

# The Montague Reporter

YEAR 21 – NO. 6

also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

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EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

DECEMBER 22, 2022

## ERVING SELECTBOARD

### ‘Can of Worms’ Leads to End of Town’s Illegal Recycling Site

By KATIE NOLAN

The Erving selectboard discussed preliminary plans on Monday night for a possible recycling station, with an estimated cost of \$100,000 to \$200,000, at the highway department facility on Public Works Way.

State regulations banning textiles and mattresses from trash disposal went into effect November 1. Highway superintendent Glenn McCrory, investigating the possibility of recycling textiles and mattresses at the highway department headquarters, invited state Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) staff to check out the site to see if it was appropriate.

“It opened a can of worms,” McCrory said. Observing that the town was already taking brush and leaves, electronics, appliances, and tires from townspeople for recycling, the MassDEP staff informed McCrory that it was illegal for the town to operate a recycling station without a permit.

McCrory told the board the materials had been cleaned up. “There’s nothing out there now except leaves and brush,” he said.

The preliminary plan for a recycling station includes cutting trees, constructing a road to the recycling

see **ERVING** page A6

## LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

### Leverett Signs Up For Smart Solar Siting Pilot Project

By GEORGE BRACE

At their meeting on Tuesday, Leverett’s selectboard voted to support partnering with the UMass Clean Energy Extension on a pilot project to assess potential solar energy development in Leverett. The board also responded to a pay raise request from highway department staff and hired two police officers, one full-time and one part-time, among other business.

River Strong, associate director of the UMass Clean Energy Extension program, gave a presentation outlining the Extension’s goals and functioning, and explained how a pilot project would use the Extension’s “Community Planning for Solar Toolkit” to advance the use of solar power in Leverett.

Strong said the Clean Energy Extension grew out of UMass’s history of providing agricultural extension services to local farmers, communities, and businesses, and functions in a similar way to promote clean energy use in the state.

“Proactive and inclusive community planning for the siting and financing of solar photovoltaics (PV),” the Extension argues on its website, “can help to facilitate solar PV development in line with community preferences, while balancing other community priorities and maximizing local benefits.”

see **LEVERETT** page A3

## Booming Fabric Business Opens A ‘Shelter for Textiles’ Down the Ave

By NINA ROSSI

**TURNERS FALLS** – “The finest textiles have already been made on a mass scale,” Kathryn Swanson asserts, gesturing at an array of tubs at her new Turners Falls warehouse, full of yardage from the last century. Kathryn’s business, Swanson’s Fabrics, has had a small storefront at 106 Avenue A since August 2020, and now she has expanded into the former Simon’s Stamps location, further south at 320 Avenue A.

The inventory at both locations has been donated almost entirely by home sewers who happily de-stash their accumulated fabric overflow, making it possible for the business to set a single price for all yardage, regardless of its fiber content or original price.

Swanson’s Fabrics opened two years ago with all fabrics selling for a mere \$4 a yard, while fabric retailers sell new yardage for around \$11 a yard. The Swanson’s



Swanson’s Fabrics has amassed an inventory of donations from home crafters, and is expanding into a warehouse space called The Stash House to handle it all.

model puts the cost of making a garment yourself roughly comparable to some of the fast fashion available at major retailers.

The yardage Kathryn sells is “the least expensive to buy, with no exploitation of the environment

or humans, better materials, it’s helping out your community... I am operating under principles of sharing, community, education, and caretaking and care for the environment,” says the former school

see **FABRIC** page A5

## New MASS MoCA Union Signs Its First Contract

By SARAH ROBERTSON

**NORTH ADAMS** – After 14 months of negotiations, unionized employees at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA) signed their first contract late last month, winning gains in pay and substantial benefits.

Custodians, curators, fabricators, landscapers, sound engineers, ticket sellers, and office staff are among the roughly 100 employees represented by United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 2110 under the contract approved November 23.

“We’re proud of having secured a strong agreement that we can build on,” the MASS MoCA Union wrote in a social media post. “We are so grateful for everyone who helped get us here.”

MASS MoCA employees first voted to unionize in April 2021.

Hourly pay rates were a major point in the negotiations. When negotiations began, around two-thirds of museum staff were earning \$15.50 per hour. Bargaining committee members requested a minimum hourly rate of \$18 for the first year of

see **CONTRACT** page A6

## G-M SCHOOL COMMITTEE

### District Nixes Notion to Build On New Parcel

By MIKE JACKSON

**GILL-MONTAGUE** – As abruptly as it was introduced, a proposal to build a K-5 school on Turners Falls Road has been rejected, the school committee learned Tuesday.

Superintendent Brian Beck and business manager Joanne Blier had pitched the idea at the committee’s December 6 meeting as an alternative to consider as the district prepares

see **GMRSD** page A5

## High School Sports: Streaks & Shutouts

By MATT ROBINSON

**TURNERS FALLS** – The Franklin Tech girls’ basketball team stayed perfect this week, with wins over Mohawk and Smith Academy, and the Turners Falls boys’ team defeated an undermanned Mohawk team before taking on the Green Wave. The Tech boys, meanwhile, had a long night against the Mount Greylock Mounties, and the Turners girls saw their win streak end at one game at the hands of a buzzsaw called Pope Francis.

Artie Burke ref’ed the Tech-Greylock game on Monday, and the next night, he officiated at the Turners-Cardinals girls’ contest. It’s nice to see a 1970 Turners Falls graduate run the court with teenage athletes.

In the pool, neither the Turners girls nor the boys could best the Holyoke Purple Knights.

Argentina won the World Cup this week, the NFL saw its greatest comeback in history, and the New England Patriots, in what has been dubbed the Dumbest NFL Play Ever, attempted two lateral passes on the last play of regulation, causing them to lose the ball and the game.

#### Girls’ Basketball

FCTS 60 – Mohawk 15

FCTS 45 – Smith Academy 30

Pope Francis 64 – TFHS 31

Last Thursday, December 15, the Tech girls defeated the Mohawk Trail Warriors 60-15. There was no JV game to play, because Mohawk simply doesn’t have the

see **SPORTS** page A4



Turners Falls’ Taylor Greene goes up for a shot against Cardinal defenders as the Thunder hosted Pope Francis Prep in a home opener. The Cards would go on to win 64-31.

## MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

### McNeely to Sub As Health Head; Town to Repair Bridge to Patch

By JEFF SINGLETON

Montague’s public works department will not remove the trash barrels in downtown Turners Falls this winter, and may even purchase up to 15 new barrels in an effort to reduce unsightly refuse downtown.

This decision was made at Monday’s Montague selectboard meeting, in response to public comments from downtown residents at a meeting two weeks earlier about litter in the streets and alleys. The decision was delayed so the topic could be posted on a meeting agenda in order to avoid violating open meeting law.

Public works superintendent Tom Bergeron and the board discussed different kinds of trash barrels and their cost, including the virtues of combining trash and recycling in the same unit. That option was not chosen because of its cost, and concern that it might produce “dirty” recycling material that would be rejected by the Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) in Springfield.

There was a consensus that each barrel should feature small holes, as well as a “rain cap” which would, in the words of selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz, “deter people from putting regular trash bags in.”

Bergeron estimated that these barrels could cost as much as

see **MONTAGUE** page A7

## GILL SELECTBOARD

### Gill Among Last to Join State’s Climate Grant Program

By KATE SAVAGE

At Monday’s Gill selectboard meeting, members heard feedback from the town’s aging population, made steps toward joining a climate resilience program, and raised dog license fees.

Gill residents above age 50 overwhelmingly wish to remain in their town and current home as they age, according to a new Age- and Dementia-Friendly Community Needs Survey presented to the selectboard by Rachel Stoler and Meg Ryan of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG).

Stoler, the coordinator of FRCOG’s Mass in Motion program, noted that only 36 Gill residents were surveyed, so the data could be skewed. (The 2021 federal American Community Survey estimates the town has 820 residents age 50 or above.)

An astounding 74% of respondents said Gill was a good or excellent place to age, compared to 53% regionally. Respondents reported better-than-average rates of access

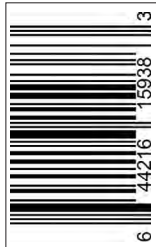
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# The Montague Reporter

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**Technical Administration**

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## Another Happy Year

News of friends and neighbors falling sick is coming at a steady rhythm now. A bad flu year, our third COVID year, and a hearty surge of Respiratory Syncytial Virus Infection (RSV) have teamed up to knock folks young and old back onto their couches.

We recommend that everyone take it *super* easy for the final days of 2022, and that those who have the time do something nice for people with extra-busy jobs during the holiday season.

We'll be off publication next week, December 29, and will return in the new year, publishing every Thursday from January 5 through June 29.

After ringing the bell when we entered our 20th year, the *Montague Reporter* now has twenty full years under our belt. Ten years ago this December – in the issues we review when we compile our “Ten Years Ago” column – Peter Kobel spent four weeks in the editor’s chair, wisely and rapidly extracting himself when he realized he would not be able to combine the job with his real-world writing career.

As we wrapped up production of the edition ten years ago *tonight*, Mr. Kobel finished his part and headed home, and the *Reporter*’s board of directors convened an impromptu all-hands meeting to discuss the future.

We took an unprecedented three weeks off production then – the board wanted four – and returned with shaky hands. Our return issue included a long reprint of an article on climate modeling with no byline, credited to the UMass Office of News and Media Relations, a front-page review of the Steven Spielberg movie *Lincoln*, and a great explainer on influenza from our neighborhood epidemiologist accompanied by a giant Creative Commons photo of an inflamed, coughing toddler. (Also on A1.)

It was a real “stone soup” moment, but it got us through that week... and the next week... until sooner or later we were chugging along again just like a real newspaper. The faith, support, and patience of our subscribers and advertisers, of course, kept us upright the whole time.

There’s a famous Internet meme, a looping clip from *The Simpsons* in which Grandpa Abe walks into a room, hangs his hat on a peg, and without missing a beat walks in a circle, puts his hat back on, and departs. Our December 2012 editor

always reminds me of that move: cool as a cucumber, reassessing midstream and reversing course. He was a great guy, very collegial, a talented writer, just nowhere near crazy enough or entangled enough in our local scene to devote his entire waking life to the project, as any country editor must.

One thing he did innovate that month, since we just then had ten full years under our belt, was to create the “Ten Years Ago” column. And this month, you may have noticed, this long-running regular item has mutated into a “Twenty Years Ago” / “Ten Years Ago” double-feature.

Twenty years ago this week, we run across Montague’s state representative, Steve Kulik, holding the town’s hand through an accidentally missed grant deadline.

Ten years ago this month, this A1 headline from the Eastern hill towns: “Towns Lose Their Triple-Threat Lawmaker: Wendell, New Salem to Throw Party for Rep. Steve Kulik.”

This core sample was no coincidence: throughout his 25-year tenure in the State House, Kulik was a strong presence on the ground in his district. A quick skim in our archive comes up with a wealth of articles: meeting with youth local at teen centers; making sure the 2005 Red Sox World Series trophy made the rounds of these towns, fighting tooth and nail for years to bring broadband to our rural communities, and even writing a column in these very pages, *View From the State House*.

The sad news of Steve’s death on Sunday has probably already reached our readers; we wanted to mark it here. One of our reporters interviewed a number of people about Steve this week, but then – and now the column comes full circle – fell terribly sick on Wednesday, so we will not be able to run that memorial piece until January.

There will be a lot more to say then, but for now, our heartfelt condolences to his family and friends.

A gem from the December 25, 1872 *Turners Falls Reporter*, 150 years ago this week:

“The editor of a paper talks about his frame of mind. He may have the frame of one, but that’s all.”

That’s all for us this year. This edition is late to the printer, which causes consternation. We only hope you enjoy our week off as much as we do. Happy New Year!

NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION

*This is me, making my last digital illustration of the year. I draw these at home on my iPad, using an Apple pencil and Procreate software. I am always searching for people to illustrate in this weekly spot, and I prefer not to have to drive around aimlessly trying to catch people at work! If you're interested in helping reduce the carbon footprint of this feature in the paper, please email me at [features@montaguereporter.org](mailto:features@montaguereporter.org).*

## Letters to the Editors

### Parade Organizers Thank Helpers, Town Officials, Public

On behalf of the Montague Center Firefighters Association, thank you to everyone who stepped up to ensure the Santa Parade on Saturday, December 17 was well attended and enjoyed.

Suzanne LoManto, director of RiverCulture, lent her expertise with logistics and posting on multiple social media sites.

The Lake Pleasant Village Association had cocoa and cookies for everyone gathered. Our fellow firefighters of Turners Falls joined for the entire route. And most importantly, the folks of the five villages came out to catch the spirit of the season.

We must certainly thank Santa and Alfie, for taking time from their busy schedule to ride along and visit with those who patiently waited for their arrival.

And lastly, to the officials of the town, who gave the approval for this event.

We wish you all happy holidays!

**Ann Fisk**  
**Montague**  
**Montague Center Firefighters Association**

### Town Thanks Bank

RiverCulture, the creative economy program of the Town of Montague, takes this opportunity to sincerely thank Greenfield Savings Bank for their generous donation in support of the Turners Falls holiday business campaign.

**Suzanne LoManto**  
**Assistant Planner,**  
**Town of Montague**



*Left to right: GSB Turners Falls branch manager Adam Rosenbaum, community engagement officer Linda Ackerman, and RiverCulture director Suzanne LoManto.*

**PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT**

## Fire District Prudential Committee Candidates Needed; Papers Available

**MONTAGUE** – Candidates for Prudential Committee are needed for the Turners Falls Fire District. A special election will be held February 15, 2023. The Prudential Committee oversees the Turners Falls Fire Department, and the general government of the District.

Nomination papers can be obtained at the District Office, located at 226 Millers Falls Road, until Tuesday, January 17. Only 30 signatures from registered voters of the Turners Falls Fire District are required to secure a place on the ballot for the Special District Election. Nomination papers must be returned to the District Office by Monday, January 23.

If you are interested, please contact the District Office at 863-4542 or stop in during the week. Office hours are Mondays through Fridays, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The special election will be held on Wednesday, February 15 from noon until 7 p.m. at the District Office.

**Published weekly on Thursdays.**  
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No paper fourth week of November,  
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Compiled by NINA ROSSI

Have a happy holiday and a very happy New Year! There will be **no paper next Thursday, December 29** – we won’t be back in your face with a fresh edition until January 5. Enjoy good food and good company through this seemingly very swift passage to the 24th year of the 21st century. We thank you for reading our paper!

The **Montague Public Libraries** are closed on Saturday, December 24, and Monday, December 26 in observance of the Christmas holiday.

**Local post offices will be open** on Christmas Eve and New Year’s Eve, and regular mail will be delivered. On Monday, December 26, and Monday, January 2, post offices are closed and no regular mail will be delivered. Priority Mail Express will be delivered on both actual and observed holiday dates.

Looking at the schedule, it looks like our **trash and recycling collectors in Montague do not have a holiday break** at all...?

If you haven’t tipped these hard-working people yet, please consider making their holiday better with some gesture of appreciation – even if it is just to meet their eyes and give them a verbal “thank you.”

The **Smithsonian on Main Street** program is in the town of Rutland, Massachusetts until January 28, and then will be moving

west to our town of Turners Falls at the Great Falls Discovery Center during February.

Rutland is currently enjoying an interesting roster of programs about their past, present, and future through this unique collaboration with the Smithsonian. The programs at the Rutland Library include “Finnish Life in Rutland,” a Farmer Forum, and presentations on the history of healthcare in the town and an analysis of three important local lawsuits of the 1700s dealing with slavery and freedom.

The Smithsonian program, called “Crossroads: Change in Rural America,” begins with a related photography exhibit by **local photographer Joe R. Parzych** in the Great Hall at the Discovery Center from January 3 through 29. Parzych, who grew up in Gill, has followed in his grandfather’s footsteps as a freelance photojournalist for local newspapers – including our own – as well as national magazines and trade journals.

“His unique photographic storytelling provides an Autistic perspective to everyday objects that people overlook,” reads the exhibit description. Come to Joe’s artist reception on January 28, 1 to 3 p.m.

During January, there will also be historical presentations on **logging and ice harvesting**.

**Youth are invited to make art** for the Smithsonian exhibit at the Brick House Community Resource

Center. The teen center is open on Monday through Thursday afternoons from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. Youth art made there or brought there during January and February will be on display at the Discovery Center in March.

The theme of the exhibit is “Life is \_\_\_\_: A critique of life through the eyes of local youth.” Text or call Hannah at (413) 432-9622 for more information.

We will be sharing more information on the Crossroads exhibit, scheduled to be at the Discovery Center from February 5 through March 18, as the event listings become available.

Each year between December 14 and January 5, the National Audubon Society sponsors a hemisphere-wide count of local birds.

The Athol Bird and Nature Club reports that their 55th annual bird count, held on December 17, revealed **8,252 birds from 63 different species** within a designated 15-mile-diameter circle in Athol. See the full list at [atholbirdclub.org](http://atholbirdclub.org).

Workshop13 and ArtWorks Gallery in Ware, Massachusetts are looking for **entries for two upcoming exhibitions**. First, they are looking for work that celebrates textiles and fiber arts; felting, weaving, knitting, embroidery, and quilting are all welcome. The deadline for submissions is December 27.

Second, the gallery is also looking for art that explores the color red. Entries are due for that on January 19. Find the entry forms, and pertinent information, online at [workshop13.org](http://workshop13.org).

“Unscripted: The Brick House’s Youth **Theatre Improv Series**” is a 16-week creative exploration for youth over 12 years old beginning in February. The class will explore devised theater, improv games,

writing, puppetry, film-making, social justice, and more. “Connect and create with peers, and have a voice in your community,” reads the promotional announcement. No experience is necessary.

The group will meet Wednesdays from 6 to 8 p.m., February through May, at the Brick House Community Resource Center at 24 Third Street in Turners Falls. Kaia Jackson will be the co-facilitator.

The series will end with a showcase in the spring, and all youth participants receive a stipend for participating, plus snacks and meals will be provided. Find out more at [brickhousecommunity.org](http://brickhousecommunity.org).

Superintendent Richard Martin announced recently that Franklin County Technical School was given a \$4.2 million grant from the state to launch a new **Aviation Maintenance Technician program** at the school.

This includes the building of a 12,000-square-foot instructional hangar, with service equipment and software to train an estimated 100 day and evening students each year. Graduates will be able to meet requirements for certification criteria set by the Federal Aviation Administration.

Youth who have experienced foster care, kinship care, adoption, or homelessness are invited to join the **HEROES Youth Leadership Group** in Greenfield on Wednesdays from 3 to 5 p.m. at Greenfield Community College.

Youth will receive academic tutoring, make art-based projects, engage in community building, service and leadership opportunities, and enjoy snacks. Transportation is available. Learn more and register at [linktr.ee/HEROESyouthleadership](http://linktr.ee/HEROESyouthleadership).

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Strong said a student from the Extension would be assigned to work on the municipal solar planning project, in partnership with the town energy committee.

The toolkit names six steps: gathering a team and setting goals; assessing resources and infrastructure; evaluating options for financing and ownership; assessing the community’s priorities; developing an action plan; and keeping the plan current.

There would be no costs to the town, Strong said, and the project would offer a comprehensive “boundary to boundary,” “soup to nuts” analysis of potential solar options in Leverett, including both municipal and private entities.

The selectboard voted 3–0 in favor of writing a letter of support for the pilot project.

Energy committee member Richard Natthorst has been serving as a liaison with the Extension service already, and will continue in that role.

Natthorst said that in the course of the project, he and the energy committee would like to explore the idea of establishing a PV-powered “microgrid” at the public safety complex. He pointed to the possibility of Leverett saving money by using more of its solar-generated power itself, rather than selling some of it to the electric company at a wholesale rate and buying it back when needed at retail.

Police Expansion

The board appointed current part-time police officer Meghan Gallo to a vacant full-time position, bringing the department back

up to three full-time officers. The board also appointed Allison Dalpe to fill Gallo’s part-time position.

Chief Scott Minckler said that Dalpe had also applied for the full-time position, and that deciding between the two had been a close call in the screening committee interviews, but Gallo’s experience and residency in town were important factors in choosing her. Minckler also touted Gallo’s sexual assault and racial bias training, along with her commitment to mediation in police work.

Minckler said Gallo has been “working her butt off to get to this point,” and that “she’s earned it.”

The appointments bring the department’s staff to three full-time and five part-time officers. Minckler said the smallest number of officers in his tenure has been six, the largest eleven. The department currently also polices the town of Wendell under an intermunicipal agreement.

Minckler reported that the department’s new cruiser, a hybrid, is being outfitted with equipment and is expected to be in use by the end of January.

Highway Economy

Highway superintendent Matthew Boucher appeared before the board to seek pay raises for one of the department’s employees and himself.

Boucher said that the employee had received a job offer at \$69,000 per year, while currently receiving \$57,000 from Leverett. Boucher proposed raising the employee’s pay to \$65,000, and increasing his own pay by a similar amount.

Boucher said his department has lost two employees to MassDOT already this year, and warned that the problem of retaining workers would be ongoing if not addressed. Boucher said that he had money in this year’s budget to cover the raises, but they would increase the department’s budget in FY’24.

Boucher added that he had never asked for a raise for himself previously, and noted that one of the employees who recently left was now making \$2 more per hour in an entry-level position with the state than he currently makes as Leverett’s highway superintendent.

Saying that he was “not meaning to be threatening,” Boucher implied he might leave the department if the employee he was advocating for left.

Selectboard member Melissa Colbert said that the request was “rational” and there was “nothing to be argued with,” but that she needed time to “understand the bigger picture.”

Board member Patricia Duffy also said it was “not an unfair ask,” but noted that “all employees are going to be pushing for this,” and said she also needed time to think.

The board said it would take the matter up at its next meeting in two weeks, but asked Boucher to call them if the employee could not wait that long for an answer.

Off Track

The board continued an ongoing discussion of the Amherst Regional School Committee’s proposal to build a new track at Amherst Regional High School. Leverett is a member of the ARHS school district along with Amherst, Pelham, and Shutesbury.

Chair Tom Hankinson said the board had received “a lot of mail, mostly from out of town” on the subject. Questions have been raised by residents about Leverett’s assessed share of the overall \$4.7 million cost of the project, how it would be funded, and the possible use of artificial turf.

Duffy said she had heard that Pelham’s community preservation commission (CPC) had rejected funding for the project, which “affects everyone’s piece.” Duffy said Leverett residents would have an opportunity to weigh in on the same proposal coming before Leverett’s CPC, probably in March.

Hankinson noted the town would also have to vote to approve any potential CPC funding request at town meeting, but also said that the proposal was “now in front of the region, and now is the time for discussion.”

Other Business

The selectboard designated Leverett’s representative to the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District (FCSWMD) as a “special municipal employee,” at the request of the FCSWMD, to fulfill legal conflict-of-interest requirements on FCSWMD’s end.

The position is currently held by Leverett transfer station coordinator Annette Herda.

A scheduled discussion with Roberta Bryant over the use of town hall by her 4-H program was postponed to a future meeting as Bryant could not attend on Tuesday.

The board signed two grant applications for fire department equipment, including lights, gloves, and a Camelot tool, among other items. The board’s next meeting is scheduled for January 3.



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## SPORTS from page A1

bodies. In fact, their varsity team only has seven players, which means that in the second half, most have been playing the entire game while their opponents can send in fresh legs.

This also impacts fouling. If any of them gets into foul trouble, they may not be able to exit the game. Lastly, having only seven players means they can't even play a five-on-five scrimmage.

This was not lost on the undefeated Eagles, who sprang out to a 13-0 lead. Mohawk finally scored halfway through the first to make it 13-2, and that's when coach Joe Gamache sent in his reserves.

In the first half alone, in fact, every single Tech player saw playing time. This didn't help the Mohawk Trailers, who found themselves down 32-4 midway through the second, and then suffered an injury. The player's father carried her off the court, and Mohawk was down to six bodies with more than half the game to play.

Franklin led 35-7 at the half, then went on a 12-0 run in the third to take a forty-point lead. Though the Birds used every player on their roster, it still didn't help the Warriors, and Tech took the contest 60-15.

All twelve Eagles scored in the victory: Lea Chapman (12), Laken Woodard (10), Kendra Campbell and Kyra Goodell (8), Hannah Gilbert (6), Lilianna Inman (4), and Trinity Doane, Jillian Crowningshield, Kitana Rodriguez, Kaitlin Trudeau, Jenna Petrowicz and Abigail Carlo (all 2).

On Tuesday the Lady Birds traveled to Hatfield and beat the Smith Academy Purple Falcons, stretching their streak to 4 - 0.

Tech used the three-pointer and a stingy defense to down the Falcons, holding Purple to just 4 points in each of the first two quarters to take a 20-8 halftime lead. They doubled up the Academy 14-7 in the third, and though Smith outscored Franklin 15-9 in the fourth, it was for naught as the Eagles took the contest 45-30.

Campbell led Tech with 16

points off four 3-pointers, going 2 for 2 at the foul line. Chapman scored 10 from underneath and pulled down 17 rebounds, but had trouble at the line, going 0 for 8 at the charity stripe. Gilbert and Trudeau each scored 5 points, Goodell scored 3 and made four rebounds. Crowningshield dropped a 3-pointer, Inman had 2 points, and Cordelia Guerin sank a foul shot.

The Birds travel to Northampton on December 27 to take on the Smith Voc Vikings.

The Turners Falls Thunder Ladies saw their brief streak end on Tuesday as the Pope Francis Red Cardinals pawed and scrapped their way to a 33-point victory. The Cards targeted every single ball carrier until she threw the ball away or it was stolen, and the Thunder just weren't prepared for this smothering, clawing defense. Occasionally, a Powertown lady would grab the ball back, which led to jumps.

This recipe for disaster led to Turners being doubled up 10-5 early on. Blue got one foul shot in to make it 10-6 but the Pope scored four more to make it 14-6 after one quarter.

In the second, Red came out on fire, scoring 25 points in the period. From the opening inbound, constant steals and grabs led Powertown into a 31-8 hole. They hit a couple more foul shots, but then Pope went on a run to end the half leading 39-15.

The Thunder fought back in the third, scoring 10 points to the Cards' 12 but Pope outscored Blue 13-6 in the fourth and took the contest going away.

Seven scored for Blue: Lily Spera (7), Tatiana Williams and Taylor Greene (6), Steph Peterson (5), Raygan Pendriss (4), Morgan Dobias (3), and Abbi Holloway (2).

This Thursday, the Lady Thunder host the Easthampton Eagles.

## Boys' Basketball

Mount Greylock 73 - FCTS 42

TFHS 62 - Mohawk 35

Greenfield 66 - TFHS 40

On Monday the Franklin Tech boys hosted the Mounties of Mount Greylock. For the first two and a half minutes, neither team could



DAVID HOITT PHOTO

Turners Falls' Tatiana Carr-Williams looks for a shot against Cardinal defender Tracetta Caudal during Tuesday's game.

buy a basket. Finally, at 5:35, Tech took a 2-0 lead. This seemed to uncork the bottle for Grey, who went on a scoring frenzy to go up 9-2. Tech narrowed the gap to 10-5 before the buzzer sounded.

In the second quarter, Tech couldn't keep up with the Mounties' speed and quick passes. They swung the ball around the horn, allowing each Grey to touch the ball. When Tech was unable to cover the pass, the open man took the shot. This resulted in a 7-0 run to open the quarter. Tech narrowed the gap to 20-14, but Grey went on another run, increasing their lead to 32-14. Tech hit a three-pointer at the buzzer, to make it 32-17 going into halftime.

Greylock outscored Tech by 14 in the third, opening their lead to 57-28, and while Tech held their own in the final period they weren't able to make up any ground. The game ended with Greylock on top 73-42.

Ty Sadoski led the Eagles' scoring with 16, followed by Robert Murphy (7), Dylan Cullen (6), Robert Belval (5), Noah Ausikaitis (4), and Josiah Little and Ben Dodge (2).

On the same day, the Mohawk Trail Warriors came to Turners to challenge the Boys Thunder.

The Trailer Boys only dressed six players. "We have seven," one of the Mohawk moms explained, "but today only six boys made the trip." She went on to explain that Mohawk hasn't had a basketball team for at least a year. "But we're good in skiing and track," she added.

As predicted, Gary Mullins's team came out hot, taking a 9-0 lead before 'Hawk scored their first basket. At the end of the first Turners was leading 19-7, and emp-

tied their bench. Powertown's lead kept growing, and by the time the halftime buzzer sounded to end the half, the team was on top 35-9. The second half was more competitive, but the result was never in doubt, as Turners took the contest 62-35.

Ten players scored during Turners' first win of the season. Alex Quezada (13) and Joey Mosca (12) each hit double figures, followed by Jakub Lavin (8), Levin Prondecki and Caden Williams-Senethavisouk (6), Dylon Shinall (5), Jackson Cogswell and Cameron Burnett (4), and Ricky Pareja and Deven Sloan (2).

As this issue went to press, it was reported that Greenfield defeated the Boys in Blue by a sizable margin. We'll recap that game after the break.

## Swim

Holyoke 65 - TFHS Girls 27

Holyoke 42 - TFHS Boys 39

The Holyoke Purple Knights came to town this Wednesday, sweeping the Turners Falls swim teams.

Sophia McComb took two first places in the girls' contest, winning the 100-yard breaststroke in 1:27.65 and tapping the wall in 1:07.81 to win the 100-yard freestyle.

In the boys' lanes, Tyler Galenski won the 200-yard freestyle in 2:55.14. Liam Bliss finished first in the 200-yard individual medley (2:41.29), and the relay team of Bliss, Nikolas Martin, Cody McDonough, and Matthew Sibley won the 200-yard freestyle relay in 2:07.15.

The Swimming Thunder will jump back into the pool on January 6 as the Renaissance comes to Turners Falls.



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FABRIC from page A1

teacher. “It seems to be what people care about, and it is working!”

The small shop downtown has survived and thrived through a mixture of online sales, classes and workshops, and the cultivation of a community of makers who donate, buy, work, and trade within this creative reuse cycle. “The shop will get cleaner and smarter looking as we set up this space,” she explains. “I imagine in the future that it might become more of a showcase for things people make – more of a gift shop.”

Here at The Stash House, Kathryn has one large front room cheerfully decorated, with couches and chairs for hanging out. A small stage is set up in one corner for monthly “crochet-a-oke” performances, and several huge balls of wound-up yarn and fabric strips that she calls “beetle balls” are available for rolling or sitting on. The colorful fabric swatches on the walls are not quilts, but have been applied to the wall with cornstarch and water in another creative reuse of her favorite medium, fabric.

An adjoining room is starting to fill with machines for sewing or serging, and there is a large table for cutting and measuring. “The idea is that this space is an open public space like a café, but what we are serving up is couches for doing your hand work, and tables for art, and machines that anyone can use,” says Kathryn. “We will help you. People can hang out and work here.”

She mentions that she wants to host events, such as a family-oriented craft night with an activity plus a movie and pizza.

There is also a separate pattern room, and a room for craft supplies and yarn. Moving towards the rear

of the building, one begins to get an idea of how the river of fabric flows. One room with an outside door is where donations are taken in and sorted. Notions, tools, and patterns are separated out, and the fabric is categorized into yardages, small pieces, and “hot garbage or scraps.”

“At this point, the inventory is mostly donations,” Kathryn tells me. “When I started up, I purchased a few large lots to get things going, but we have enough of a reputation now that we have become a safe haven for people’s stashes that they are trying to downsize. We call ourselves the ‘no-kill shelter for your fiber stash.’”

Moving to the next room, where shelves are stacked with colorful textiles, she explains the secondary sorting processes. The yardages get divided into *animal*, *vegetable*, and *mineral*. The wool and silk fabrics are animal, and cotton, linen, and rayon are vegetable. The mineral are petroleum-based synthetics.

“Rayon is a gray area,” she explains, when I mention that I think of rayon as a synthetic. “Rayon is made from trees and burns clean like a natural fiber, but it goes through an extraordinary chemical process. It was the original synthetic fabric, but once petroleum-based fabrics came along, rayon began to be seen as a natural fabric even though its process is really synthetic.”

“How do you decide what an unmarked, off-the-bolt fabric is made of?” I ask.

Kathryn explains that she burns samples of the fabrics to see if they melt – indicating “mineral” – or if they burn a certain way. She also has what she calls “a good hand” for feeling the content of fabrics, cultivated from her experience “growing up in fabric stores” as the daughter



Kathryn Swanson, in the hangout zone at The Stash House, with some of her “beetle balls.” She put up the fabric “wallpaper” seen behind her using only cornstarch and water.

of a costume designer and maker. But not being able to guarantee the fiber content is another reason why the fabrics are priced so low.

Beyond this is another room filled with the inventory that is listed for sale on the Swanson’s Fabrics website. Inventory moves from the first sorting room to the website after passing under the noses of the store’s members, shoppers who pay \$25 a month for first dibs when the fabric comes in.

The shop’s online fans – of which there are over 130,000 on TikTok and over 9,000 on Instagram – can get their first dibs during a members-only live drop on Wednesdays, the day before it goes out online to the general public. Kathryn and her employees create an online live event in Instagram and TikTok video sessions, where shoppers can chat with them and show off their purchases.

There’s much theater in these events, and Kathryn admits that she loves to perform – although she doesn’t act, sing, or dance, she wears snazzy outfits and bright makeup and has a unique, theatrical presence during these sale events. Online sales account for one-third of the shop’s total revenue, she says, with another third each coming from in-person retail and workshops.

“I feel like I am really serving a purpose here,” Kathryn says at one point during our interview. “I

am saving these fabrics with this feminine kind of economy. When you are engaging with fiber arts, you are engaging with femininity. Capitalism and money has never really acknowledged any kind of feminine work.”

What do most people want to make when they seek out her work space?

“Underwear!” Kathryn says. “And, I want to make people aware of how everything they wear has been made by somebody at a machine. If people could realize how really weird it is how little we are paying for a garment – if you know the joy and intense emotional feeling of putting on a garment made by someone who loves you, you must question what energy you are carrying around with you when you are wearing something from a fast-fashion outlet. There is so much joy and comfort in learning how to make your own things. It soothes the soul.”

Kathryn leans down to scoop up Pockets, the shop kitten, and explains that she initially capitalized her business not with a loan from a bank, but with her pandemic relief check and a gift certificate campaign from the community. For this next step up to The Stash House, she did a membership drive to have it be “town-driven, rather than just money from a bank.”

She levies a harsh assessment

against the new Massachusetts state law prohibiting textiles from entering the waste stream. She believes that municipalities collecting these items and funneling them into used-clothing charities will only worsen the large-scale displacement of textile garbage onto the African continent.

“So the next frontier for this business,” Kathryn says, “is, what is the end use for all these waste textiles and clothing?”

She pauses, looking around at her many emoji-labeled tubs full of textiles.

“My thoughts are making bricks, or some kind of furniture, or maybe a punching bag company, because most often we have tons of synthetics, and what can we do with them? Maybe we need to partner with UMass to study this. It’s a big challenge, and this new law is just putting it in someone else’s backyard... and there is a lot of it.”

Find out about hours and events at both The Stash House and Swanson’s Fabrics by checking the website, [www.swansonsfabrics.com](http://www.swansonsfabrics.com), where you can also sign up for a newsletter. If you think you might be interested in teaching a workshop or class at The Stash House, there will be a meeting in early January to cooperatively develop the procedures for holding workshops.



A room at The Stash House with work tables and sewing machines is available to anyone who wants to use it.

GMRSD from page A1

to apply for construction funding.

The cost of maintaining Hillcrest Elementary is projected to soon surpass the local share of new construction, and administrators are leaning toward expanding Sheffield Elementary into a single combined K-5 school.

On December 6 Blier had suggested abandoning both Hillcrest and Sheffield in favor of a single large new building. She showed maps of the territory the district acquired in 1971 to build the high school, and named benefits of the idea, including students from downtown Turners, who currently live too close to their schools, becoming eligible to ride the bus.

Beck said the pair met on December 13 with Montague town administrator Steve Ellis and assistant town administrator Walter Ramsey, and were dissuaded. “[It] puts the town in a situation where they would have two now-empty elementary schools,” he explained. While Beck had suggested Sheffield could be repurposed into a regional therapeutic school, the Montague officials indicated they

would “require [the district] to have outside partners” committed to a specific reuse plan before they would support a new building.

“So, we’ve scrapped the idea,” Beck said.

Gill member Bill Tomb asked if razing both Sheffield and Hillcrest had been considered.

“Razing an existing school would leave students without a place to go, because construction is going to take longer than the summer,” Beck replied, adding that the state may be more likely to fund a renovation project in any case.

Director of teaching and learning Jeanne Powers reported that January will be time for a major mid-year review of academic assessment data, part of ongoing efforts to address pandemic learning loss. Powers said the data so far shows a “positive correlation” between student attendance and educational progress.

She also reported that the district is forming a committee to review social-emotional learning curricula in use at Hillcrest, Sheffield, and Gill elementaries with the aim of identifying a “common curriculum” districtwide.

The Zoom meeting was joined by a number

of this year’s John and Abigail Adams Scholarship winners. The scholarships are awarded to seniors on the basis of standardized MCAS test scores. Winners Brayden McCord and Cloe Fulk had attended the previous meeting to receive other accolades, and Levin Prondecki and Cadence Wozniak were unable to attend, but four others – Mia Gonzalez, Maddie LeBorgne, David Stowe, and Corin Wisniewski – were praised for the accomplishment.

Beck announced that LeBorgne, like Fulk, had received the National School Development Council’s Award for Academic Growth and Student Leadership. He read a long list of LeBorgne’s achievements – National Honor Society presidency, a 108.3 grade point average, class offices, dual enrollment at Greenfield Community College, and extensive involvement in dance and musical theater. “You and your peers in this graduating class make up an awesome group of seniors,” he added.

“I can’t wait to show you all the good stuff we’re going to continue to do this year,” LeBorgne told him.

The school committee again has an open seat, following the resignation of Montague member Haley Anderson. A former member, Anderson was elected last spring by two write-in votes, and has told the *Reporter* that she accepted in order to help the committee reach quorum, but found herself overextended.

Members voted to accept letters of interest from Montague residents until January 24. The committee may appoint a resident to fill the empty seat until the spring election. Letters should be sent to the superintendent’s office.

Tuesday’s meeting, the last before the holiday break, was one of the shortest in memory, but more meetings are scheduled for January 10, 17, and 24. January 10 will include a slide presentation of findings by the Six Town Regionalization Planning Board, which is exploring the feasibility of combining Gill and Montague with Leyden, Bernardston, Northfield, and Warwick, the towns that currently comprise the Pioneer Valley district. Their presentation can be previewed at [sites.google.com/view/stprpb/](https://sites.google.com/view/stprpb/).

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CONTRACT from page A1

the contract, with annual increases over the next two years, according to reporting by *ARTnews* magazine; management proposed \$16 per hour.

Under the contract, the new minimum starting wage is \$16.25, effective December 5. Many staff members are seeing additional pay increases retroactive to June, MASS MoCA communications director Jenny Wright told the *Reporter*.

“MASS MoCA completed a comprehensive position-by-position compensation assessment over the last 18 months in order to make salary levels equitable, competitive, and fair, and in June implemented equity increases of up to 40% in some cases,” Wright said. “Wage increases are mandatory bargaining subjects, which is why we went through the legally required bargaining process.”

During the last two years, museum em-

ployees filed three unfair labor practice complaints with the National Labor Relations Board. One was filed when the museum initially gave the June “equity increases” only to non-union staff, an action the union argued constituted “changes in terms and conditions of employment.” In July, the museum settled this charge, increasing the pay of many union staff retroactive “to the date the increases were given to non-unit members,” according to the *Berkshire Eagle*.

In August, with bargaining over the base pay rates still at a standstill, employees staged a one-day strike, forcing managers to fill in to keep the museum open. UAW members told the *Eagle* that the strike put pressure on museum management, and changed the course of negotiations.

While management emphasizes that much of the wage increase under the agreement can be credited to their equity review,

rather than to the union’s efforts, the new contract secured a wide range of other benefits, including educational leave, an employer contribution to student loan repayment, reimbursement for employees participating in professional development, and bonuses for full-time workers eligible for retirement.

The agreement also established the LemonAid Fund, an emergency financial aid service for employees facing sudden financial hardship. Wright described the fund as an “equitable-access mutual aid fund that provides modest financial relief, so that an unexpected expense doesn’t turn into a major financial setback.”

“This contract is a result of the willingness of each party to listen and genuinely consider the other’s objectives and concerns,” MASS MoCA director Kristy Edmunds said in a statement. “The way forward requires a shared optimism for the future, and the abil-

ity to meet our field-wide challenges with creativity and care.”

UAW Local 2110, the Technical, Office and Professional Union, represents several thousand employees at 39 other institutions, mostly in New York City but including workplaces in Maine, Connecticut, and New Jersey. These include the American Civil Liberties Union, Columbia University, the Center for Reproductive Rights, the *Stamford Advocate*, and the Portland Museum of Art in Maine.

Local 2110 officials did not return a request for comment by press time.

“The museum has experienced incredible growth in many ways since its original conception,” the MASS MoCA Union wrote in its public mission statement. “[A]s a unionized workforce, we can help guide the museum as it moves into a new era of supporting artists, audiences and employees.”



ERVING from page A1

station, pouring concrete pads, building a shed, and bringing in cargo containers to keep the recyclable items clean and dry. In accordance with state regulations, the station would be open only during scheduled, staffed hours.

“Capital planning hasn’t heard anything about this,” commented Debra Smith, finance committee chair and capital planning committee member. She said the committee already has significant capital projects slated for FY’24. “Where would the funding come from?” she asked.

“We haven’t explored funding yet,” town administrator Bryan Smith answered. He said the town could decide not to construct a recycling station, or to start the program slowly and make improvements over time. He said state grant funding might be available to cover some of the cost.

“We don’t have all the facts,” added selectboard chair Jacob Smith. “This is just informational – it’s evolving right now.” He agreed to communicate better with the finance and capital planning in the future when projects, even potential ones, are proposed.

Open Meeting Law

The board approved a response to an open meeting law complaint about their November 7 executive session, taken regarding “the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual...”

Todd Wallack, deputy managing editor at Boston public radio station WBUR \*, filed a complaint with the state attorney general stating that the Erving board had held

the executive session without listing its topic in either the meeting agenda or the minutes, as required by the open meeting law, because the name of the person discussed was not provided.

Selectboard chair Jacob Smith read aloud the board’s response, drafted by town administrator Bryan Smith after consultation with town counsel, maintaining that the open meeting law permits a board to withhold an individual’s name in order to protect their privacy, and concluding that “the Board did not violate the Open Meeting Law as alleged in your complaint.”

“I believe that closes out that issue at this time,” said chair Jacob Smith. The response will be sent to the Division of Open Government at the Attorney General’s office.

The selectboard voted unanimously to accept the November 7 minutes at its November 14 meeting, according to the minutes from the latter meeting, but the town has not yet posted them to the town website.

An Age-Friendly Town

Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) public health nurse Meg Ryan and community health program manager Rachel Stoler gave a presentation on two grant-funded state programs: Mass in Motion, which promotes healthy eating and active living, and the Age- and Dementia-Friendly Community program, which helps towns meet the needs of citizens as they age.

Ryan and Stoler presented the results of a survey of elders in Franklin County towns. Erving respondents were more likely than respondents in other local towns to own their homes, and to have lived in town

## Erving Officials Circle the Wagons In Elementary School Labor Dispute

By KATIE NOLAN

**ERVING** – On Monday night, Erving school committee chair Jennifer Eichorn asked the town selectboard to support a letter presenting the committee’s position on terms for a three-year contract with the Erving Teachers Association (ETA).

In the December 18 memo, Eichorn stated that in negotiations held between January and June, the committee and ETA were unable to agree on some contract terms, especially teacher wages, so the committee filed for mediation. Three mediation sessions have been held since September.

“Since then, the Erving Teacher Association has attended the school committee meetings in September and November,” Eichorn wrote, “along with publishing four articles in the *Greenfield Recorder* and holding a ‘Meet the Teachers and Discuss the Current Negotiations’ meeting at the library. They have been putting pressure on the committee to increase their wages in any way they can think of.”

In the draft public letter, Eichorn stated that the committee and ETA had agreed on several contract items, including prep time, tuition reimbursement, tutoring rates, and teacher-in-charge stipends. However, the parties disagreed on annual salary increases, with the ETA asking for 2%, 2.5% and 3.5% increases over the three-year contract and the committee proposing 2%, 2.25%, and 2.5%.

“Erving Elementary Teachers are among the highest paid in the region,” she wrote, “and with the current proposal of the School Committee, they would remain so.”

In addition, the ETA is proposing a bonus for teachers. The letter quoted the union’s legal counsel: “In light of the hardships enduring by its members due to the recent increases in the cost of living as well as the difficulties of working through the pandemic and its aftermath, along with the significant compromises the Association has made in its base rate proposals, the ETA is proposing a lump sum \$5,000 bonus for all members of the bargaining unit.”

The source of funding proposed for this bonus is the federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER III) grant. According to the state Department of Education website, this grant is intended to “support the safe reopening and sustaining safe operations of schools while meeting students’ academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.”

According to the letter, the ETA contends that teachers were not meaningfully consulted about the use of these funds – as was claimed by Superintendent Union #28 in its application for the grant – and proposes the bonus as a way for Union #28 to comply with the requirement for meaningful consultation.

Eichorn disputed this contention, writing that the ETA was informed of the funding in August and that the union’s president was present at ESSER III planning meetings.

All three Erving selectboard members said they supported the content of the letter, as well as its publication.

\* Wallack contributed reporting to a November 20 investigative report published by WBUR titled “Officer shuffle: Some ousted cops find jobs at new departments in Mass.”

The article detailed the “notable example” of Erving sergeant Adam Paicos, who was terminated after four months as a state police officer in 2012 after a string of drunk-driving incidents, hired by Erving in 2016, and subsequently arrested and charged with drunk driving in Washington state in 2018. A judge dismissed the charges if Paicos attended a treatment program; according to the article, Paicos was “deceptive when questioned” about the incident by the then-Erving police chief, and took a five-day suspension.

Paicos was promoted to sergeant in April 2021. “Town officials refused to explain why they promoted Paicos after the arrest, despite his history of drunk driving,” the WBUR article states. “Paicos did not return requests for comment.”

The article also links to a reportedly unsuccessful 2014 lawsuit filed by Paicos in which he attributed his alcohol dependency to post-traumatic stress stemming from service in combat zones in Iraq in 2009 with the Massachusetts National Guard, and accused the state police of defamation and “intentional infliction of emotional abuse” for disseminating information from his personnel file to the news media.

– Eds.

more than 15 years. 100% of Erving respondents said they always felt safe in their home and community.

The board voted to sign a memorandum of understanding with FRCOG about the two programs.

Committees created by the town will begin to review the survey, and other data, in January, and members will receive a training on health equity in February. Through the spring and summer, the committees will identify the root causes of issues, identify the town’s priorities for improvement, and recommend strategies.

FY’24 Budget

The board met jointly with the finance committee to consider the fiscal year 2024 budget requests from several town departments.

Police chief Robert Holst presented a request for \$635,884, an increase of 18% over FY’23. He listed increased utility costs, the canine program, and an additional staff member as the reasons for the large increase. Animal control expenses were level-funded.

Fire chief Philip Wonkka presented a request for \$465,820, an

increase of 4% over FY’23, as a result of increased costs for utilities, turnout gear, and hose maintenance. The emergency management department request was for \$13,166, an increase of 0.5%.

Highway superintendent McCrory requested \$713,287, a 33% increase over FY’23, driven by increased costs for surveying, road maintenance, vehicle fuel costs, and electricity.

Tree warden Michael Gordon requested \$36,537, with an increase of 6% attributed to police traffic details during tree work.

Other Business

Erving school committee chair Jennifer Eichorn asked the board’s support for publishing a letter stating the school committee’s position on contentious contract negotiations with the Erving Teachers Association (*see article on this page*). The board members said they supported the school committee’s letter.

In November, the board had asked for quotes from several dental and vision insurance providers, because some town employees have complained of problems with the

current provider. In her role as town treasurer, Eichorn presented details of four dental plans. The board asked her to provide the information to department heads and town employees and solicit feedback.

The board reviewed and renewed liquor, general business, common victualler, and auto repair and sales licenses for the 2023 calendar year.

The board voted to establish a gift fund for the Poplar Mountain Conservation Area.

The board approved the transfer of the former Erving Public Library building at 17 Moore Street and the former Graded School Building at 18 Pleasant Street to Millers Falls Realty, LLC for \$5,000 and \$10,000, respectively. The company plans to develop the Pleasant Street property into four market-rate apartments, and the Moore Street property into a single-family residence.

As the hour grew late, Jacob Smith decided to pass over several items on the agenda, including review of draft personnel policies and minutes of previous meetings. The meeting, which began at 6:35 p.m., finally adjourned at 10:48 p.m.



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**MONTAGUE** from page A1

\$12,000, though he also mentioned costs below \$1,000. At Kuklewicz’s suggestion, the board allocated “up to \$15,000” in federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to pay for the receptacles.

**Health Department**

The board appointed former health director Gina McNeely to serve as temporary health director while a committee continues to search for a new permanent director. The search, which began in October, had to be reposted after the most qualified candidate withdrew their application.

McNeely’s original path to public health director in Montague had many twists and turns. After receiving a degree in biology from UMass, she told the *Reporter*, she decided to go into horse breeding, but discovered that many states with large horse industries did not allow women to do that work. She landed a public health position at Westover Air Reserve Base, followed by a similar position in Holyoke.

McNeely became public health director in Montague in 2000, and stayed on for 19 years. This is the second time she has served as “acting health director” in the past three years. She covered the job in March 2020, during the absence of then-director Daniel Wasiuk in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“She was so excited to come back that she wanted to come actually be in the office today,” said board of health member Michael Nelson. “But we said ‘no, you’ve got to wait one more day until the [selectboard] appoints you.’” McNeely was appointed as a temporary town employee at Grade G, Step 10.

“I don’t know how many times I have reappointed Gina over the years,” said member Chris Boutwell.

The town has also signed a “*per diem*” contract with Greenfield for limited support from its health director, Jennifer Hoffman.

**Public Libraries**

Library director Caitlin Kelley reported that the state Board of Library Commissioners has announced a library construction program, the first since 2016.

She said the state would cover 45% to 50% of new construction, but asked that the selectboard grant the library trustees \$35,250 for a feasibility study of library growth, looking at the Carnegie Library in Turners Falls “and other sites.” Kelley said this money could come from the town’s ARPA fund, which could in turn be replenished by a town meeting vote to reallocate money approved in 2017 for a feasibility study but never spent.

Kelley was asked whether the state still requires towns of Montague’s size to build relatively large libraries, which previous studies had concluded would not be realistic for an expansion and renovation on the Carnegie site. She said she did not know if the criteria had changed, and agreed that “figuring out something for the existing footprint would be very difficult,” suggesting it may be necessary to purchase adjacent land.

On Tuesday, Kelley told the *Reporter* she had reached out to the “building folks” at the state commission and received the following response:

“As for library design requirements, we no longer suggest consulting the Wisconsin Standards. Every community is so unique in

its demographics and needs that the library building program should set the requirements for your library. However, that being said, we do still recommend one parking space per 400 square feet, but we defer to the local zoning laws for parking.”

“This means we won’t be required to build a behemoth,” Kelley explained.

At Monday’s meeting, Kelley also announced that she had received a grant to continue a food distribution program at the Millers Falls branch library.

Kelley also proposed a public meeting on February 16 to review several studies of the old town hall building, constructed in the late 1850s, which now houses the Montague Center branch. She said the trustees had originally planned to meet at town hall in Turners Falls, but decided to hold the event in the Montague Center building after feedback “from the community.”

“That’s great,” said Kuklewicz. “I have expressed concern about the under-use of that building for many years.”

**Cities In Dust**

Building inspector Bill Ketchen told the board that Trinity Health of New England, which owns the soon-to-be-demolished former Faren Care Center, requested that they be allowed to “crush masonry and stone” from the building to use as backfill as a “cost-saving measure.”

Town administrator Steve Ellis said he did not have the “expertise” to evaluate this proposal.

“We’re not engineers, just remember,” Kuklewicz told Ketchen. “I want to be reasonable, but I think you should do more digging.”

The board did not vote on the issue. Ketchen said the demolition would begin “in March sometime,” after hazardous materials abatement.

Ketchen also requested that the town establish a municipal hearing officer to rule on challenges to fire and safety code violations, primarily at entertainment venues. The board approved creating a hearing officer capacity, which will be added to the building department budget.

Assistant town administrator Walter Ramsey presented an update on the former highway garage at 500 Avenue A. The town sold the building to Nova Works LLC, owned by Peter Chilton and Sayre Anthony of Nova Motorcycles, for redevelopment.

Chilton said the company has applied for a permit to begin the renovations required under its land development agreement with the town, and that all the spaces in the building have been leased. The tenants, “as we had hoped,” were small businesses that “needed more space,” he said.

**Many Bridges**

Bergeron and Ramsey reviewed a proposal by engineers Weston & Sampson to perform an inspection and draft a preliminary design for repairs to the Eleventh Street bridge, which connects Avenue A to the Patch neighborhood across the canal.

The immediate need for repair comes after an inspection by the state Department of Transportation, which found certain structural elements of the bridge at risk.

“One of the beams under the bridge is lifted, and is not structurally supported,” said Ramsey.

Although Weston & Sampson estimated over \$85,000 for all engineering services, including bidding and construction oversight, the board

only approved \$10,200 for the project’s first phase, a visual inspection, and a firmer cost estimate.

Ellis sought to debunk a rumor that the reopening of the General Pierce Bridge is now only delayed by Montague’s request for upgraded pedestrian lighting. He said that the lighting was not the only work delaying the opening, which has been moved earlier several times and is now expected in March.

The board approved amendments, developed in executive sessions during the past month, to a 2021 agreement with FirstLight Power about a historic footbridge to the Strathmore Mill. Under the original agreement, the town surrendered its right to maintain utility lines on the bridge in exchange for easements on FirstLight property needed to construct a new footbridge to the southwest. As that replacement footbridge will no longer be built, the transaction has become, in Ellis’s words, an “orphan.”

The modified agreement stipulates that if the town requests the old overhead footbridge be removed, the request must be “recognized” by FirstLight within four years. A replacement footbridge, however, would no longer have to be built at its exact location.

Ellis said the deal requires “historic preservation” of the footbridge’s east entrance on Canal Street while the bridge itself is “decommissioned, and ultimately removed.”

**A Welcome Sign**

Ramsey presented the board with a “mock-up” of a potential “gateway sign” to be placed on the hill opposite the Fifth Street auto bridge over the canal. The sign, which would sit on masonry and stone, would read “Turners Falls, Town of Montague.”

This elicited a wide range of suggestions including that the sign should include the word “welcome,” that the lettering should be white and not black, that the base should be built of brick, and that Turners Falls should be renamed “Great Falls.”

A proposal for a “local directional signage program,” to alert visitors to “attractions” not on main roads, was endorsed by the board.

**Other Business**

Bergeron and Ramsey discussed the project to replace broken town hall boilers, awarded to the local company Jamrog HVAC. Bergeron said the work would begin this week or next, but no one had planned for the need to close town hall for up to three days while there was no heat.

Jamrog can keep one of the current boilers going, but it will increase the cost of the project. Ramsey said the company estimates keeping the heat on would add \$3,850, still below the \$40,000 total allocated by the selectboard. The board approved an amended contract.

The board voted to approve a \$20,580 state grant to improve access to the retirement board office, which has been moved into the town hall annex, as well as a contract with the company Synagro to haul sludge cake away from the Clean Water Facility.

The board approved hiring a student to do mechanical repair work at the DPW under an apprenticeship program with Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School in Northampton. Bergeron said the student will work for four weeks on alternate weeks, and that his hours will be paid by the DPW and reimbursed by Smith.

Bergeron also reported that the latest inspection of the town’s transfer station on Sandy Lane found no violations. “It’s gold up there, for a change,” he said. “They could find nothing to write us up for.”

The board voted to declare the First Street parking lot and adjacent property, owned by the town, as “surplus property” so it can be sold in January to an affordable housing developer.

Ramsey reviewed a long list of capital requests to be proposed at the winter special and spring annual town meetings. The cost of these projects totals \$4.4 million, but Ramsey said the “net cost” after grants and prior appropriations are taken into account is about \$2.2 million.

The board approved renewing a number of licenses – including food service, liquor, entertainment, and used automobile sales – for 2023.

At the suggestion of town counsel, they voted to extend the liquor

license owned by Sean Hubert for the closed bar and restaurant Hubie’s until “sometime in January,” when a hearing can be held on its proposed transfer to the Shea Theater.

As the meeting extended nearly an hour beyond posted agenda times, Ellis gave a “sneak peek” of Montague’s FY’24 operating budget, and discussed a schedule for in-depth budget talks with departments. Ellis said the departments’ total requests represent an increase of 4.8% over the current year.

The board informally agreed to hold a special meeting on January 17, primarily to deal with personnel increases and the airport budget.

At the end of the meeting, Ellis told town residents to check the holiday recycling and trash pickup schedule posted on the town website.

The meeting adjourned after nearly three hours. The board’s next meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 9.



## LOOKING BACK: 20 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

*Here’s the way it was on December 19, 2002: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.*

**Grant Deadline Missed**

Montague missed an October 11 deadline for filing required paperwork for a Community Policing grant. State representative Stephen Kulik confirmed on Wednesday that Montague missed the deadline.

Kulik said acting Montague police chief Gary Billings contacted his office last week indicating that the hearings concerning former police chief Patrick O’Bryan had caused the delay, but that the appli-

cation had just been sent to Boston by overnight mail. Billings was hopeful that Kulik’s office might be able to provide assistance despite the missed deadline.

Kulik noted that \$40,000 in Community Policing funds was “earmarked” for Montague in the state budget, and said he suspected Montague will get the funds as they cannot be spent on anything else.

## 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

*Here’s the way it was on December 20, 2012: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.*

**Battlefield Grant Approved**

While the long-delayed vote on a historic battlefield grant application was a foregone conclusion, the Montague selectboard meeting Monday did provide some fireworks. The American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) grant, which seeks \$40,000 from the National Park Service, passed 2–1 with Mark Fairbrother, who has consistently opposed the application, voting against it.

The early-phase grant would fund research into a battle between colonial militias and Native Americans that took place primarily on the Gill side of the Connecticut River in May 1676, during King Philip’s War.

The purpose of the grant, which runs for 18 months, is to determine how much of the core battle site is threatened by development.

Former Rhode Island state archaeologist Paul Robinson, who wrote the proposal, described the grant in terms of conciliation. “It’s called a consensus-building grant, for good reason,” he said. “You knock on a lot of doors.”

But Fairbrother was not in a conciliatory mood, and appeared angry during the discussion. He quickly turned the conversation to the impact of Native American archaeological sites on the “rebuild” of the Turners Falls airport. “When the project started, we had \$5 million for a complete rebuild of the airport, with no cost to the town,” he said. “As we sit here in 2012, the project is still far from complete.”

While Fairbrother said his decision on Monday’s vote was shaped by the airport brouhaha, he asserted, “Despite what you may have heard, I do not hate Native Americans. All right, I don’t. I have great respect for Native Americans. There are, however, three or four specific tribal leaders who are the ones promulgating all of this. I’m not too happy with them.”



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**GILL** from page A1

to civic participation, employment, volunteer work, and social and cultural events.

Most of the responses were in line with regional trends, but there were a few outliers. For instance, 44% of respondents reported living alone, compared to 34% regionally, and 84% in Gill reported difficulty accessing public transit, compared to only 46% regionally. “If you look at Gill, nobody’s surprised by that,” said Stoler.

On the brighter side, the town newsletter received top marks, with 66% saying they use it as a source of information for services and programs, compared to only 27% regionally. The most popular information source was “Newspaper,” at 69%. For context, the top information source regionally was “Internet and Social Media,” and fewer than half of all respondents said they get information about services from newspapers. The survey included every town in Franklin County plus Athol, Phillipston, Royalston, and Petersham.

Ryan argued that improving quality of life for an aging population is particularly crucial for this region. “By 2030, 34% of the people in Franklin County are going to be 65 or older, as compared to about 22% in the state,” she said. “Around the same time, there are going to be more people over 65 than under 18 – for the first time in history.”

Stoler said that even with the positive survey results, Gill’s aging population needs more support. 27% of the respondents said financial insecurity was their biggest problem, 12% didn’t have someone they could call for help anytime day or night, and 26% said they felt Gill was not a good place to age.

Ryan and Stoler asked the selectboard to help convene a work group, whose members would receive health equity training and help Gill identify its priorities for improvement. The program offers \$4,230 to support community engagement, which can go toward transportation or food.

The selectboard agreed to reach out to potential participants, and to sign a memorandum of understanding with the program in mid-January.

**A Climate Holdout**

Gill is one of only 10 municipalities in Massachusetts to not be part of the state’s Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program, according to Andrew Smith, the program’s regional coordinator. MVP offers grants to help towns and cities reduce the impacts of climate change hazards. Smith claimed the program has helped other municipalities install new culverts, study levees, digitize town documents, and improve emer-

gency shelters, among other projects.

The selectboard said Gill’s slowness to join has been due to a shortage of time and workers to put together plans, attend meetings, and seek out professionals to help.

“I’ve got a list of things we need to work on,” said selectboard member Randy Crochier, “but that doesn’t mean we have the *capacity* to work on it.”

The program’s goal is to reach every municipality in the state, said Smith, but the due date for participation is January 6, 2023. As an incentive, the remaining towns – mostly rural communities in the western part of the state – have been given a streamlined application process, and can apply for expanded special project funding.

In addition, Gill is on a list of “economically disadvantaged rural communities” that now only have to match the action grant funds by 10%, rather than the 25% required from most municipalities.

The selectboard authorized town administrator Ray Purington to apply for the program, contingent on his capacity to engage with the process or find other help. As part of the application, they suggested he ask for expanded special project funding to help deal with flooding in the town hall basement.

“As the water table changes, we’re starting to lose the use of our basement,” said Crochier.

“We’ve moved offices upstairs because of health issues,” added town clerk Doreen Stevens. “If it doesn’t get better, we’re going to lose our town hall.”

The selectboard listed other immediate needs related to climate resiliency, including digitizing town records, fixing or replacing culverts, emergency shelter planning, and improving energy efficiency at the public safety complex.

**Pooches Get Pricier**

The selectboard voted to increase dog license fees for 2023. Effective January 1, the fee will increase from \$5 to \$15 for a spayed or neutered dog, and from \$10 to \$20 for an intact dog. Additionally, the fee for those who are late to register their dog will be \$20 per license, up from \$10. There will be no additional mailing fees.

In accordance with state law, residents over 70 years old are still allowed one annual dog license for free.

Stevens noted that the current fees don’t fully cover the time and materials required to register the dogs. She reported that while Gill’s current rates are similar to neighboring municipalities, those other towns tend to charge higher late fees, and tack on additional mailing fees.

Stevens initially suggested raising license



SUZETTE SNOW-COBB PHOTO

# FACES & PLACES

About 35 people turned out last week for a poetry reading at the State Library in Gill. Amy Gordon read from her new book *The Yellow Room*, and was joined by Jane Yolen and Peter Tacy, who read selections from their *The Black Dog Poems* and other works.

fees to \$10 for spayed and neutered dogs and \$15 for intact dogs, but Crochier responded that he felt higher fees were warranted. “Ten dollars is not what it used to be,” he said, adding: “I want to make it clear that I own a dog.”

Funds raised could help pay Gill’s assessment for the regional animal control officer program, said Stevens.

**The Data Gap**

The selectboard agreed to join a multi-town partnership seeking to improve internet access in the region. The potential partnership with Northfield, Bernardston, and Erving would work with a consultant from the Massachusetts Broadband Institute to develop a digital equity plan.

Purington noted that about 25 households in Gill still have no broadband access. Many of these locations are “logistically complicated,” he said, far from public roads, with long driveways, and without public right-of-way for utility poles or power lines.

“It’s really difficult for them to work from home, do the telehealth visits, or do stay-at-home school work,” Purington said. “I hope an outcome could be a recognition that, just like electricity is a necessity of life, I think we’re at a point where data is a necessity of life.”

**Other Business**

The town had previously agreed to apply for a Green Communities Grant to improve insulation and install mini-split heating and cooling systems at the public safety complex.

Since then, Purington reported, an electrician found that the current wiring in the building couldn’t support the new appliances, and estimated that necessary updates would cost \$29,000. In addition, rising material prices have added an estimated \$5,000 to the project.

In light of these additional costs, Purington removed the portion of the application dealing with mini-splits. The application for insulating the building remains.

The selectboard approved the purchase of two new motorized doors for the fire department headquarters at a cost of \$5,690, but asked that Purington first seek other bids to ensure this is a reasonable price.

The board renewed a food concession trailer license for Cielito Lindo, and car dealer licenses for Arrow Auto Sales and Town Line Auto.

The selectboard voted to apply for free solar-powered speed feedback and school zone speed limit signs for the elementary school. MassDOT’s Safe Routes to Schools program will choose 50 municipalities among the applicants for the free equipment, in a quest to reduce speeding and its related injuries.

Crochier noted that there aren’t any sidewalks leading to or from Gill Elementary School, meaning pedestrians often have to walk in the street. Since the building is set back from the road, drivers might speed by without even realizing it’s a school zone.

Applications are now available for the Fred W. Wells Fund Scholarship. Interested students can pick up an application at town hall.



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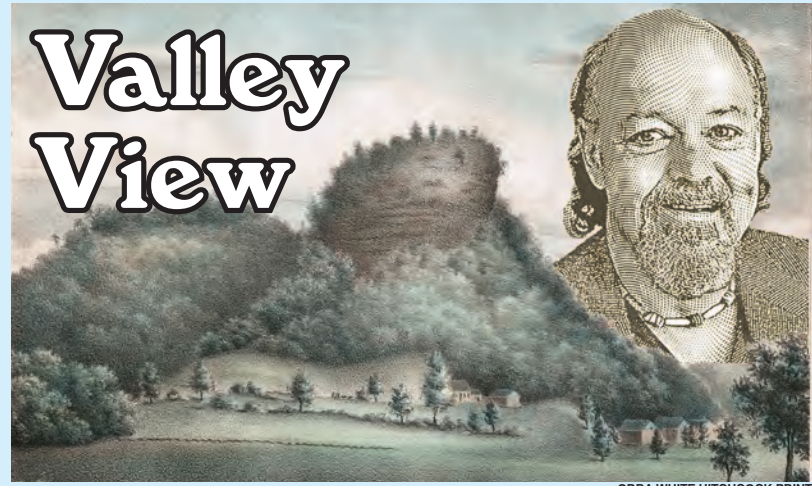
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FEATURES@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER DECEMBER 22, 2022



By GARY SANDERSON

**GREENFIELD** – I really enjoy reading a book I connect to – one that, because it spins me into continuous reflection and reminiscence, I can’t put down.

Jann Wenner’s memoir, *Like a Rolling Stone*, is such a read, pulling me back to high school, college, and parts of five decades working for a small-town daily newspaper in a place I know.

In case Wenner doesn’t ring a bell, he is the founder of *Rolling Stone* magazine (*RS*), which began as a rock and roll journal and became much, much more – a New Journalism bible that gave creative voices like Hunter S. Thompson, Tom Wolfe, Joe Eszterhas, Tim Cahill, William Greider, Joan Didion, and many more a place to play.

Wenner’s 554-page *tour de force* chronicles *RS*’s evolution to a media empire valued in the hundreds of millions. It hit the street in September. By the time I purchased a copy online in November, it was in its third printing. The work of a fellow Baby Boomer seven years my senior, I found it to be a quick, captivating read. I suppose that goes without saying, considering that I came of age with the magazine in the mid-Sixties and Seventies and have not missed an issue as a lifetime subscriber since the early Eighties. Plus, we share the same political bedrock.

What I already knew about Wenner was that he sold *RS* five years ago, and that its print edition has been scaled back to make way for a 24-hour online feed that’s not covered by my lifetime subscription. That I deciphered from catching breaking, cable-TV news alerts attributed to *RS* that never found their way into the monthly print edition. Thus far, I have resisted the impulse to purchase a \$4.99-per-month online subscription.

There were, however, a few things I didn’t know before opening the book. Not one to read supermarket exposé rags, *People* magazine, or metro newspaper

gossip columns, or watch the likes of *Inside Edition* on TV, I was not aware that Wenner was gay. Nearing 50 in 1995, he finally “came out” by leaving his wife and three young children for a young boy-toy model, with whom he had three more children.

I was also unaware that he had been at death’s door due to a heart attack five years ago.

Wenner’s book took me on an evocative ride through my own life journey, starting with my peach-fuzzed teen years. Just a 14-year-old Frontier Regional School freshman for *RS*’s

inaugural October 17, 1967 issue, I can’t claim to have read or even known of its existence back then. Yeah, it’s possible there were a few college-town copies kicking around in Amherst/Northampton record stores – but, if so, I didn’t see them. My hunch is that it took a year or more for the old two-fold, biweekly tabloid to gain wide Happy Valley circulation.

Not so in the Flower-Power neighborhood of San Francisco’s Haight-Ashbury district, then the home of Jerry Garcia, Jorma Kaukonen, Grace Slick, and Janis Joplin, to name but a handful of its musicians. *RS* was published and widely available in the Hippy Bay Area from the start.

Some 3,000 miles east, I had just entered my freshman year of high school, living a stone’s throw across Bloody Brook from the South Deerfield school. It was a transition year of sorts for me. Some of my friends and classmates had left public school for Deerfield Academy. Then a staid boys’ prep school of blue blazers, Oxford shirts, khakis, and wing-tips or shined penny loafers, it was no place for anyone agog with Sixties activism and cultural revolution.

A couple of years earlier, when I entered Frontier junior high in 1965, upperclassmen were scheming to challenge the school’s draconian dress code. As I recall, males were prohibited from wearing their hair below the collar, see **VALLEY VIEW** page B3

Above: The first annual Looky Here Gala was held last Saturday at Greenfield’s Pushkin gallery, with live music from acts including Stella Kola (pictured) as well as a silent and live auction of art to benefit the local nonprofit.

# The Healing Power of Song

By LEE WICKS

**MONTAGUE** – A local singing group named Healing Harmonies, established in 2017 by a self-described “ragtag group of volunteers,” aims to help people with Parkinson’s disease and other neurological disorders that affect communication. Sometimes a person can sing but not talk, or a person who stutters loses their stutter when singing. Something changes in the neurological pathways when we sing, in addition to the joy that comes from joining one’s voice with others.

The singers from Healing Harmonies met on Zoom during COVID, and have recently reconvened in person. They had their first post-pandemic concert in early December at Hawks & Reed Performing Arts Center in Greenfield.

Amanda Bernhard, one of the group’s co-founders, said it was a great success. Bernhard, a speech-language pathologist in the



Healing Harmonies members, at the choir’s recent concert in Greenfield. Left to right, standing: David and Stephanie Kraft, Jean and Norm Reynolds, Bonny and Gordon Grant. Front row: Caitlyn Gannon, Amanda Bernhard.

rehabilitation services department at Baystate Franklin Medical Center and a Montague resident, said the concert raised more than \$1,000

to help sustain the program, which is open to anyone free of charge.

“As we come back from only see **HEALING** page B5

## NOTES FROM THE HEARTFELT CAFE BY TROUBLE MANDESON

**GREENFIELD** – Soft, hard, crusty, or fluffy, topped with a fried egg, spread with butter or jam, sandwiching a pile of deli meats, or slathered with sauce – I’m talking about B.R.E.A.D., something humans have made since the dawn of agriculture. It’s used for secular and religious purposes, and has grown from a simple form of cooked starch into a billion-dollar industry.

Remember the familiar bright red, blue, and yellow logo of Wonder Bread? It was one of the first pre-sliced loaves sold in America. In the 1960s in my hometown of Los Angeles we waited with anticipa-

tion for the local Helms Bakery truck to come around each week. The van’s big doors would open, and long drawers were pulled out to dispense loaves of bread and rolls to the housewives in the neighborhood.

I was surprised to learn that wheat and multigrain breads are now the most consumed bread in America, followed by white, Italian, French, sourdough, raisin, cinnamon, oat, rye or pumpernickel, and bran. My mom was one of the first on our block to switch from white to wheat bread in the 1970s after reading a book on health food.

The first evidence of bread comes

from 30,000 years ago in both Europe and Australia, where it’s surmised that starch from plants like cattails was spread atop flat rocks and cooked over fire, creating a primitive form of flatbread. The oldest evidence of baked bread comes from Jordan on the Asian continent, four thousand years before agriculture appeared in Southwest Asia.

In the Neolithic Age, around 10,000 BC, agricultural production began with grain as the main ingredient in bread. Yeast spores grew naturally in grasses like wheat, rye, oats, and barley so that when left to rest they rose naturally in a process called leavening. The Gauls and Iberians of medieval times collected yeast by skimming foam, called “barm,” from beer.

Baking was transformed in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries by globalization, and as new ingredients and spices became available, so began the production of cakes and specialty pastries to feed the growing middle classes.

An industrial-scale process for bread baking was developed in the 1800s. It used water with dissolved carbon dioxide instead of yeast, so there was no longer a need for fermentation. The Aerated Bread Company in the UK dominated the

see **HEARTFELT** page B8



Focaccia is a Mediterranean flatbread, a prototype of modern pizza that is dimpled and drizzled with olive oil before rising and baking to keep it moist. The author decorated this one with veggies to make a garden scene.

# Pet of the Week



DAKIN HUMANE PHOTO

## “SNOW SHOES”

Say hello to Snow Shoes! He is an affectionate cat who likes to snuggle with his people once he is comfortable. The key to his heart is food, and mealtime is his favorite time. He can be independent when he feels like just hanging out, but will approach you for pets when he is in the mood.

Snow Shoes is an FIV kitty. FIV+ cats most often live long, healthy, and relatively normal lives with no symptoms at all. FIV is not

easily passed between cats.

He is also a VIP kitty. This cat can be very confident and feisty, and often behaves as a diva. VIP cats are not for first-time cat owners.

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

## Senior Center Activities DECEMBER 26 THROUGH 30

### WENDELL

A foot care clinic is held the first Wednesday of each month. Call Katie Nolan at (978) 544-2306 for information or appointments. Senior Health Rides are available. Contact Jonathan von Ranson (978) 544-3758.

### LEVERETT

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

### GILL and MONTAGUE

The Gill Montague Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Mondays through Fridays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Lunch available Tuesday through Thursday. Coffee and tea available all the time. For more information please call 863-9357.

### Monday 12/26

No Activities

### Tuesday 12/27

9:30 a.m. Tuesday Knitters  
1 p.m. Chair Yoga  
3 p.m. Tai Chi  
**Wednesday 12/28**  
10:15 a.m. Aerobics  
11 a.m. Chair Aerobics  
12 p.m. Bring Your Lunch Bingo

### 4 p.m. Mat Yoga

### Thursday 12/29

1 p.m. Cards & Games

### Friday 12/30

10:15 a.m. Aerobics  
11 a.m. Chair Aerobics

### ERVING

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

Brown Bag lunch is the first Thursday of each month. Veterans Services the first Wednesday of each month. Erving van services available: Must call 24 hours in advance for a ride to any scheduled appointment. For more information, please call (413) 423-3649.

### Monday 12/26

9 a.m. Interval  
10:15 a.m. Seated Workout  
**Tuesday 12/27**  
9 a.m. Good For U  
10 a.m. Line Dancing  
**Wednesday 12/28**  
9 a.m. Cardio Low Impact  
10:15 a.m. Chair Aerobics  
11:30 a.m. Bingo  
**Thursday 12/29**  
9 a.m. Core & Balance  
10 a.m. Barre Fusion  
**Friday 12/30**  
9 a.m. Quilting & Open Sew



## Travel with Max

By Max Hartshorne

## A Year of Travel: Where I Went in 2022

**SOUTH DEERFIELD** – I always like to take stock of where I went during my year of travel, and try to reflect on what each of these places meant to me. Herewith is my year in travel, 2022.

My first journey was in February when I joined my friends at Travel South in **Virginia Beach, Virginia**. It was chilly down there, but that grand beach was the highlight, as well as getting to tour the Cavalier Hotel, the sturdy old standby of the community. Going out on a whale watch and seeing so many humpback whales was a kick. I never knew how large the whale population is down there. It was an easy flight down to Norfolk, taking Breeze Airways, a new airline that serves Bradley airport.

In April I visited **Mississippi** for the first time and spent four days in the capital, Jackson. I shared the story about Jackson in my regular column here. We attended a practice for the famous Jackson State University Tigers and visited many civil rights museums and important locations, including the home of Medgar Evers, who was killed by a racist’s long-range bullet.

I was fascinated by the city’s awesome blues traditions and enjoyed seeing some of the blues clubs and dined on southern foods.

Jackson was a challenge. It is one of the poorest and most troubled cities in the US, with the highest per-capita murder rate, polluted water, and a shrinking population. Still, I wanted to find the fun and I did. Everyone I met there had their own good things to say to balance out the bad press.

In May I was invited to see NEOM, the spectacularly huge new development being built by the government of **Saudi Arabia**. Even though it is still mostly barren desert,

the natural sights were impressive, and the people there were warm and very hospitable. They have a lot of huge empty canyons there!

Saudi was such a contrast to any other place I’ve visited in my 30 years of traveling. I was told again and again how they had modernized, and that they no longer had such strict rules about women’s clothing and freedom. Yet everyone I saw adhered to that same strict regulation, and when I boarded a train from Dammam to Riyadh, every window of the train car was blacked out so you couldn’t look out the windows. Something to do with secret military areas the train passes through.

In June I combined trips beginning with the TBEX Travel Writers’ meeting in Marbella, **Spain**, and then took an excursion to Almeria in Andalusia which really inspired me. In fact, I liked it so much that I am going there for two weeks to start the year 2023.

I have already begun planning for our work vacation, where we will become digital nomads living in Spain for a spell.

Nice, Cannes, and Antibes, in **Provence, France**, were my next ports of call. Each one was special with that famous French food, beach hikes, and the great people I met along the way. Memorable were the superyachts in those cities, and the walk along the rocky coast of Antibes. *Wow!*

I think the pinnacle of my travel year was the week I spent with my daughter, her husband, and my granddaughter Sofie, in **Ventimiglia, Italy**. Nothing beats showing your adult kid Europe if they’ve never been there! This harkened back for me to the very memorable trip to Italy I took with my parents in 2005, treating them to a week-long vacation in Le Marche to thank them for

helping me with my business. Something about intergenerational travel makes it sweeter than regular trips.

In July I boarded a scenic cruise all around the **Netherlands** and got to visit the impressive Delta Works where the water is all held back with dams, sluices, and canals that keep the country from being flooded. September brought on **Brno, Czech Republic**, and **Kutna Hora in Central Bohemia** for an eye-opening late-night visit to an ossuary, with the visit lubricated by the world’s cheapest – and best – pilsner beer.

November began with a trip to **Portsmouth, New Hampshire**, which I also wrote about in this column. That’s a place to put on your own weekend-getaway radar – I can’t say enough about this compact, exciting little seaside city.

My year closed with a trip on the magnificent **Scenic Eclipse Discovery Yacht**, down the coast of South America between Peru and Chile. This ship is 545 feet long, and carries 200 passengers. It is built to visit Antarctica, with massive stabilizers and two helicopters plus a submarine on board. Our voyage was sort of a repositioning cruise, to move the ship from the west coast of the US to Antarctica, so we only had 44 passengers with the 130 crew.

This new type of ship is really gaining in popularity. It carries hundreds instead of thousands, and offers an almost-private experience where you never wait for a tender to take you off the ship – they can dock at nearly every port.

*Local travel editor Max Hartshorne writes about traveling around our region, and a little beyond. Max is the editor of GoNOMAD Travel, a website published since 2000 in South Deerfield. Find him online at [www.gonomad.com](http://www.gonomad.com).*



Above: Some of the places visited by the author during a year of international travel.

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**VALLEY VIEW** from page B1

sideburns past mid-ear, or beards and mustaches, while jeans, bell-bottoms, T-shirts, and sandals were also taboo. The fairer sex was limited to skirts and dresses covering the knees, with slacks and shorts prohibited. There was no room for the chic miniskirt and earthy brassy look of the day.

As winter faded to spring, hallway whispers of a protest were abuzz. The plan was to organize an *en masse* dress-code-violation day. When this day of defiance arrived and drew overwhelming support, the wheels of change were flicked into motion, and it wasn't long before the school committee adopted a more liberal dress code.

That is not to suggest there wasn't strong opposition from conservative, law-and-order types. No, in fact, full-throated disagreement was persistent from Goldwater men my father privately called "John Birchers" in the comfort of home. Of a reactionary, flag-waving, love-it-or-leave-it persuasion, these "patriots" wailed about inmates running the asylum.

Reading Wenner brought it all back to me in living color, deeply stirring my memory juices.

That right-wing clamor only got louder when, fueled by opposition to the Vietnam war, the drinking age was lowered from 21 to 18. The justification was that teens drafted for foreign wars should not have been deemed by law too young to buy spirituous liquor. Again, there were strong arguments on both sides of that issue, but liberals eventually prevailed and the drinking age was lowered.

This new freedom, coupled with release of a new, easily accessible birth-control pill, unleashed a raucous, Roaring Twenties-like scene that lasted about a decade on college campuses across the land. Then, with Vietnam far in the rearview, Reagan steering the ship of state, and college campuses running amuck, Mothers Against Drunk Driving banged the drinking-age drum back to 21.

With its trademark leftist lean, *RS* jumped into all those battles and many more. The biweekly rock and roll periodical became the voice of the young, taking courageous stands on civil rights, abortion, birth control, marijuana, LSD, and women's lib, while covering the crushing 1968 assassinations of Bobby Kennedy and Martin Luther King and condemning the National Guard murders of Kent State antiwar protesters.

*RS* also warned of dire consequences relating to the re-emergence of Richard M. Nixon, who welcomed George Wallace's segregationist Dixiecrats into the GOP to narrowly defeat Hubert Humphrey in the 1968

presidential election. Yes, Martha, that was the genesis of our current Republican Party, now the voice of the South and white nationalism headquartered at Mar-a-Lago.

Though introduced to an occasional *RS* issue in the late Sixties, I didn't become a devoted reader until my college years of the early Seventies. That's when I had the good fortune of meeting UMass Professor Howard Ziff – the former *Chicago Daily News* night editor who grew up in Holyoke and graduated from Amherst College. Soon after we met, he told me he remembered playing football against my dad.

Ziff and I arrived at UMass in 1971. Holyoke friend David M. Bartley, then a state rep, had recruited him to establish a Journalism Department at UMass' Amherst flagship. Talk about being at the right place, right time – I had a front-row seat.

Working his city newsroom on the periphery, Ziff had witnessed the ugly Chicago Democratic National Convention of 1968 and was deeply disturbed by what he viewed as misleading, whitewashed coverage of the riotous police brutality that unfolded. Disillusioned with the mainstream media as a result, he ended his newspaper career and landed in Amherst, where I found him. Looking back, I find it disheartening that never in my travels did I meet another journalist worthy of the respect I held for him. He was head and shoulders above the rest. I feel fortunate to have met him, and only wish I could have worked for such a man.

Ziff was a pre-24/7-cable-news and pre-Internet visionary who strongly believed the future of print news was New Journalism. He called it *RS* style and fed us a steady diet of Thompson, Wolfe, Eszterhas, Didion and many other "New News" pioneers. A Dickens and Orwell scholar, he also gave us a good dose of those iconic British writers considered by him to be the fathers of New Journalism, their creative non-fiction way ahead of its time.

He believed that "objective," cream-of-wheat AP Style reporting was passé and already starting to chase away some newspaper readers. He believed modern, educated readers wanted more pizzazz from bold, creative voices willing to take positions on important issues with an entertaining voice. Conservative mainstream news editors, stuck in their old ways, didn't buy it, and I got a good taste of such out-of-touch foes in the newsroom where I toiled.

There, pasted on the office wall of an editor and teacher through whose desk all local copy passed, was a bold, 84-point warning that read, "NO ADJECTIVES!" Imagine that. This from a man born within

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Police Called On Sheffield Janitor, Second Week Running; Sad Cat Saga; Bus Passer; Cows OK; Dirt Bike Stolen

Monday, 12/12

10:56 a.m. Walk-in looking to speak to an officer regarding a fraudulent check she was given. She has gone to both her bank and the bank on the check; they are unable to help, and advised her to go to the police. Report taken.

12:05 p.m. Caller from Prospect Street states that her house was hit by paintballs overnight. Referred to an officer.

3:31 p.m. Caller reports a husky with one eye in the middle of Route 63 near Center Street. Animal control officer contacted; no answer. Officer advised. Report taken.

8:44 p.m. Caller states that there is a male dressed all in black in the area of Sheffield Elementary School; believes he just heard something break. Officer made contact with night janitor, who had just taken the trash out. Matches the description. Building is all locked up.

9:32 p.m. Caller states she is calling on behalf of a friend who cannot report a silver Toyota driving crazy up and down the Avenue fast on the wrong side of the road. Caller does not see the vehicle; a friend texted her about it. Unsure where on the Avenue this is occurring. Referred to an officer.

9:39 p.m. Caller states that a dark-colored pickup truck is burning out down Lake Pleasant Road. Caller states that they stopped at the corner, in front of the caller's house, and at the train tracks. Caller can still hear the vehicle burning out down the road. Referred to an officer.

Tuesday, 12/13

9:16 a.m. School resource officer, who was off duty due to training, received a report from Franklin

County Technical School of a harassment incident. SRO requesting officer to respond to school to investigate. Report taken.

4:19 p.m. Party into station to fill out missing person report. Party entered into NCIC. Greenfield PD contacted to check address in their town. Male is not in that address and not at FMC or detox facility in Springfield.

11:59 p.m. Caller states that a female had asked for help with a cat that was not doing well. Caller states female took cat to the emergency vet, who offered to put the cat to sleep. Female refused. Vet personnel were concerned for cat's wellbeing. Female was put in contact with caller, who sent female \$50 for transportation to their facility, but she never showed up. Caller looking for ACO's number to have him do a well-being check on the cat and possibly take custody of the cat. ACO number given.

Wednesday, 12/14

9:08 a.m. Walk-in reports that a vehicle unsafely passed his school bus and a bus in front of him while they had their red lights on and were stopped on Fourth Street. Kids were getting on the bus, and the car went right around them. Caller has a photo of the car and license plate; there is video of the incident, as well. PD units advised.

1:08 p.m. Caller from Depot Street states that two men got out of a truck and headed into the woods near the bike path with rifles.

2:21 p.m. ACO advises he is heading to Fourth Street to do a well-being check on a cat that was reported to be in poor health. ACO called and stated that he

took possession of the cat and is taking it to the vet hospital in Deerfield.

Thursday, 12/15

11:02 a.m. TFFD requesting PD to the scene of an odor investigation on Third Street. Source is believed to be a motor vehicle.

3:58 p.m. Caller from Farnen Avenue requesting officers as attached male party has returned and broken into the building and is now screaming. CSO contacted; states Section 12 is still active and there is a be-on-lookout for the male party out of Greenfield. Shelburne Control contacted for staging; requesting AMR and TFFD. CSO contacted for new copy of Section 12. CSO states section came from Greenfield. Greenfield states they do not see a section active. No active section at this time. TF and AMR clear.

4:08 p.m. 911 caller from Swamp Road reporting car vs. deer on her property. Officer requesting Gill PD for backup. Deer not on scene. No injury. Car operable.

4:49 p.m. 911 caller reporting house fire on Alice Street. Shelburne Control contacted. Officer advises fire is in back end of house.

5:29 p.m. Shelburne Control requesting PD to Alice Street for physical altercation. Situation mediated. Male party left for night. Neither party wishes to pursue further.

9 p.m. Following a vehicle stop at Dell Street and Turners Falls Road, a summons was issued for operating with a suspended license; operating with a revoked registration; and uninsured motor vehicle.

9:36 p.m. Caller states that a car alarm has been going off somewhere in the vicinity of Central

and Prospect Streets for the past two hours. Officer found smoke alarm on back porch. Someone couldn't get it to shut off. He was able to deactivate.

Friday, 12/16

2:37 a.m. Caller reports someone burning construction waste in the alley between H and I Streets. Shelburne Control notified.

9:30 a.m. Tow truck driver requesting assistance with traffic while recovering a vehicle that has slid off of Swamp Road. No injuries. Citation issued.

11 a.m. ACO called to advise that he returned a cat crate to the crate's owner on Fourth Street.

11:16 a.m. Caller states that her vehicle was stolen in Vermont, but she recently received a message that her car was on L Street in Turners Falls with a key stuck in one of the tires. Area checked; no matching vehicles located.

3:08 p.m. 911 caller advising there are 20 cows in the road on Wendell Road. Officer in area; does not see cows. Spoke to someone shoveling snow who states they belong to him and he has rounded them up.

6:55 p.m. 911 caller from Keith Apartments states her neighbor is beating on walls; they were previously doing it at 3:30 a.m. Officer advises quiet upon arrival. Attached party would not come to door.

Saturday, 12/17

12:33 p.m. Caller from Whistle Stop Cafe reports that a male grabbed him by the hood while he was holding his child. Report taken.

1:33 p.m. Walk-in reports a white 2021 Cobra 50CC dirt bike with the number 8 on it stolen from him at Unity Park. Entered into NCIC.

Sunday, 12/18

8:27 a.m. Strong odor of propane in front yard on Bridge Street. Shelburne Control notified.

9:26 a.m. Report of a group of people on the hill near the Third Street public lot yelling at a child while he walks his dog. Unable to locate.

10:28 a.m. Mailbox on Old Northfield Road vandalized with pickles and fireworks overnight. Report taken.

3:11 p.m. Caller from N Street states the dog at his neighbor's house is running around the yard freely without a muzzle or leash. States ongoing issue as dog has bitten people before. Officer requesting call to ACO. Message left.

7:37 p.m. Checking on outdoor fire on Fifth Street. Small contained fire in pit.

10:11 p.m. Caller from Central Street hears someone yelling and swearing outside. Referred to an officer.

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Montague Community Television News

Help Catching Them All

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

TURNERS FALLS – There are so many lovely holiday events going on in Montague, it’s nearly impossible to catch them all! Luckily MCTV makes it their job to do so.

This week we have the Valley Vaudeville Variety Show, as well as the classic beauty, Welcome Yule at the Shea Theater.

The Montague finance committee, Montague selectboard, and GMRSD school committee each met this week, and their Zoom recordings have been uploaded to MCTV’s Vimeo page and will also air this week.

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

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

EXHIBITS

**Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls:** *Junior Duck Stamps*. See the top Massachusetts youth entries for the 2022 Junior Duck Stamp competition. Through December.

**Artspace Gallery, Greenfield:** *A Figure Drawing Exhibition*, work from the figure drawing group at Artspace. Through December 29.

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

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

**Geissler Gallery, Stoneleigh-Burnham School:** *Visual Cycles:empty. full.absence.presence*, installation by Olivia Bernard and Karen Dolmanisth. Through December.

**Goose Divine Energy, Greenfield:** *Donna Estabrooks*, paintings. Through January 15.

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

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

**Shelburne Arts Coop Gallery, Shelburne Falls:** *Season of Wonder*. Members’ show. Through January.

**Gallery A3, Amherst:** *Small Wonders*. Group show. Through December.

**Anchor House, Northampton:** *It’s a Kitschy World*. Valerie Flex Gilbert creates three rooms full of brilliantly colorful assemblage making humorous visual stories. Through December.

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

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Disturbances, Scams, and Medical Emergencies; Trouble on Two Bridges; Buoys Come Off River

Tuesday, 11/1

6:49 p.m. Recovered a suitcase abandoned on Mount Hermon Station Road.

7:41 p.m. Caller from Mountain Road advises that people with flashlights are in the woods behind his residence.

Wednesday, 11/2

4:18 p.m. Animal complaint, Ben Hale Road.

Thursday, 11/3

9:42 a.m. Served a warrant for Erving PD on the French King Highway.

9:07 p.m. Report of fraudulent activity with a bank card, South Cross Road.

Friday, 11/4

2:11 p.m. Investigated a report of smoke, River Road.

6:11 p.m. Suicide attempt on the French King Bridge.

Saturday, 11/5

5:09 p.m. Assisted state environmental police on Camp Road.

5:42 p.m. Medical emergency, Boyle Road.

Sunday, 11/6

7:01 a.m. Welfare check on the French King Highway.

Tuesday, 11/8

10:11 a.m. Medical emergency, West Gill Road.

11:09 a.m. Assisted another agency on Lamp-lighter Way.

3:55 p.m. Disabled motor vehicle on the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge.

11 p.m. Medical emergency, Memorial Grove Road.

Wednesday, 11/9

9:23 p.m. Medical emergency, Purple Road.

Thursday, 11/10

6:53 a.m. Caller reports a tractor trailer unit hung up on Turners Falls-Gill Bridge, blocking traffic.

12:42 p.m. Disabled vehicle, French King Highway.

4:52 p.m. Fraud/scam re-

ported on West Gill Road.

8:21 p.m. Disturbance, French King Highway.

9:45 p.m. Caller from the French King Highway asked for an officer. Another tenant in the building punched a hole in the door.

Saturday, 11/12

8:45 p.m. Suspicious vehicle, French King Highway.

Sunday, 11/13

7:57 a.m. Medical emergency, Boyle Road.

6:57 p.m. Assisted Northfield PD at a structure fire on East Street.

7:53 p.m. Assisted Erving PD with a disturbance on Pleasant Street.

8:35 p.m. Welfare check, French King Highway.

Monday, 11/14

3:33 a.m. Caller from the French King Highway and Barney Hale Road reports he struck a deer. Deer is deceased; significant damage to the vehicle. Caller is reporting no injuries.

5:39 p.m. Disturbance, French King Highway.

Tuesday, 11/15

8:48 a.m. Medical emergency, Mountain Road.

4:21 p.m. Served papers on Main Road.

4:24 p.m. Caller from Main Road reports a sedan passing other vehicles on double yellow lines, speeding.

Wednesday, 11/16

11:12 a.m. Line down on Riverview Drive.

7:13 p.m. Medical emergency, Boyle Road.

Thursday, 11/17

1:31 a.m. Party from Main Road reports her neighbor is disturbing the peace.

2:53 p.m. Caller from Mountain Road reports his two dogs got loose about two hours ago.

11:48 p.m. Served war-

rant on Main Road.

Friday, 11/18

8:16 a.m. FirstLight reports it is removing dam buoys. Boat ramp to be closed soon for winter.

8:42 a.m. Security advises someone illegally parked near a hydrant, Elm Street.

7 p.m. Caller reports a suspicious female party stumbling on the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge.

Saturday, 11/19

1:52 a.m. Fire alarm on Elm Street.

10:45 a.m. Caller from Mountain Road called to report a past phone scam.

Sunday, 11/20

2:29 p.m. Assisted Erving PD with disturbance on Old State Road.

9:02 p.m. Caller from the French King Highway reports an injured owl on the side of the road.

Monday, 11/21

10:51 a.m. Medical emergency, Mountain Road.

11:29 a.m. Caller from East Main and Wheelock streets in Erving advises a tractor trailer unit almost took out a couple of poles.

12:10 p.m. Assisted citizen, West Gill Road.

6:40 p.m. Assisted Erving PD with disturbance on Pratt Street.

Tuesday, 11/22

11 a.m. Caller from the French King Highway states that a piece of farm equipment behind her is unable to maintain its lane.

Thursday, 11/24

5:16 p.m. Medical emergency, Boyle Road.

8:15 p.m. Medical emergency, French King Highway.

Friday, 11/25

8:27 a.m. Caller from the French King Highway

found a dog running in and out of traffic in Gill. She has the dog in her vehicle.

2:25 p.m. Caller from Main Road reports that a female in her 20s wearing black clothing lit a fire in a trash can at North Cemetery.

Fire is now out and the subject is walking southbound on Main Road.

7:50 p.m. Welfare check, French King Bridge. Party transported for evaluation.

Saturday, 11/26

4:16 p.m. Suspicious vehicle, French King Bridge. Operator was having a smoke. No sign of distress.

6:47 p.m. Welfare check, French King Bridge.

Monday, 11/28

7:46 a.m. Minor accident with no injuries on the French King Highway. Vehicle moved to the Turners Falls side.

4:49 p.m. Caller from West Gill Road advises that a small airplane was flying in all directions. He stated it should be in the Bernardston area. Caller wasn’t sure if the person was lost or having a hard time finding the airport.

Tuesday, 11/29

12:45 p.m. Three-car accident, French King Highway and Main Road. Fluids leaking.

Wednesday, 11/30

4:34 p.m. Tree down on Mountain Road.

6:28 p.m. Report of a tree blocking Bascom Road.

7:05 p.m. Assisted Bernardston PD with a breaking and entering on Brattleboro Road.

7:55 p.m. Eversource requested an officer to stand by at the French King Highway and Barton Cove Road for replacing a fuse.

SEASONAL REMEMBRANCE

The ‘Christmas Truce’ of 1914

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – Truces can happen in wars, but one like the Christmas Truce of 1914 seems impossible to believe. It could be called a Christmas miracle.

Stanley Weintraub’s *Silent Night: The Remarkable Christmas Truce of 1914* made it apparently seem so. His book is full of personal letters and accounts by soldiers of all nationalities, involved with this piece of history. I found out about him through the National Veterans Memorial and Museum’s official website.

Roughly 100,000 British and German troops were on the front during World War One, according to Wikipedia. As Christmas began, only British soldiers had care packages of cigarettes, tobacco, pencils, and some chocolates.

It started on the morning of December 19. Lieutenant Geoffrey Heinkey of the 2nd Queen’s Westminster Rifles wrote to his mother “a most extraordinary thing hap-

pened.” Germans came out and got their wounded, and the British were able to do the same.

After nightfall on the 23rd, according to Vizefeldwebel Lange of Germany’s XIX Corps, “Saxons from Leipzig began placing small Christmas trees on the parapets of their trenches, replete with candles affixed by clamps.”

Another observation is added from Sergeant A. Lovell of the 3rd Rifle Brigade, which the National WWI Museum and Memorial has made available in an online exhibit featuring 128 letters from soldiers at the Truce. A friend said to him, “They’ve got Christmas trees all along the top of their trenches. I never saw such a sight!”

Lovell wrote that when he looked, “I saw a sight which I shall remember to my dying day. Right along the whole of their line were hung paper lanterns and illuminations of every description, many of them in such positions as to suggest that they were hung upon Christmas trees.” This was the Ser-

geant’s sight on Christmas.

The exhibit also has an account of Christmas Day from Lance Corporal Cooper of the 2nd Northampton (UK): “I was never more surprised in my life when daylight came to see them all sitting on top of the trenches waving their hands and singing to us.”

The British learned about the Germans during the truce. “They were all fairly well dressed and the majority could speak broken English. Some of them could speak it as well as I can myself,” wrote Corporal Robert Renton of the Seaforth Highlanders.

These letters were sent to newspapers and relatives. The Truce would go through Christmas night – and until New Year’s Day, in some places.

I also learned through Weintraub’s book how special this Truce still is today. In December 1999, nine people decided to go Flanders to commemorate the Truce near Ploegsteert Wood in Belgium in makeshift uniforms, acting like



A 1915 depiction from The London Illustrated News.

1914 soldiers. They planted a cross for those lost. Later, they were astonished to learn the locals had treated the cross with preservative and set it in a concrete base.

Barbara Little John, the daughter of a British soldier named Bruce Barnfather, met up with the son of a German soldier and they honored their fathers together.

The people behind this unofficial event in 1999 were taken by surprise because of the deal with the cross, which showed them the reverence people still place on this event.

The Truce was part of a 2017 *Doctor Who* Christmas episode called “Twice Upon a Time,” and Collin Raye’s song “It Could Happen Again” was about it. I believe these examples back up how well it is remembered, and just how long this remembering has been going on.

I hope I have made the Christmas Truce come to life, and have given a good idea about the reverence people still have for it. People are right to think this Truce seems impossible, but it happened, and it was amazing.

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HEALING from page B1

meeting virtually,” she added, “the group finds itself in need of funding if it is to continue and have a place to rehearse in person and a paid choir director.” With additional funding, the group hopes to host more concerts and be able to pay its choir director.

The recent concert ended with the eight singers and the audience performing their rendition of “Imagine” by John Lennon. It’s an appropriate choice. Bernhard said she and co-founder Lisa Sommers like to imagine an expanded program serving more people who might benefit from the joy of singing together.

Sommers is an associate professor and clinic director in the communication disorders department of the School of Public Health and Health Sciences at UMass Amherst; she and Bernhard are friends and colleagues.

“Lisa and I began the group because of the connection observed in research conducted at UMass between singing and benefits to individuals with speech difficulties,” Bernhard said. “We quickly realized that singing with others could benefit in many ways, whether to improve their voice, articulation, language, cognition, or social interaction. It can also slow down the progress of a disease such as Parkinson’s.”

The Parkinson’s Foundation website, [parkinson.org](http://parkinson.org), states that “Speech evaluation and therapy (such as singing) in early stages of Parkinson’s disease – even before changes are noticeable – can make a big difference in preventing more serious issues later on.”

The American Parkinson’s Disease Association reports that “singing, both individual singing as well as participation in choirs have been studied for people with PD. Sing-



Members of Healing Harmonies continued to sing together on Zoom through the first years of the pandemic.



Lisa Sommers (left) and Amanda Bernhard (right) founded the choir for people who have neurological disorders.

ing may be helpful by enhancing voice volume and quality, improving respiration and swallowing – some studies have shown that singing can also strengthen muscles responsible for swallowing and breathing.”

In addition, the association notes that singing offers an opportunity for socialization and collaboration, enhances mood and cognitive function, and appears to relieve stress.

Bernhard said Healing Harmonies also includes people who have had strokes, brain injuries, dementia, and other neurological disorders. Though some studies are speculative, anecdotal evidence suggests that singing in a group can enhance concentration and memory and lead to a feeling of general well-being.

Carly Simon, B.B. King, Bill

Withers, Nancy Wilson, and Mel Tillis are all famous examples of singers who stutter, according to the Stuttering Foundation ([StutteringHelp.org](http://StutteringHelp.org)), a nonprofit founded in 1947. On the foundation’s website Barry Guitar, Ph.D., of the University of Vermont, writes, “Understanding what dramatically reduces stuttering during singing may eventually help us understand stuttering better.”

“There is now evidence that the brain functions differently for singing than it does for talking,” Guitar, adds. “In singing, we use our vocal cords, lips, and tongue differently than when we talk. There is no time pressure in singing nor is there any communicative pressure. When we sing, we generally know the words of the song by heart. Word retrieval or searching for the words may play

a role in stuttering.”

It seems that science and intuition have come together in support of people raising their voices in song. It can certainly do no harm and may do a great deal of good in multiple ways. The next time Healing Harmonies perform, note the date and come out to see, support, and celebrate the power of song with them.

The Healing Harmonies singers rehearse at the Sunderland Library on Wednesdays between 5:30 and 7 p.m. Anyone who is interested in the program can contact Bernhard at [fiddlehead1985@gmail.com](mailto:fiddlehead1985@gmail.com).

To watch and learn more from a short video about the program, with footage from a March 2019 concert at the Academy of Music, see [tinyurl.com/healingharm](http://tinyurl.com/healingharm).



# Sex Matters

a sex-positive health column

by STEPHANIE BAIRD

**SOUTH HADLEY** – I first heard about cervical orgasms a few months ago from someone who had also recently heard about them, and wanted to know more. I got curious, watched some webinars, and will share what I have learned thus far.

Dr. Jenny Martin appears to be the main researcher and spokesperson for cervical orgasms and has a fairly extensive website, with links to several webinars and some podcasts, so we will start there. In Dr. Martin’s free webinar on her website, [DrJennyMartin.com](http://DrJennyMartin.com), “Discover Your Sexual Potential: The Pleasure and Power of Your Cervix,” she provides a great deal of information about the cervix and cervical pleasure. She explains that “accessing cervical pleasure can (help) access the divine.”

In bodies that have cervixes, there are pathways from the reproductive, sexual, and erectile organs to the brain. The uterus is connected to the brain via both the *hypogastric nerve*, a sympathetic nerve controlling urination, and the *vagus nerve*. (More on that in a moment.) The clitoris is connected to the brain by the *pubdental pathway*, which passes along movement and sensation from the genitals. The vagina is connected by a system of nerves in the pelvic region to the brain.

But the cervix is connected to the brain by three pathways: pelvic, hypogastric, and vagus nerves. In fact, the vagus nerve, which wanders up the body, connects together the cervix, the heart, and the brain. The vagus nerve can be activated through cervical orgasms. The vagus nerve is also linked to the fight, flight, freeze response, which can manifest in numbness in various areas of the body

when activated. It can also counteract fight or flight response and has been dubbed the body’s “superhighway.”

The vagus nerve is linked to our “gut feelings,” and has also been called our “love nerve,” as studies show that it is activated when one is experiencing more compassion and empathy. It’s the vagus nerve that sends information to the brain 80% of the time, not the other way around.

Dr. Martin discusses how cervical orgasms and DMT (N, N-dimethyltryptamine) may be connected.

DMT is a naturally occurring psychedelic substance found in some plants, including those used to make ayahuasca, a drink used in sacred shamanic rituals in some indigenous cultures. Some researchers have called DMT the “spirit molecule.” It is not considered addictive as it works on serotonin, not dopamine. It can possibly be made in the human body during vaginal birth, at death, and during trance-like sex.

Dr. Martin also discusses unique properties of the pineal gland, and how this gland can relate to potentially psychedelic sexual experiences – without using any substances. The pineal gland is activated by DMT, and also manufactures DMT. It is in the middle of the brain – neither left nor right hemisphere – and links with our “third eye” chakra. The pineal gland is associated with the detection of light, which we can see during DMT experiences. Dr. Martin hypothesizes that the cervix-heart-brain connection can “wake up” third eye capabilities such as clarity, imagination, spiritual perception, and universal connection.

*DoubleBlind*, a magazine that investi-

gates the use of psychedelics, is also very interested in the psychedelic connection between cervixes and sex, and hosted Dr. Martin’s webinar, “The Psychedelic Orgasm: Can Sex Release DMT?”

According to Dr. Martin, the answer is yes, sex can trigger a psychedelic state. However, this is greatly related to the “quality of thoughts and feelings before and during sex.” According to her, our consciousness is the single most important factor to create an “otherworldly” experience during sex.

Unfortunately, many conditions suppress psychedelic states, such as worry, resentment, anger, trying to please, fear, lack of present-moment awareness, trying to control things, power dynamics, being “stuck in your head” or your heart being “shut down,” and being unaware of your partner’s social cues. In my estimation, this is the sex that most of us experience, most of the time, in our fast-paced, stressed out culture. There are plenty of sexual “brakes” happening, and not many sexual “accelerators.”

However, DMT-producing sex can potentially be experienced solo or in partnership if these three things are in place: “inner coherence, synchrony, and resonance,” according to Dr. Martin, who reminds us that “human beings are oscillating systems of energy,” and that in particular, the “cervix is an oscillating energy field capable of generating high frequency energy.” When “oscillations within the brain synchronize, it increases their power,” and therefore increases our ability to create an otherworldly experience.

*Intention* is vitally important in this process, as it influences the “energy field.” Practicing mindfulness techniques such as Heart-Math meditation can help us with our intentions, synchrony, coherence, and resonance.

Dr. Martin states that another way to enter

a state of resonance is to “surrender.” What she means is to surrender to our higher self, “let go of expectations, be fully embodied,” be in flow, and “let go of power dynamics, don’t rush to make anything happen.” She reiterates that our bodies have “wisdom, so let them guide us.”

Seeing sex as a spiritual practice, and centering ourselves with a daily mindful practice so that we may better self-regulate, can also help in this journey towards naturally psychedelic sex. For some of us, connecting with a goddess figure may also help. Bringing our vagus nerve into a state of relaxation and trust could also help activate a potential DMT state.

In a very positive note, Dr. Martin states that we all already have “light” within, and can “activate the light within through direct connection to the divine,” and that our entire body is “pure” from the beginning. She states that “awakening to the power and pleasure of the cervix can have a profound effect on mental and emotional well-being.”

Another lovely website about cervixes is [www.beautifulcervix.com](http://www.beautifulcervix.com) – a font of education and information about the care and keeping of cervixes, including a gallery of cervix images.

This article hopefully provided some resources and legwork. As far as exactly how to physically stimulate the cervix to help produce cervical orgasms, that’s up to you to figure out for yourself – and please do report back!

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

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

- William Carlos Williams

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

# Our December Poetry Page

## A Louis De Broglie Winter

The house i live in,  
not really a house at all,  
is an electron microscope.  
The snowflakes,  
not really snowflakes,  
are atoms,  
bombarding my not-house  
via the vacuum  
of walls, windows, and wood.  
And i, happily,  
am an electron.  
Never am i  
the viewer,  
looking squint-eyed  
into a tainted lens.  
Never the viewed,  
mere shadow  
of something infinitely  
more real.  
Just an electron.  
Just an electron;  
scattering endlessly  
with other electrons –  
a crazed dance  
reveling in  
the joy of  
its own folly,  
a dance through which  
not-viewers look at  
not-views.

– Kevin Smith  
*Greenfield*

## To a Lost Friend

In the flame  
of a mighty land,  
I can see  
two hands clenched  
in tribal communion;  
hands sandpapered  
from days and years  
of scraping the ocean grain  
for the elusive treasure  
of a thousand kings.  
As the fire  
flays the last  
flint of flesh  
from our fingertips,  
try to remember  
that we were once brothers,  
and let the embers die.

– Kevin Smith  
*Greenfield*

## Next

I don't want to learn how you carry your ghost  
or let you see how I carry mine.  
  
I don't want to put away the pictures  
or empty her closet to make room for you.  
  
I don't want to meet your relatives  
or merge with your family before me.  
  
I don't want to meet your friends,  
be the living symbol of your progress.  
  
I don't want to move  
or expect that you'll move.  
  
I don't want to make room for your car  
by selling hers  
  
or learn what makes you cry  
by making you cry.  
  
I don't want to watch  
as you rearrange her kitchen.  
  
I don't want to awaken and,  
confusing you with her,

feel the momentary flood of relief,  
followed by the pain rushing in again.  
  
I don't want to watch your shows,  
learn your routine, or alter mine.  
  
I don't want to see it in your eyes  
when you realize this was a mistake.  
  
I don't want to argue about it  
or fight for us.  
  
I don't want to help you pack  
or wish you well  
  
as you load your car  
and drive back to your old life  
  
so I'll just say goodbye now,  
before we ever say hello.

– G. Greene  
*Greenfield*

## Stroke & Love

The world had its stroke and it smothered us.  
We were in our beds going through life in gauze and sleeping.  
Like a soft club, without a sound, it loosed us to the world.  
Loosened the teeth of the one, single, inscrutable word we have for  
what we left behind:  
Love.

Love is now seeking someplace to go. Without hold.  
An escaped balloon some kid is crying over.  
We look up. We point. We shake our heads.  
It's not coming down.  
A tough lesson right there.

Even before, we struggled to find a place to put love.  
(It belonged wherever we are.)  
We dither. We don't know where we are.  
We didn't "do" rehab.  
We went inside. Became suspicious.  
Became feral to each other.  
We greeted friends through our feet with shoes on.

Now, the choice. Are we together? Now, are we new?  
Are we all in the soul of some refurbished body?  
Or in the upended monster setting fire to his mother  
Unrelinquished, smoldering on the lawn? He went inside.

I know there really is a place to go with love.  
Some idea to love.  
Where? What? Where is the place to put brief, searing love?  
Long slow burning passion?  
Into our work which pays handsomely? Our art which pays bitterly?  
Family is not unfathomable or vast enough. Where to fall on like a sword?

– Edna French  
*Greenfield*

## The Greef

Shhhhh! Be quiet!  
You'll wake  
the goddamn Greef!  
No,  
yeah,  
I know,  
I shouldn't  
have to live like this,  
but just be careful,  
wouldja?

When did I get it?  
Well, my wife got sick  
and it just started  
showing up  
and it was better than  
nothing,  
those scary nights alone,  
not knowing,  
and then she died  
and it got bigger, like...  
a lot bigger,  
you know?  
but it felt like

just then,  
just for a little while,  
we needed each other  
and I thought  
eventually  
it would get sick of me  
and leave

so I let it inside,  
let it stay,  
and now I know  
that was my first mistake,  
and then it just,  
I don't know,  
settled in,  
took charge somehow  
and now I can't...  
I don't know how  
to get rid of the damn  
thing.

There are days  
I don't see it around as  
much.  
I don't know where it goes  
to hide  
but I can feel it,  
it's always there,  
waiting  
for just the wrong moment  
to grab you, then  
other days

I wake up  
fresh into the nightmare  
and there it is,  
lying on my chest,  
staring me right in the face  
and it just hangs on  
all day, then  
settles down in bed  
draped over my head.

Nothing I've tried  
seems to discourage it,  
and as much as I want  
to be rid of it,  
sometimes  
the only thing that feels  
like it could be worse  
than living this way...  
is not living this way.

– G. Greene  
*Greenfield*

## Contributors' Notes

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

Gary Greene is a Greenfield native and author of *Poems In A Time of Grief*. His work has appeared in the *Montague Reporter*, where he was the featured poet in January 2021; Oprelle Publications' poetry anthology *Matter*; online at [wittypartition.org](http://wittypartition.org); and in *Nine Mile Books & Literary Magazine*. His poem "A Poem About Not Getting a Dog" will appear in the June 2023 edition of *Rattle*. He has competed in and placed in the top three in the Poet's Seat and Robert P. Collén poetry competitions. His latest book, *The Lonely Years*, is currently seeking a publisher.

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



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**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 22**  
Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Khalif Neville*, free, 6 p.m.; *Mavrodaphne*, *Organ Transplant*, \$, 8:30 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Les Taiauts*, *The Honky Tonk Angels*. Cajun dancehall, two-step, country karaoke with a live band. No cover. 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Synthesizer Santa*. Free. 9 p.m.

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23**  
Four Star Farms, Northfield: *Moon Hollow*. Free. 6 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Robber Robber*, *Lily Seabird*, *Prune*. \$. 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Jeopardy*, *Bent*, *Slob Drop*, *PWRUP*. \$. 8:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Bev Ketch & J. Burkett*, *Jeff Gallagher Unfortunately*, *Michael Slyne*. Free. 9:30 p.m.

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 28**  
Rendezvous, Turners Falls:

*Masala Jazz*. Free. 8 p.m.

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 30**

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Fat*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Cinemastorm* movie double feature: *Breakin'* (1984) and *The Last Dragon* (1985). Free. 8 p.m.

The Drake, Amherst: *LuxDe-luxe*, *Ruby Lou*. \$. 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Bag Lady*, *Always Manic*, *Power Trousers*. \$. 9 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Bella's Bartok*, *Consider the Source*. \$. 9 p.m.

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31**

First Night Northampton (18 venues): *Soul Magnets*, *Pangears*, *The Fawns*, *Father Hotep*, *Vimana*, *ReBelle*, *Mal De-visa*, *Carinae*, *Northamptones*, *Cheap City*, *The Nields*, *LUCY*, *Sandy Bailey*, *The Greys*, *Lonesome Brothers*, *Happy Valley Guitar Orchestra*, *Hoonah*, *Ray Mason*, *Banish Misfortune*, *The Leafies You Gave Me*, *Lush Honey*, *Pamela Means*, *The Suitcase Junket*, and dozens more. \$. Starts at 12 p.m.

Liberal Arts Pop-Up, 236 Pleasant, Northampton: *Landowner*, *Almost Almost*, *Lucas Solo*, *Anni Abigail*, *Wishbone Zoe*, *Band of Clones*, *Fred Cracklin*. \$. 6 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *A Kid's New Year's Eve*, free, 7 to 9 p.m.; *Starship 20.23* with *DJ Callus*, \$, 9 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Jimmy Just Quit*, *AfterGlo*, *The B-52.0s*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *DJs Witch.Wav*, *Maysee Morpho*, *nitu*, *Sillysounds*. \$. 8 p.m.

Guiding Star Grange, Greenfield: *NYE Contra* with *Nova*, *Steve Z-A*, *Bal Folk*. \$. 8 p.m.

Race Street Live, Holyoke: *Max Creek*. \$. 8 p.m.

Shutesbury Athletic Club: *Electric Carnival*. \$. 8:30 p.m.

Deja Brew Pub, Wendell: *The Shadow Twisters*. \$. 8:30 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Bella's Bartok*, *The DiTrani Brothers*. \$. 9 p.m.

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 3**

Belltower Records, North Adams: *Retail Simps*, *Sky Furrows*, *Ian St. George Band*. \$. 7 p.m.

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4**

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Half Shaved Jazz*. Free. 8:30 p.m.

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 5**

Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *Singer/songwriter night*. Open mic. Free. 6 p.m.

The Drake, Amherst: *Calliope Jones*, *Lemon Street*. \$. 8 p.m.

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 6**

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Aden Gray*. Free. 9:30 p.m.

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 7**

MASS MoCA, North Adams: *Kaleta & Super Yamba Band*. \$. 8 p.m.

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 8**

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Ian St. George Band*, *Rocking Puppies*, *Film & Gender*, *The Prozacs*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11**

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

The Drake, Amherst: *Son Rompe Pera*, *DJ Bongohead*. \$. 8 p.m.

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 12**

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Dari Bay*, *Ruby Lou*, more. \$. 8 p.m.

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 13**

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Young Shakespeare Players present *Twelfth Night*. Free. 7 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Space Camp*, *Bricklayer*, *Rong*. \$. 8 p.m.

The Drake, Amherst: *Cass McCombs*, *Kolumbo*. \$. 8 p.m.

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 14**

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Young Shakespeare Players present *Twelfth Night*. Free. 1 p.m. and 7 p.m.

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 15**

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Skytiger*, *Plunge Pool*, *Perennial Quest*, *Mark of Wrath*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 20**

The Drake, Amherst: *Sunburned Hand of the Man*, *Franklin Mint*. \$. 8 p.m.

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 21**

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Old 78 Fall Festival Reunion*, with *Woody & the Rebel Alliance*, *rice: an American Band*, *Whalom Park*, *MC Force*. \$. 8 p.m.



(Part Two)

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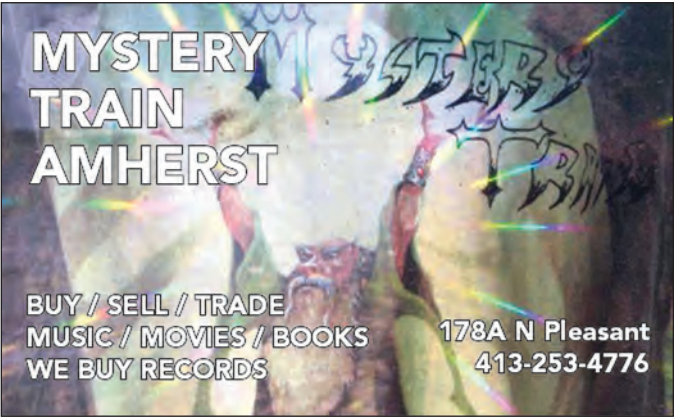
  
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