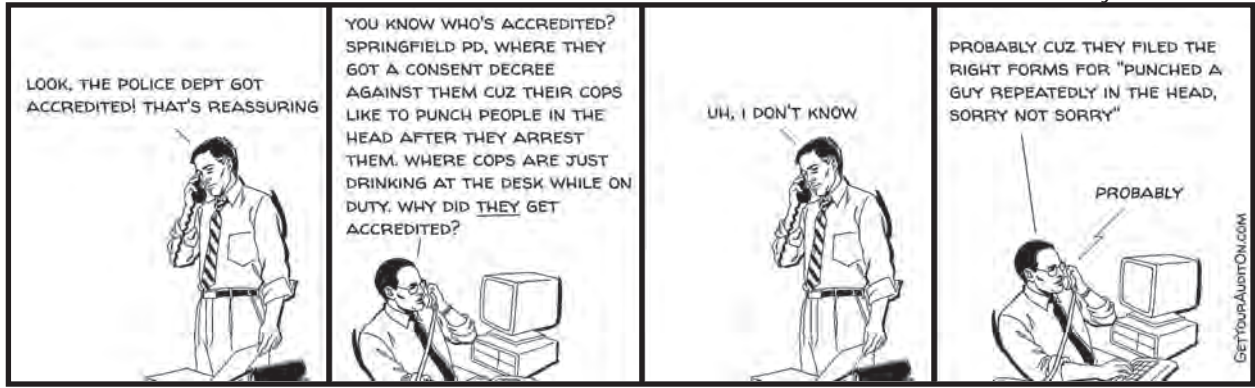
Three Degrees of Warming
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2/3 of all Americans believe more should be done about Climate Change

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CONCERT PREVIEW

An Evening With Outerspace



The long-serving Outerspace Band plays the Shea this Saturday.

By MIKE JACKSON

TURNERS FALLS – “We chose the Shea Theater for this show because we really wanted a venue where we could showcase the songs, and the songwriters,” Outerspace Band bassist John “Klondike” Koehler tells the *Reporter*. “Bars and festivals are all about filling the dance floor and keeping it full, and we have some music that’s more contemplative – the Shea is a very nicely sized, soft-seat theater with a dance floor, and BBC beer on sale in the lobby.”

The Outerspace Band formed in the fall of 1968 at Trinity College and spent most of the Seventies as a working, perpetually gigging rock band with a communal base in Wendell. The original lineup, with the exception of drummer Michael Wisotzkey, who joined 25 years ago (“the new kid,” Koehler jokes), still gets together for summer tours in Maine and the occasional home-turf blowout.

This Saturday night, November 5, the group will reconvene for two full sets at what its press announcement jokingly calls the Turners Falls Municipal Spaceport. Rick Page of backyard-barbecue-band colleagues Trailer Park will sit in on saxophone. “No opener,” the semi-retired

sound engineer tells me, grinning at his own promotional patter. “Evening-With. Doors at 7, show at 8. People should come out and stay out, because they get to set their clocks back!”

The promo drive that has brought Koehler into the *Montague Reporter* office on an unseasonably warm November Tuesday involves hard-copy paper advance tickets – a fun anachronism, maybe, but one he confides has driven strong pre-sales, rare in these pandemic times.

It also involves a special edition beer, The Outerspace Band Liquid Sun, an India pale ale put into charmingly psychedelic, possibly even collectible cans by the Berkshire Brewing Company. (BBC president Gary Bogoff is a fan and a friend of both the band and the Shea.) Said cans can be acquired in the Shea lobby, or at Connecticut River Liquors. “We may not have a record deal, but man, we’ve got our own beer!” Klondike beams.

Nostalgia is a polarizing force in rock’n’roll. But a band that abandoned its plan of making it big back in 1977 and has kept on playing for another 45 years, purely for fun, friendship, and the love of music? Sounds pretty punk rock to me. Don’t forget to set your clocks back.

NEW EYES from page B1

If there was time, I did not notice it passing until the tile was complete, and we each shared and admired each other’s unique creations. I felt hooked, and made a note to attend another class. I had found Zentangle to be a relaxing, satisfying, and somehow comforting method of making art, reminiscent of when as a child at a grade school desk I had happily copied my teacher’s lines from the blackboard to my paper. I found myself feeling confident in my accomplishment, and eager to meet the teacher.

Last week, before contacting Nordell to schedule a phone interview for this article, I checked out his website one more time. There I found, at the start of his most recent blog post, a short video documenting “stepping out of the comfort zone.” Text followed describing a collaborative project he had engaged in with Anna Hepler, his friend and mentor and a Greenfield artist herself. At a drumset set up in Hepler’s clay studio, and donning a dress shirt, tie and jacket with shorts, Nordell played the jazz while Hepler pounded the clay at a table, hard, with a mallet. The spontaneity and rapport between the two was evident as they played together, learning and creating.

When I later spoke to Nordell about this project he explained that his major interest in creative life is exploring the creative process itself and that he encourages the same exploration by his students in his role as a teacher of a class called “Cultivating Creativity” at AIC, where he developed a Visual and Digital Arts program. In his own work, as with his students, he emphasizes research, learning and designing a project, hands-on experimentation, having fun and then reflecting and learning from mishaps with peer and/or teacher support.

He gave an example of a class project that involved carving wooden printing blocks and using a natural ink made from the purple berries of the pokeweed plant. It involved an ink spillage, which ultimately led to an “aha!” moment, and the development of deeper resiliency, creativity, and collaboration.

In fact, as we spoke about his own work and the evolution of his creative life, he shared about a time such an opportunity to “see with new eyes” had presented itself for him. In 2006, after two decades working as a freelance photographer and then an internationally traveling professional photojournalist, he moved from Boston to Turners Falls to share his accumulated knowledge as a faculty member at the Hallmark Institute of Photography. Nordell said it was a turning point for him to be in an environment that was “a stimulating mix of enthusiastic students, creative colleagues, and diverse artists.”

“After working many years as a photojournalist, it was there that I first began to realize the artistic



IMAGES COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



“I splashed my brush into the ocean for water to paint with,” John Nordell wrote this summer on his blog, of a day spent painting on a sailboat. “As I tacked back and forth working with the wind, I alternated between painting with my left and right hands. The sights, the sounds, the sensations, the creating and the sailing all brought me into the precious now.”

potential of photography, and to consider myself an artist,” he told me. “While teaching digital photography, I began to experiment with multiple images layered on a single sheet – a very different direction than photojournalistic realism. It’s a style of using multiple planes simultaneously to portray the essence of a subject, and is inspired by the paintings of American-born German artist Lionel Feininger and his use of prismatic shards and planes of light that I viewed while on a field trip with students to the Williams College Museum of Art. My exploration of this method continues today, with a focus now on what I refer to as ‘reality abstraction’.”

In 2011, Nordell pursued a Master of Arts Education at Fitchburg State University.

“It was a good transition,” he said, “and with my wife’s encouragement, I began to branch out from digital photography to explore painting, drawing, and sculpture – and also the new DSLR cameras, which enabled both still and video photography. This is when my interest in the creative process really began to solidify.”

While attending an art gallery event in 2012, Nordell met the creators of the Zentangle method, and he later became certified to teach the process. That year he also de-

veloped the Visual and Digital Arts major at AIC, where he now works full-time as an assistant professor.

Nordell said he finds great satisfaction in teaching, and continues to learn and delight in life. As he writes on his website: “The ultimate satisfaction from a lifetime of creating art and finding inspiration is the awareness that most everything around me can be considered art and has inherent value. I hear music in water dripping down a drain. Freshly painted crosswalk lines evoke Sol Lewitt’s wall drawings. Eating a sandwich can be a journey.”

Nordell’s work can be viewed on his website and blog, *createalookenjoy.com*, and at two shows beginning in November. This Saturday, November 5 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. there will be an opening reception at the LAVA Center, 324 Main Street in Greenfield, for a community show including Nordell’s work that will run through December 17.

A reception will be also held at 6 p.m. on Sunday, November 13 for the Massachusetts Arts Education Association Members’ Exhibit at Worcester Art Museum, in which Nordell has a painting on view.

Registration can also be found on the website for upcoming Zentangle classes on December 15 and 16.



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