State Strikes Down Solar Zoning Bylaw In Shutesbury

SHUTESBURY – Local bylaws that are overly restrictive of solar energy development are at odds with Massachusetts’s goal of reducing carbon emissions, and are therefore unlawful, according to state officials.

“We’re forcing communities to fight to defend their own bylaws,” state representative Aaron Santos said. The AG’s rulings struck down bylaws in Wendell and Shutesbury on the grounds that they “facilitate systems in Wendell and Shutesbury that are unlawful, according to state officials.”

By SARAH ROBERTSON

Gill Police Log Highlights

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Montage assistant town administrator Walter Ramsey has been offered a promotion.

The Montague selectboard indicated on Monday night that it plans to elevate assistant town administrator Walter Ramsey to the position of town administrator. If Ramsey is appointed by a formal vote in the coming weeks, without a search process, he will replace current town administrator Steve Ellis who will be vacating the position at the end of June.

Ellis said that he had spoken with town counsel and was told Montague was not legally required to fill the position with a formal search. Ramsey was hired as Montague’s interim town planner in 2011 while he was still a graduate student at the University of Massachusetts Master of Regional Planning program, and became the permanent planner six months later. In October 2022 he became assistant town administrator (ATA), a new position created by a town meeting vote that May.

Ramsey owns a home in Turners Falls and his children attend the local public schools, he told the Reporter. The discussion took place under an agenda item titled “Town Administrator Succession and Transition Plan.” Selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz thanked Ellis for giving the board time to consider a succession plan, and said he was pleased with the “outlook” on such a plan. “I can jump in,” Ramsey said, “and take the opportunity to publicly acknowledge that I am interested.”

By JEFF SINGLETON

High School Sports Week: Warning Up!

Tayler Bergeron. The Eagles hosted the Green Wave on Monday for an early-season scrimmage in Turners Falls.

By KATE SAVAGE

Montage assistant town administrator Walter Ramsey has been offered a promotion.

The main focus of Monday’s Gill selectboard meeting was the long-term future of the town’s police force.

“Everybody’s going to have to grow or die,” said Mike Edwards, from the Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management. “It’s unreasonable to think the state won’t ask for regionalization.”

The Collins Center is a state agency based out of the University of Massachusetts Master of Regional Planning program, and became the permanent planner six months later. In October 2022 he became assistant town administrator (ATA), a new position created by a town meeting vote that May.

By KATE SAVAGE

Sade's dog looks longingly either at Santa's mailbox in Turners Falls, or past it at squirrels. Saint Nick is scheduled to meet his followers at 6:30 p.m. this Friday at Spinner Park during the "TV's A Wonderful Night" downtown event.
As a member of the local Jewish community, and as someone who works with children here in Great Falls, I carry a deep concern for the well-being of children and all civilians in Gaza, and have been heartbroken to learn that over 6,000 children have been killed in the ongoing military bombardment by Israel following the tragic Hamas-led attack on October 7. I believe that every life is sacred, and that Israel’s US-funded military operation does not serve the interests of Israelis or Palestinians, and will not lead to lasting security or freedom in the region. The children in Gaza who survive the current bombing, displacement, and inhumane living conditions will be left with un- fathomable loss, trauma, and ongoing oppression in the context of Israeli occupation and apartheid. Furthermore, Israel’s escalated military bombardment has sparked a rise in anti-Semitism and Islamophobia worldwide.

History shows us that only collective action, global solidarity, and diplomatic efforts can bring about a just peace and lasting security or freedom in the region. I invite others to join me in marching 25 miles for Palestine – the length of Gaza this Sunday, December 10 from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., beginning at Rep. McGovern’s office in Northampton and culminating outside Senator Warren and Markey’s offices in Springfield.

If you are interested in participating, you can find out more and register at linktr.ee/montagueremarathon, or follow us on Instagram @montagueremarathon. See you in the streets!

Katie Jackson
Turners Falls

Keller: ‘New Leaf’ is Not Green

A working bistro of the town of Wendell prohibited “Stand Alone Battery Energy Storage Facilities.”

The town bylaw has been rejected by a Massachusetts Attorney General. State authorities are grappling with how to replace fossil emissions with what they consider to be cleaner peak standards, and to safely provide alternative energy sources. According to a Mass General Law Ch. 40A S. 3: “reasonably necessary for the public convenience or welfare.” and according to M.G.L.Ch.164 (with minimum impact on the environment the least possible cost).” The state thereby is accepting responsibility for reducing dependence upon carbon-producing production in seeking what they deem to be green or renewable producers of energy. The “New Leaf” Stand Alone Battery Storage Project has been proposed for mid-town. It is neither green nor renewable. Activity to stop the project, and others of the same ilk, is based upon diverse issues. One major fact is that the lithium-ion batteries only require electrical charge directly from an existing possible grid, which transmits energy sources produced elsewhere. As documented in the New Leaf proposal, that grid is seasonally provided with 45% to 60% gas and 10% to 40% nuclear – clearly not alternative nor green.

Borecore/ECP are project developers, with corporate offspring “New Leaf” established as an independ- ent company for “Renewable Energy.” Battery storage may more likely be considered green by some if it exists in conjunction with solar, or producers of energy like hydro or wind. Batteries that consist only of the grid are not renewable. Stand Alone Battery projects are environmentally unacceptable, here or elsewhere. Instead, there are solar installations on acreage in proximity to power lines which could be retro- fitted to accommodate battery stor- age. At that point there remain the troubling issues of battery them- selves, with a life of 20 years after which there is much trade, toxicity, flammability, and overly-challeng- ing infrastructure accommodations.

If the state of Massachusetts de- rects us towards solar battery sys- tems, there are unused paved areas that year for updated function. Clear cutting oxygen-producing environ- ments and paying those assesses is not an option. Economic assesses must include all environmen- tal costs, which includes what is safe, healthy, and progressive.

Nina Keller
Wendell
The Future of the Carnegie Library

TURNERS FALLS – The Montague Public Libraries are in the application phase of a project to either expand the Carnegie Library in Turners Falls or construct a new building farther up Avenue A. If approved and funding is met, this project will proceed to the planning and design phase.

Opportunities for the future of the Carnegie will be discussed at two community forums next week. The first will be held via Zoom, from 6 to 7 p.m. on Tuesday, December 14, and the second will take place at the Great Falls Discovery Center from 6 to 8 p.m. on Wednesday, December 15.

During the first hour, the current condition of the library will be reviewed and the state’s application process and construction timeline explained. The library director and trustees will present the community feedback gathered so far, answer questions and listen to input.

Register for the Zoom forum at montaguelibraries.org/events.

At the in-person event, the presentation will be followed by a roundtable discussion with stakeholders that will be held at Montague Public Libraries.

McEwen explores the idea of listing as an extended metaphor for openness and receptivity.

The United Church of Bernard- ston’s second monthly Student Read Beef Supper is up and run- ning again, with the next one taking place this Saturday, December 9, with seatings at 5 and 6:15 p.m. “A delicious roast beef meal, complete with freshly mashed potatoes, gravy, vegetable and rolls, and freshly baked desserts for only $15,” reads the description.

Call (416) 648-9306 to reserve seating or order take-out meals.

Grafton’s Community College will host a workshop for older adults who want to gain a better understanding of the social media platforms people are using. “Social Media for Seniors” will be presented by GCC students Olivia Dow and Jessica Lenahan next Wednesday, December 13, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Registration is required at montaguelibraries.org/video-media.

Next Wednesday, December 13 from noon to 4 p.m., join Zeke Jakub of Conservacion Panama to learn how to use a map and compas to stay safe in the woods. The event begins at the main entrance to the Great Falls Discovery Center. Dress for the weather. The rain date is Saturday, December 16. For ages 6 and up, sponsored by Montague Public Libraries.

There’s an in-person job fair next Wednesday, December 13 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Great Falls Discovery Center in Greenfield, where you can meet with employers from many different industries.

The Ja’Duke Theater has put out a call for first responders, nurses, and others who want to be part of a performance fundraiser for the New England Learning Center for Women in Transition. “We aim to house those who embody resilience and show support for survivors and victims of emotional, and sexual violence,” they write.

“Resilience Rising: A Fundraiser for NECLWT” will be held on Friday, September 9 and October 1 at the Ja’Duke Theater in Turners Falls. Rehearsals begin Saturday January 7 and run for five Sundays. Interested performers can contact jaduketheater@gmail.com.

Enjoy hot chocolate and meet your neighbors at a Hot Chocolate Social and Silent Auction fundraiser at the Montague Center library from 3 to 4 p.m. next Thursday, December 14.

A Música Franklin Community Concert will be held at Shelburne Elementary School in Turners Falls next Thursday, December 14 from 5:45 to 6:45 p.m. This is a student performance and family-friendly concert featuring five vocalists and a saxophonist. Cey has performed around the world as a member of Esperanza Spalding’s “Radio Music and Chamber Music Societies.” This concert is free and open to the public.

The Artspace community arts center in Greenfield will hold a Winter Stamping Activity next Saturday, December 11, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. This is an all-ages winter craft in which you can make cards, a wintry scene, or what-have-you. Drop in and be creative for a suggested donation of $10.

Families are also invited to come make Gingerbread Houses from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, December 16. This Montague Public Libraries program will be held at the Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls. Children of all ages and their caregivers are invited to make gingerbread houses with empty milk cartons, graham crackers, and assorted candies all provided for free.

Santa will take a ride through Montague starting at 2 p.m. Saturday, December 16 from the Montague Center fire station. The route will proceed to Rutters Park in Lake Pleasant, Canada’s Mill in Millers Falls, Montague City, land at Unity Park in Turners Falls around 3 p.m., and head back to the Mont- ague Center common. Find more details on the Montague Parks & Recreation Facebook page.

Send your local briefs to editor@montaguerepporter.org.
Looking for artists to create murals with natural materials on the library lawn for Summer 2024. More information at serving-ma.gov/bids

Curator Tracer Lane said this week’s event is “flourished and it lived.” She cited a study released in July by the state Department of Environmental Analysis. The report found that solar energy releases sequestered carbon and about 94% of solar energy systems is also “impermissible under the current laws.” She pointed to the town over what they consider a reasonable restriction on the use of skill or commitment by our volunteers,” he emphasized. The legislation requires the town to build these projects in a way that meets the public need, in this case, is “trying to get to where the state’s carbon emission goals by 2040. According to Massachusetts 2050 De- vise a multi-year plan for the re- diction of municipal energy use. “There is a lot of work to do,” Hurley said. “We need to do it in a way that is consistent with the public good.” The AG’s office released a study in 2015 that found that clear-cutting forests for solar projects could increase the risk of fire with readily extinguished with water as readily as flammable gases, “he explained. Battery fires cannot be extinguished with water, can only be extinguished with chemical fire suppression systems. Jake Wish, a spokesperson for the Department of Fire Serv- ices, told the Reporter that batteries can “be exploded in flames and toxic, flammable gases,” he explained. "There is an obligation to make sure that there is an adequate response in the right emergency evacuation plans. Facilities. Battery fires cannot be extinguished with water, can only be extinguished with chemical fire suppression systems. Jake Wish, a spokesperson for the Department of Fire Serv- ices, told the Reporter that batteries can "be spilled or caught on fire. They pack so much power into a small package that they can explode in flames and tox- ic, flammable gases," he explained. The host committee will hold a fundraiser next Wednesday, December 13, at Hope & Olive restaurant in Greenfield. Guests will hear how the community of Franklin County has community of Franklin County has

Looking for artists to create murals with natural materials on the library lawn for Summer 2024. More information at serving-ma.gov/bids

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GILL was on page A1 to keep their police forces running. Following widespread protests against police brutality, the state of Massachusetts passed “police reform” laws which require more train-
ing for officers. Part-time officers, who had lighter training require-
ments before, must now undergo full academy training. Edwards said the laws also demand more administra-
tive work from chiefs, which would only increase once the state releases its department-level certification re-
quirements for police forces.

“I think larger departments are going to be the ones that are left standing at the end of the day,” said Edwards. “The momentum is there, I honestly think you’re wait-
ing on is retirements and scandals, for the most part. You’re waiting on that opportunity to come.”

Edwards recommended that Gill begin by researching the full cost of its current police department and learning what residents expect and want from the police. Then it could start “dating” other towns to see who might be interested in joining forces.

“I’ll want you in advance,” said Edwards, “very rarely is it going to save you a lot of money.” He stat-
ed that regionalization was instead about “maintaining or sustain-
ing a level of service.”

“I think we’re in good shape,” said selectboard chair Randy Cro-
och, who expressed belief that the town would have a lot to offer in any agreement. “Our budgets are reason-
ably high for the police department,” said Edwards, “but it’s still got to be a reason to do it.”

The board agreed that part of the process would be at least two public meetings to receive guidance from residents. “Ultimately the board can enter into any agreement they want with any town to do the service,” said Edwards, “but it’s still got to be fanned. And that’s town meeting’s role on this whole thing.”

Funding the Fire Department

“The three-year brush truck project is almost coming to a close,” promised deputy fire chief William Kimball. After a long wait, Gill’s new firefighting truck is expected to arrive by February.

To pay for it, the town will take around $77,600 from the funds given to the town by Northfield Mount Hermon School (NMHS). The “NMHS gift fund,” as town admin-
istrator Ray Purington called it, is made up of voluntary payments the private school makes each year to fund emergency services in the town. Purington estimates that around $22,000 will remain in the account after this purchase.

The final $6,000 needed for the truck will come from Amer-
ian Rescue Plan (ARPA) funds left over from a new town hall co-
py-machine purchase.

The board also approved spend-
ing $2,875 from the fire department office space. They consid-
ered renovation requests for the mobile fire hydrant,” said Kimball, “because we don’t have fire hy-
drants in most of the town.”

The department would like to prac-
tice on the second story of the office. They approved spending $1,100 from the building maintenance fund to renovate deteriorating particle-board countertops in the radio room, but decided to wait on funding a $7,000 renovation job to complete flooring on the second story of the office. The department would like to prac-
tice drills and store equipment there, but it currently features a wide hole with exposed insulation.

“I’d feel a lot better if this was April or May and more of the year and its surprises were behind us,” said Purington. The board agreed to return to the issue in the future.

Other Business

The board voted to adopt an offi-
cial flag policy, allowing only offi-
cial, federal, state, and town flags to fly on town-owned flagpoles. The are both an administrative clerk and PEI access videographer.

The board signed a letter of sup-
port for Comcast’s application to the Broadband Infrastructure Cap Networks Grant Program, which will allow the company to offer broadband to the last several dozen households in Gill that still have no broadband internet access.

The board voted to once again close a portion of Piscataquag Mountain and River roads to vehicle traf-
 fic from December 5 to April 1 due to icy driving conditions.

PUBLIC SERVICE

HOLIDAY CRAFT FAIR EXPANDS TO TWO DAYS

WENDELL – The annual Wen-
dell Holiday Craft Fair, hosted by the Friends of the Wendell Free Library, will be held on the Wendell Common this Friday, December 8 from 4 to 8 p.m. and Saturday, December 9 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The first hour of each day is for masked shoppers only.

Vendors will be set up in both the Town Hall and Senior Center. Join us for live music, Diemand Farm food, and raffles, as well as a wide variety of offerings from local artist-
s and craftspeople.

Included are: wooden bowls, cutting boards, and utensils; pottery; jewelry; fabric art, clothing, wooden knits, and quilted items; visual art; hand-made stationery; soaps and candles; wildlife photog-
raphy; and more.

Sugarbush Farm will be there with fresh maple syrup, and mem-
bers of the citizens group No As-
sumin’ Battery United will be on hand to answer questions with handouts and a petition to protect the health and safety of Wendell.

There will also be new Wendell Flag merchandise, including red aprotios, blue loup-sleeve t-shirts, and black deluxe tote bags, with all proceeds benefiting the Friends of the Wendell Library.

PLACE YOUR BUSINESS CARD HERE (12 WEEK MINIMUM). CALL 863-8666!
The mystery of why unbaked water in the building killed several of the main cultists behind raising scores of scores in the small mud sewer system – deepened when a day-long smoke test turned up no evidences of air flow. Mary Ray Parington reported that the sewer line is in good shape. So how is excess water finding its way into the sewer pipes and across Barton Cove to Montague, in the district for its treatment?

A heated discussion took place at the town meeting on Monday, Member Linda Downs-Bembury said she has received citizen complaints regarding the lack of magnetic placards on the burglar alarm in the previous sewer, before others went down. She and board member Bert Dubay said they did think the car should be marked, but some residents disagreed, noting that an unmarked cruiser gives more flexibility in their work.

A peculiar disease has killed horses cross the river now.

To Mark or Not to Mark

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**Schools Bracing for Slow Growth**

**BY MIKE JACKSON**

GILL-MONTAGUE – November was marked, as it always is, by the joyful descent of the Gill-Montague school committee into the annual budget process. The committee must work together to figure out how to make the town a better place to live if it always is, by the joyful descent of the Gill-Montague school committee into the annual budget process.

Though the district settled a contract this fall with the paraprofessionals themselves, the pupil services director, Jayne Finn, said she did not think this could be blamed on the paraprofessionals.

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**Turners Falls – Unanimous**

The Montague Reporter is bringing not only incredible titles to our small town, but also a new passion for Governor’s Cup. How is it possible to do all this and not feel overwhelmed? Well! Their recent Poetry Marathon is available to view on our YouTube page, though we recommend you attend their next event in person.

Events that are for screen viewing only, such as our “episodes” from the Gill-Montague school committee’s work, are released based on November 28. All community members are welcome to submit their videos to be aired on Channel 9, and featured on their website, montaguetv.org.

**Other Business**

The board unanimously voted to rescind a revised order addressing abanking com-
family trusts informed town offi-
cials that the owners were consid-
ering building a large-scale housing
complex with hundreds of units.

The concept was discussed on
Monday, with virtually no specif-
ic, at a planning board meeting
covered by the Hampshire Gazette,
and on Wednesday morning plan-
ning board chair Tom Ewing posted
commentary on the pros and cons of
such a project on the Leverett Con-
derland, with larger housing proj-
ests that often serve a student pop-
ulation, are at 11.72% and 10.33%
respectively. Montague, which is
just under the threshold of 9.18%,
recently created two "Chapter 40R
overly districts" in Turners Falls to
encourage greater density and more
affordable housing.

Ewing’s listserve post listed a
range of potential positives – in-
cluding increasing the tax base and
making Leverett a more afford-
able place to live – and negatives
including the need to spend more
money on road improvements, po-
licing, and fire protection as well
"a change in the rural feel of the
neighborhood."

Selectboard chair Tom Hankin-
sen told the Reporter he had agreed
with Ewing’s view "completely.
"It is the responsibility of Leverett’s
town leaders and town residents," he
wrote, "to remain clear-eyed about
the positive and negative impacts a
project of this size will likely have
on our small, rural town with a little
over 1,800 residents."

According to the neighboring
town of Sunderland’s 2021 Hous-
ing Plan, two housing complexes
in that town – Sugarloaf Estates on
Route 47 and Cliffside Apartments
on Route 116 – include 232 and
208 apartments, respectively. The
Rolling Green Apartments in Am-
herst, according to that town’s 2015
Housing Market Study, includes
204 units, each ranging from one to
four bedrooms.

Hankinson and Ewing, along
with town administrator Marjorie
McGinnis, met with Amherst of-
ficials last week. Some of the pro-
posed project would likely be sited
in Amherst, and a development of
its size may require improvements
to Leverett Road, as Amherst Road
is called when it crosses the border.

Perhaps more importantly, the
development would likely hook in
to Amherst’s drinking water and
sewer systems.

"The developer cannot pull this
off without Amherst fully on the
game," Hankinson wrote. "The
project on the Kettleidge Road as
proposed will require the full co-
operation of Leverett and Amherst
municipal leaders, working together
to achieve the very best outcome for
both towns. We have done so suc-
cessfully in the past, and we fully
expect to do so again."

"At this point we don’t know any
details, and the details are going to
be what determines whether this is
good for our community or bad for
us," Ewing wrote. "The planning
board is going to do everything we
can to encourage community in-
volvement. There are going to be
trade-offs and values-based deci-
sions that we have to make and it is
important that we make those deci-
sions as a whole community."

Ewing urged residents to attend
the planning board meeting next
Wednesday at 7:15 p.m., which
will be held both via Zoom and in
person at the town hall.
I’m glad to have them. The white-throated sparrows and junco cousins have arrived for the winter, but in small numbers so far. With the portal of an open winter, they may not need a handout for a while yet. Woodpeckers have found the suet post, nutcrackers with their tin-horn nasal calls scoot in and out of the seed hoppers, and a welcome tree sparrow down from the northern taiga has appeared, but has remained somewhat scarce.

I feel lucky enough to live mostly outdoors, and I can escape the indoor worries about mounting bills, while others may well be submerged under the onslaught of commercial seasonal urgings, impertinently to buy and buy more, or even the warnings about the threatening rising tide of fascism in our internal politics.

My sense of December, like for some souls who like to reflect on memories of the days when the world seemed more simple and more kind, provides some sort of solace. Just stepping out of doors and taking a deep breath of cold air can help restore some balance and taking a deep breath of cold air can help restore some balance.

Back then in the ‘50s, in the idealized collection of my winter memories, my sister Sue and I often embarked on an ambitious project to make boxes and write our observations. On a cold day in December during the designated count dates, we would head out the door of our little house above the Narragansett on the Connecticut, elip and this count.

WEST ALONG THE RIVER

EARLY DECEMBER SKETCHBOOK

By DAVID BRULE

THE FLAT, ERVINGSIDE – I always approach December cautiously, trying to ease into the season without the calendar and its precious days specifying by leaving me wondering where the month went. I’m a Christmas Eve-born baby boomer, and for me December has always held a certain kind of magic. Maybe even more than most. I live in the snow globe bubble of early wintertime, belly, swirling snow, calm and peace. I like to keep that bubble of popping fun as long as I can, so I framed long ago how to unplugged Christmas. Unplugging from the commercial madness and compulsive buying, forgetting about finding the perfect gift. I often turn back to, of all things, snowscapes of the French Impressionists. They tried, like I do in this sketchbook, to capture fleeting moments of outdoor occurrences and scenes playing with natural light, ephemeral as they are. I find myself standing before the next 31 days as a blank canvas, paints, or in my case ink, almost congested with the cold. Felt pen clenched in mittened right hand, I stand there or sit there ready to paint what I see.

For the time being what I see is a winterland landscape, mostly dark brown, with an occasional cardinal perching in the bare branches of the old lilac. Here occasional cardinal perching in the bare branches of the old lilac. Here occasional cardinal perching in the bare branches of the old lilac.

I would add a dash of a brilliant red, like holly berries. Here holly berries. Here holly berries. Here holly berries. Here holly berries. Here holly berries.

Snow at Argenteuil

WEST ALONG

DECEMBER 7, 2023

By CLAIRE HOPLEY

LEVERETT – When I was a child growing up in England, Christmas crackers were as vital for Christmas as the Christmas tree. There were big ones that appeared at Christmas meals, and little ones that were tied to the tree. At down moments over the holiday we could beg for a little six-inch one, but the big ones – around twelve inches – were reserved for dinner on Christmas Day and often Christmas festivities.

Later, living in Massachusetts, it was inconceivable that my children would grow up without them, and equally that adults should sit down to Christmas dinner without a Christmas cracker waiting at their place. I got visiting relatives to bring them, and hunted them down wherever they could be found.

But while the eye-candy designs tempt most Americans who encounter them, many don’t know what to do with them. Surely not to toss them, that’s the idea. And now that local big-box and department stores sell Christmas crackers, everyone can enjoy them. Here’s how.

You put a cracker at every place setting, usually on the side plate or napkin. When someone is assembled for the meal, each person picks up the cracker. You can hold an end in your right hand, then cross your arms over your body so its end points to your neighbor on the left, who grabs hold. Everyone around the table is linked by the crackers.

Keeping your thumbs tight on the joints in the crackers – an important step, according to the manufacturers, to avoid accidental injury.

A family of titmice, hatched and grown in the great little house above the Narrows, has arrived for the winter, but in small numbers. With the portal of an open winter, they may not need a handout for a while yet. Woodpeckers have found the suet post, nutcrackers with their tin-horn nasal calls scoot in and out of the seed hoppers, and a welcome tree sparrow down from the northern taiga has appeared, but has remained somewhat scarce.

I feel lucky enough to live mostly outdoors, and I can escape the indoor worries about mounting bills, while others may well be submerged under the onslaught of commercial seasonal urgings, impertinently to buy and buy more, or even the warnings about the threatening rising tide of fascism in our internal politics.

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WEST ALONG page B3

GREENFIELD – “Beans, beans, the magical fruit, the more you eat, the more you toot. The more you toot, the better you feel, so eat your beans with every meal!”

Did you know that beans are legumes, but not all legumes are beans? The word legume is often used as an umbrella term, but in fact beans are the edible seeds of different plant species while legumes come from plants that bear their fruit inside a pod. For clarity in this column, I’ll use legume to describe both, unless otherwise specified.

Legumes are good substitutes for red meat and are an important plant-based protein for vegans and vegetarians. Soybeans in particular are a complete protein. Nutritious and versatile, low in fat and cholesterol, they are loaded with antioxidants that help prevent cell damage and fight aging and disease. Their high-fiber content can cause bloating in our guts as our bodies work to digest them, hence the “bean burp” from this “magical fruit.”

As a food crop they have a low impact on the environment, are drought-resistant, and use far less water than what’s needed to raise beef. When legumes are used as a dry grain, such as livestock forage and silage, they’re called a pulse.

Fossilized evidence has been found on the banks of the Euphrates River in modern-day Syria showing lentils were a dietary staple about 60,000 years ago. The ancient Egyptians favored them – think falafels and hummus, which we still enjoy today – while early Greeks initially saw them as poor man’s food. Rome’s Pliny the Elder extolled the virtues of the fava bean, and the gourmet writer Apicius included them in the world’s first cookbook, De Re Cultivaria.

During the Middle Ages, Charlemagne ordered the domestic and nutritious chickpeas to be planted across war-avenged European lands,

Notes from the Heartfelt Café

By TROUBLE MANDeson

Chili with beans is thought to originate from cattle drivers in the Southwest. With chili con carne popularized in the 1950s and ‘60s, the first world championship was held in 1967 at Terlingua, Texas. From traditional red chili, a.k.a. Texas chili, to chili verde (green), there are passionate debates among aficionados as to the right way to make chili.

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Angus is a handsome pup who loves to play, go for walks, enjoy car rides, and is super smart! He is fully house-trained, walks nicely on leash with his harness, and loves to have play dates with other dogs.

Angus does guard his food from other animals, so he needs to be the only pet living in his home. He loves older kids, but is uncomfortable with young children, so you have children, they should be at least 10 years old. If you’re looking for a solo dog who is a smart, energetic companion who is already fully house-trained and knows manners, then look no further than Angus.

Angus at Dakin are currently available only in Springfield. Contact adoption staff at springfield.dakinhumane.org and include your name and phone number. For more information, call (413) 741-4000 or visit www.dakinhumane.org.

“ANGUS” is the first Tuesday of each month, and pool table open. Senior Health Rides, contact Jonathon von Ranson at (978) 544-3758. Senior Health Rides, contact Jonathon von Ranson at (978) 544-3758. Second Tuesday is Toe Nail Clip.

Senior Center Activities DECEMBER 11 THROUGH 15

GILL and MONTAGUE

Monday 12/11
10:15 a.m. Aerobics
9:30 a.m. Tuesday Knitters
12 p.m. Tech Help Drop In
12:30 p.m. Tai Chi
Tuesday 12/12
9 a.m. Good For U Workout
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
11 a.m. Line Dancing
11 a.m. Social Strings
Wednesday 12/14
9 a.m. Strength & Conditioning
10:15 a.m. Chair Yoga
10 a.m. Pilates Flow
Friday 12/15
9 a.m. Quilting & Open Sew

ANGUS

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9 a.m. Chair Yoga
9:30 a.m. Tuesday Knitters
10 a.m. Zumba Life
12:30 p.m. Tech Help Drop In
12:30 p.m. Tai Chi
Wednesday 12/13
3 p.m. Foot Clinic by Appointment
4:15 p.m. Mac Yoga
Thursday 12/14
1 p.m. Pilates
1 p.m. Five Crowns
Friday 12/15
10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
2 p.m. Chair Dance
LEVERETT

Chair Yoga classes are held on Wednesdays at 10 a.m., at the town hall and on Zoom. Foot Clinic by Appointment

For more information, contact the Leverett COA at (413) 585-1022 x. 2, or coo@leverett.ma.us.
West Analog from page B1 slide down the steep side to the Red Rock and the nearby Hwy 25. We were ready to walk all kinds of winter rambles, accidents, and a host of constant neighborhood birds.

The anticipation of finding my morning birds was like anticipating opening Christmas presents. The first lighted one down as soon as the wrapping is torn away and the gift is, well, sort of half wrapped and might be seen as a winter surprise.

Our Christmas count results were always something like that: we usually managed to count a dozen blue jays, more or less, a number of cheery chickadees, may- be a nuthatch in the still-scarce funnel of the Naries, a few song sparrow darting among the储蓄 of the small shrubs, and the occasional trio that tall cattail plumes were fluffed open and scattering floating away.

We got home, chilled then warmed by hot cocoa and some of winter adventures as we tallied up our day.

Nowadays, I participate in the Cornell Bird Count, tallying up my own birds in the morning and sending the results electronically to the lab a hundred miles away. No need to move from the couch, and my thoughts span the warmth of the woodstove!

I walked over my lifetime I've hitchhiked in Spain, through Madrid and Seville, spending days following long slowly in Tanger, later in our snug car we're home in the valley's first snow and memories of kinds of mem- ions pop up in my snowglobe, but only in this winter month. But for the last fifty years, I've been holding December in my heart. It wouldn't be Christmas without it, or if I think, then flattens and recedes.

For a December-born like me, I need to save this month. We don't know how many more we'll see it as the ways things are going.

With my head and heart dwell- ings of the past months, and 206 mea- sures, those December images lin- ge. Some are stored in the rooms we've lived in, now entering its 152nd year of family living, dying, and with the New Year, others move in among these humble old walls.

What I'm trying to tell you is that you are wondering what December like you would catch a wave in August on the shallower shelf of Plum Island. That would be in high summer, not its seasonal opposite, perched as we are in the northernmost long days of the night of the year, but the met- afor works – the rolling wave of Christmas comes in quicker than you think, then flattens and recedes. For a December-born like me, I need to save this month. We don't know how many more we'll see it as the ways things are going.

An evening not to miss,” says Court Dorsey at (413) 325-7587 or courtcdorsey@gmail.com. For more information on the Friends of the Wendell Meet- housepole, a free event.

On Sunday, December 10 from 3 to 6 p.m., Wendell author Kai Carol Judd will celebrate the release of her newly published book, Life of Kai, “a mem- ory of awakening,” at the Wendell Meetinghouse.

Judd is a psycho- therapist, retreat leader and writer whose embedded storytelling comes from a deep and profound love of nature and study of shamanism. she has taken her memories to the woods and the seas to share her ex- periences and challenges of life and death. In 1988 she founded the Institute of the Wendell Meetinghouse Board and most of its greatest con- cept of new directions for the building this spring, rebuilding it from the ashes. She took ancient sound forms to modern acoustic sound pan- els, floors, walls, ceiling, win- dows, insulation, windows, doors, stone, and ADA accessibility in the kitchen. Since the spring Meetinghouse’s board and she are now new. More information is available at wendellmeetinghouse.org. A reading from the Coffeehouse event, contact Court Dorsey at (413) 325-7577 or courtcdorsey@gmail.com.

Monday, 11/4

From eastern control officer was notified about an injured shank walking down a road near the parking lot off the bike path near the General Pierce Bridge.

Rau’s contacted off duty officer. He was told that the injury was to his leg.

6:13 p.m. 911 caller from the General Pierce Bridge reporting a fire inside of a barrel and it tore his trailer apart. Two occupants still inside. Rau’s contacted off duty officer.

9:13 p.m.911 caller states that two hunters are lost in the woods near Route 47 and Federal Street. Caller checked area; no sheep.

10:39 p.m. 911 caller stated that there is a deer in the roadway on Federal Street. Deer is near the crosswalk.
HEARTFELT wafting over Boston Harbor as this shaped to look like the real thing, I peanuts inside a hard-baked coating sweet brown bread.

beans with molasses and salt pork the distinctive local style of baking chants coined the nickname after made from the distillation of fer-

century slave trade importing rum Boston baked beans. With the 18th feel obligated to share the origins of dia and Brazil consume the most le-

per person per day (about 0.74 oz.), cheap protein, and today legumes increased their consumption as a was so named as a staple for sailors. China, India, and

cinies name evolved into “kidney beans” by the British, these, from the New World. Dubbed food source on slave ships as well eyed peas came from Africa as a traveled by ship to Europe: black-
corn and beans. And lentils, rice and soybeans, and been a part of every major civiliza-

cereal, grasses, and grains in terms historian Umberto Eco believes fagioli for the French. As a kid chewing on Boston

In the Pioneer Valley we grow different varieties of legumes and beans at local farms and in our regional delicacy baked slowly in ovens throughout the city. Here in the Pioneer Valley we grow different varieties of legumes and beans at local farms and in our gardens. One of my favorite sum-

berries is picking fresh snow

As a kid chewing on Boston Baked Bean candies, made from peas inside a hand-baked coating shaped to look like the real thing, I might have imagined the sweet ap-

Hummus is a great addition to any meal, party platter, the addition of different types of beans and various

one 15.5-oz. can of chickpeas

½ cup tahini

³⁄₄ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice

2 garlic cloves

1 tsp. cumin

½ tsp. paprika

1 tsp. dried oregano

1/2 cup chopped onion

1 tsp. ground black pepper

1 tsp. salt

3 tsp. olive oil

Drain and rinse the chickpeas, and mince the gar-

Drain and rinse the chickpeas, and mince the garlic cloves. Mix all ingredients in a blender until smooth.

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BASIC HUMMUS

Hummus is a great addition to any meal, party platter, the addition of different types of beans and various

Hummus is a great addition to any meal, party platter, the addition of different types of beans and various

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Hummus is a great addition to any meal, party platter, the addition of different types of beans and various

For you to solve a Rubik’s Cube as fast as possible. People who con-

once you feel you are ready you can sign up to be in a competition. There are podiums and prizes, but the majority of people are doing it because they want to meet other people like them and improve on their own time. I have been to a couple of competitions, and would like to share what it is like compet-

registering for one of these competitions is very easy: you just go onto the World Cube Association (WCA) website, sign up, and pay a small participant fee. Competitions are happening all over the world, though sometimes there may not be a competition very close to you. The two I have been to were in Alesund and Northampton. Luckily enough, we live in a relatively densely-pop-

if you do well in a round, you have a chance to move on to the next round. I made it to Round 2 of 2x2 and then stopped there. I did well in 3x3 and set a couple of per-

I have to mention heirloom beans too, which offer unique flavors and textures not often found in the more

There’s also a floral side to the legume family in the form of the dangling violas with their shiny blue-violet blooms, and the gor-

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Monday, 10/8 4:10 p.m. Suspicious ac- cident in the area of the Bart- on Village, Route 10.

Monday, 10/9 12:45 p.m. 911 call for un- desired party, Main Road.

Monday, 10/9 11:24 a.m. Assisted Mon- tague PD with disturbance.

Thursday, 10/12 3:12 p.m. Caller from the A.P.E. Gallery, Northampton: The show backed up my thought that those shows had lost any popularity. There was an interactive part of the show where the audience was asked questions by Mr. Drag and the show to be all right.

My favorite moment of the show was when Mr. Drag told his own take on the Nativity story to the audience. I really enjoyed it.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Exhibitions of colorful geometric paintings and fine art prints, through February.

A.P.E. Gallery, Northampton: Microworks 23. Extra-small works by over 123 artists who have shown at the gallery over the past 45 years. Through December 30. Friday, December 8, from 5 to 8 p.m.

Art in the Hall, Shelburne Falls: First Sat- ursday of the month, seen through Christmas. Art will be on display from local artists and collectors in downtown Shelburne Falls.

PULP Gallery, Holyoke: North- east Contemporary. The show featured a group show. Artists are members, by invitation only.

The theme for this year is “Dance.” It turned into a dance number with other performers, who I think had to do with the song he was singing. It wasn’t a bad way to start the show. It started to resemble a family gathering during the holidays. Mr. Drag had a unique turn to it. Mr. Drag commented about the change, and indicated it would be how things are normally.

The show did seem like they were having a holiday party. I liked the idea of dancing with the crowd for Turners Falls: “What happens here stays here” because no one knows we’re here.

There were a couple more music numbers, which the audience really

ON SALE
RECENTLY
11 a.m. Injured hawk re- ported, Main Road.

Tuesday, 10/10 5:27 p.m. Caller advises there is a baggie with a white substance in it in the park. Main Road.

Tuesday, 10/10 11:04 a.m. MassDEP ad- vises of potentially significant release of fuel oil in the Mill River. On the opposite side of the bridge, there is a large spill, possibly involving a tractor-trailer.

Wednesday, 10/11 7:47 p.m. Vehicle stuck in the Buzzing in the area of the Montague Bridge.

Monday, 10/11 4:28 p.m. Loose dog, Papermill Road. Caller reported hearing the sound of dragging, coming from across the street. Mr. Drag states he came back to find a dog in his door and found out to be a Black American, with extensive damage to the vehicle. He had extremely dark tinted windows, and no one was in the vehicle had a newer black Suburban. She was standing out of the vehicle and was in the middle of the road.

Tuesday, 10/11 7:50 p.m. Officer reports hearing the sound of dragging, coming from across the street. Mr. Drag states he came back to find a dog in his door and found out to be a Black American, with extensive damage to the vehicle. He had extremely dark tinted windows, and no one was in the vehicle had a newer black Suburban. She was standing out of the vehicle and was in the middle of the road.

Tuesday, 10/11 10:47 p.m. Officer reports hearing the sound of dragging, coming from across the street. Mr. Drag states he came back to find a dog in his door and found out to be a Black American, with extensive damage to the vehicle. He had extremely dark tinted windows, and no one was in the vehicle had a newer black Suburban. She was standing out of the vehicle and was in the middle of the road.

Tuesday, 10/11 2:44 p.m. Loose dog, Papermill Road. Caller reported hearing the sound of dragging, coming from across the street. Mr. Drag states he came back to find a dog in his door and found out to be a Black American, with extensive damage to the vehicle. He had extremely dark tinted windows, and no one was in the vehicle had a newer black Suburban. She was standing out of the vehicle and was in the middle of the road.

Tuesday, 10/11 8:25 p.m. Officer reports hearing the sound of dragging, coming from across the street. Mr. Drag states he came back to find a dog in his door and found out to be a Black American, with extensive damage to the vehicle. He had extremely dark tinted windows, and no one was in the vehicle had a newer black Suburban. She was standing out of the vehicle and was in the middle of the road.

Tuesday, 10/11 11:12 a.m. Two young dogs playing in the street on Main Road.

Tuesday, 10/12 2:20 p.m. Loose dog, Main Road.

Wednesday, 10/12 5:25 p.m. Tree down blocking out the on the northbound lane, Route 2.

Wednesday, 10/12 1:00 p.m. Man wanted on a warrant for the theft of a trailer.

Wednesday, 10/12 10:37 a.m. Call from the A.P.E. Gallery, Northampton: The show backed up my thought that those shows had lost any popularity. There was an interactive part of the show where the audience was asked questions by Mr. Drag and the show to be all right.

My favorite moment of the show was when Mr. Drag told his own take on the Nativity story to the audience. I really enjoyed it.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Exhibitions of colorful geometric paintings and fine art prints, through December.

Great Falls Discovery Cen- ter, Leverett: Duck Stamps. See the top youth entries for the 2023 Junior Duck Stamp competition. This statewide con- test, for students from kindergarten through grade 12, highlights the importance of preserving wetland habitats and the delights of wild- life. Make your own duck stamp at the Great Falls on Tuesday, January 16.

LOOT, Turners Falls: Paintings and prints, including colorful geometric paintings and fine art prints, through February.

Artists: C.R.E.A.T.E.: Creativity in Recov- ery Expressed Artistically Through Photography, in memory of a one-on-one recovery program, The Project, Project Mentor Group, the Great Falls Project, Leverett.

LAVCA, Greenfield: Fourth Annual Community Art Show, Friday, December 15. Photography Exhibition, photos taken other people dressed as marines, who I think had to do with the song he was singing. It wasn’t a bad way to start the show. It started to resemble a family gathering during the holidays. Mr. Drag had a unique turn to it. Mr. Drag commented about the change, and indicated it would be how things are normally.

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Psychoactive Substances Structurally Similar To Serotonin Soothe Sadness

By SPENCER SHORKEY

MILLERS FALLS – Serotonin has a really important function as a neurotransmitter, that is, as a propagator of signals in the brain. Low serotonin levels are one of many chemical imbalances observed in patients of depression. Serotonin and a number of well-known psychoactive substances are all known to bind to a receptor on brain cells which mediates their effects.

Other psychoactive substances structurally similar to serotonin include lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), a synthetic compound; dimethyltryptamine (DMT), a natural plant compound used in indigenous Amazonian shamanic practices; and psilocybin, a naturally occurring compound found in “magic mushrooms.” These are shown in the accompanying illustration binding with the serotonin receptor.

Psychedelic substances have been increasingly investigated by clinical trials in recent years, showing promise in alleviating symptoms of depression, anxiety, trauma, and addiction. Many therapeutically relevant psychedelic compounds work by mimicking serotonin, sticking to the serotonin receptors in the brain.

A significant clinical trial testing single-dose psilocybin treatment for Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) in 104 adults reported positive Phase 2 results this August. Participants were randomized to receive a 25-mg dose of synthetic psilocybin or a 100-mg dose of niacin as a placebo, each with psychosocial support.

The results showed that psilocybin treatment led to a significant reduction in the patients’ “Montgomery-Asberg Depression Rating Scale” (MADRS) scores, indicating a rapid and sustained antidepressant effect. Trial participants receiving psilocybin had sustained depressive symptom response in 42% of cases, compared to 11% in the control group. Psilocybin was also associated with improved psychological well-being and was generally well-tolerated, with most adverse events being mild or moderate and limited to the acute dosing period.

The study adds to the growing evidence that psilocybin – when administered with psychological support – is a promising treatment for MDD. These trial results were published this August, the same month that the Massachusetts campaign, Massachusetts for Mental Health Options, started its petition for a psychedelics legalisation ballot initiative. This campaign, backed by the political action committee New Approach, aimed to get 100,000 signatures in support of the ballot question in our state.

New Approach says it has collected 100,000 signatures from Massachusetts voters, putting the initiative on track to become a referendum on the ballot next fall. According to spokesman Jared Moffat, the high volume of new signatures collected in a short time is indicative of the initiative’s popularity.

The initiative, known as the Natural Psychedelic Substances Act, aims to create a regulatory framework for lawful and supervised access to psychedelic substances at licensed facilities. It would legalize the possession and gifting of psylocybin such as psilocybin and mescaline for adults 21 and older, and would allow for their home cultivation.

The act would also establish a “Natural Psychedelic Substances Commission” to oversee implementation of the law and licensing of facilities and service centers. Additional patients include a 15% excess tax on psychedelics purchased at these licensed facilities, with localities having the option to impose an additional 2% tax.

From a medical standpoint, recent research has shown promising potential for psilocybin in treating certain mental health conditions, such as depression, anxiety, and PTSD. Clinical trials suggest that psilocybin, often in combination with therapy, can produce significant and rapid improvements in these conditions.

The move towards legalization or decriminalization of psilocybin reflects a shift in how society views mental health conditions and in drug policy reform in general. Let’s discuss this break-through medicine. The inactivation of PCSK9, which stands for “pro-protein convertase subtilisin/kexin type 9”, is expected to result in lowered blood cholesterol levels in patients. PCSK9 has been previously shown to lower cholesterol in humans by antibodies, such as Praluent from Regeneron, and by silencing RNA – such as inclisiran by Alnylam and Novartis.

While the patients who received the lower doses (0.1, 0.3, 0.45 and 0.6 mg/kg) saw a 39%, 48% and 55% decrease in blood cholesterol, the two patients receiving 0.45 mg/kg saw LDL-C reductions of 39% and 48%, and the patient receiving 0.6 mg/kg saw a 55% decrease. These preliminary results appear to be at least as good as Praluent and inclisiran, which had previously been shown to reduce LDL-C around 48% in familial hypercholesterolemia patients.

As for side effects, in the two lower-dose cohorts there were no adverse events observed. However, in the two higher-dose cohorts, mild or moderate infusion reactions occurred transiently. Two patients experienced serious cardiovascular events, however, a relatively small change in blood cholesterol, the two treated receiving 0.45 mg/kg saw LDL-C reductions of 39% and 48%, and the patient receiving 0.6 mg/kg saw a 55% decrease. These preliminary results appear to be at least as good as Praluent and inclisiran, which had previously been shown to reduce LDL-C around 48% in familial hypercholesterolemia patients.

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Look out for psilocybin on the ballot in 2024!
The Buoyant Heart, Brattle - Jumper of Love, Strange Man - The Drake, Amherst: Comedy. $. 8 p.m. Dreiblatt.

ielle Deluty, Bella Levavi, Eric Ciezig Ziegler, Dan- schorama's Chanukah Spectac- lular feat. Giezig Zieglar, Dan-

10 Forward, Greenfield: Waves Over Heaven, Death Spiral. $. 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Mother Tongue. $. 7 p.m.

The Green Sisters. $. 7:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15

Stone Church, Brattleboro: Jeopardy, PWRUP, Slob Drop, Benet. $. 7:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18

The Drake, Amherst: Ian St. George Band. $. 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: HardCar, Ezzy P. Masmar. No cover. 9:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16

Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: MadAfter. No cover. 7 p.m.

Mt. Toby Friends Meeting-

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: Everything Must Go, Northamp-

Welcome Yule. $. 7 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Sandy Bailey, Stefan Weiner. $. 8 p.m.

No cover. 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: The Band Holiday Concert. $. 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1

Parlor Room, Northampton: Sandy Bailey, Stefan Weiner. $. 7:30 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: TapRoots, Mal Maïz. $. 8 p.m.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: Jake Blount. $. 7:30 p.m.

Everything Must Go, Northamp-

Hutghi's, Westfield: Ruby Lou. $. 8 p.m.

The Drake, Amherst: Padded Waltz, The Fawns, & JJ Slater, Mal Devisa, Philippines, T把它往包裹里装。
Traditions from page B1: The Christmas cracker provides a fun and silly way to celebrate the holiday. When you pull the cracker, a unflattering paper crown falls on your head, along with a motto that is often unkind. These crackers are a beloved English tradition, and many Americans enjoy them as well.

The first Christmas crackers were created in the 17th century by Sam Weller, a London confectioner. The original crackers were made from paper with a small trinket inside. They were given as gifts during the holiday season, and the trinkets were often small toys or other items meant to be shared among family and friends.

Over time, the crackers evolved to include more elaborate designs and messages. By the 19th century, crackers became a popular way to celebrate the New Year and other special occasions. The traditional paper crowns were replaced with more modern designs, and the crackers became a symbol of good humor and light-hearted fun.

Today, Christmas crackers are a beloved tradition in many parts of the world. They are often used as a fun and festive way to celebrate the holiday season, and they are enjoyed by people of all ages. While the specific design and messages may vary, the basic idea remains the same: to provide a moment of laughter and joy as the crackers are pulled and the hats are worn.