

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 22 – NO. 8

also serving Erving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

JANUARY 18, 2024

Montague May Join Mosquito Control District; No State Plan

By JEFF SINGLETON

The Montague board of health is considering proposing to the town selectboard that Montague join the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District (PVMCD), one of 11 regional programs that provide mosquito control services to cities and towns around the state. The Pioneer Valley district contains 23 municipalities including Gill, Erving, Greenfield, and Sunderland. Originally on the selectboard's agenda for this coming Monday, the proposal has been delayed by a week until January 29.

If the selectboard endorses becoming part of the district, it would reverse a decision made in 2021 not to join because joining would have limited the town's ability to "opt out" of a statewide program of aerial spraying of chemicals, known as larvicides and adulticides. That same spring, however, town meeting granted the selectboard the authority to join a control district under emergency conditions.

Montague successfully applied to the state to opt out of aerial spraying in 2021 and 2022, but the provisions of state mosquito control law allowing the opt-out expired at the end of the latter year and have not been renewed.

The local discussion of the virtues of aerial spraying, and whether to join with a control district, was

see **CONTROL** page A4

ERVING SELECTBOARD

Sewer Use Fees, 'Anything Goes' Seen as Possible Revenue Sources

By KEITH WATERS

The Erving selectboard held a meeting, including a joint meeting with the finance and capital planning committees, on January 11. The main topics of conversation were the upcoming special town meeting and a review of the town's FY'25 budget.

The town realized it is required by law to bring the matter of the upcoming school transportation contract to the voters, because the five-year contract exceeds the length that may be authorized without voter approval. To this end a special town meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, January 31 at 7 p.m. at the elementary school.

A number of other issues were added to the agenda to try to entice enough voters to attend to make up a quorum. One of these is a proposal for a new modular office space, essentially an office in a shipping container, for the public works department. A new office for the department has been on the agenda for a few years.

Given that the town voted late last year to not allow a Proposition 2½ override for the current fiscal year, the selectboard has gone back to ask all town departments to adjust their requested budgets for

see **ERVING** page A4

All Safe After Late-Night Fire in the Patch



JACKSON PHOTO

Fire crews from nine towns packed H Street and spent hours fighting a pernicious blaze in the house's upper levels.

By MIKE JACKSON

TURNERS FALLS – When the fourth fire siren blared past our Avenue A office Wednesday night, we paused the production of this edition and followed the flashing red and blue lights over to the Patch. There a small army of firefighters was already deep into battle with a multifamily building engulfed in flames, poking from outstretched ladders at its attic and drenching the sorry structure with water from head to toe.

The thermometer read 12 degrees F and it was not long before the entire half-block of H Street downslope was a glistening puddle. Icicles accreted on the bare tree branches above. Deeper streams found their way to 10th Street and picked up mud and gravel before curving along down Power, through a snowbank and into the old canal impoundment.

And although the towering bulbs of steam and petroleum-laced smoke flashing stroboscopically with the blinking reds and yellows of the fire equipment arrayed below were foreboding and large, very few neighbors gathered long to gawk: the bitter

see **FIRE** page A5

Heat Aid Backlogged Again This Winter

By SARAH ROBERTSON

GREENFIELD – For the second year in a row, thousands of

people in Franklin and Hampshire counties who applied for financial aid to heat their homes this winter are experiencing significant

delays in the application process. With sub-freezing temperatures in the forecast through the end of the week, over two-thirds of the applications have yet to be processed.

Community Action Pioneer Valley (CAPV) is the nonprofit tasked with processing local applications for the state- and federally-funded Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Last year staffing shortages and complications with new software used by the state to certify applications caused the months-long backlog, and similar problems persist this year, according to CAPV's new fuel assistance program manager Jo Bartley.

"This season, we started out with less staff than ideal, having lost more staff over the summer," Bartley

see **FUEL** page A6



MIKE JACKSON PHOTO

Surner Heating, which typically serves hundreds of fuel assistance customers each winter, says it has "hardly gotten any" approvals so far this year.

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Solar Hookup Issue Sends Airport Budget Into Tailspin

By JEFF SINGLETON

"The town has supported the airport begrudgingly over the years, and we saw a light with Bryan managing the airport," Montague selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz said Tuesday night. "We've got a bump in the road, [but] we can get past this bump, and get back to the airport being self-sustaining."

This week's selectboard meeting was a long one, dominated by a search for ways to close a \$162,000 deficit in the airport's current-year budget. Other topics included renovating a structure on the grounds of the former Farren Hospital for staff at the Clean Water Facility, spending nearly \$180,000 in state highway aid on road guardrails, and funding a new position at the public works department.

Airport manager Bryan Camden has become one of the Montague's recent success stories, in part by weaning the municipal airport of its annual infusion of property tax money. But that success may be now undermined by the unexpectedly high cost of connecting a proposed solar array with the region's electric grid.

Camden, accompanied by airport commission members Josh Lively and Seth Rutherford, began his presentation by estimating the funding gap in the current fiscal year. He said that the added cost of an interconnection required by the electric company Eversource – which could run into the millions of dollars over the long term – has made it impossible to finalize a planned lease agreement with a solar operator. The loss of projected revenue has created a deficit of

see **MONTAGUE** page A5

High School Sports Week: Snowed Out!

By MATT ROBINSON

TURNERS FALLS – This week, winter finally arrived. Although we weren't hit as hard as Western New York and we didn't plummet to sub-zero temperatures, like in Kansas City, Tuesday's winter storm caused postponements of several sporting events.

For Turners Falls High School basketball, the JV girls' team and both boys' teams had their games against Athol scratched. The boys' games were moved one day ahead, but the girls have to wait a week to play Athol.

The Franklin Tech boys' basketball team saw their date against Mount Greylock postponed to Wednesday, while their wrestling match against the South Hadley Tigers was shifted to Friday.

Fortunately, some of the teams played on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, giving Turners a win against Murdock and allowing the Turners and Franklin JV girls to take the court.

Girls' Basketball

FCTS 64 – Putnam 38

FCTS 35 – TFHS 22

Last Thursday, January 11, the Franklin Tech girls traveled down to Springfield and upended the Putnam Golden Beavers by 26 points. After clinging to a close lead, 14-11 after one quarter, the Eagles outscored

see **SPORTS** page A4



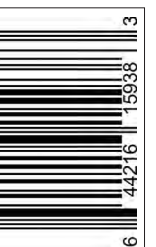
DAVID HOITT PHOTO

Turners Falls' Ivy Lopez shields the ball from Eagle defender Samantha Duncan as Franklin Tech hosts TFHS for a junior varsity match on Monday.

Local News, I.E. Mostly Not About Retaliatory Airstrikes

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The Montague Reporter

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August 2002

CLARIFICATIONS & CORRECTIONS

We chose to report the controversy to the detriment of researching the facts in a December 21 article, and Leverett reader Steve Weiss let us know he believes we have worsened public confusion on the matter of Rattlesnake Gutter Road.

He is likely right. It was all done innocently. We assigned a reporter, Sarah Robertson, to tag along on a hike up the Gutter by a mixed group – advocates of officially discontinuing the road and repairing it as a recreational trail, advocates of fixing it entirely for vehicle traffic, and an official from the state Department of Transportation who oversees aid for such projects – and submit a report later the same day. Sarah's instructions were to listen and record and explain to our readers (and to us) why some people felt there was a case for reopening, despite a prior vote by the town selectboard to petition the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) to declare the road closed.

The article, *A Contentious Hike Along a Beloved Gutter* (Page A1), was never meant to include a comprehensive background on the conflict, which has been discussed (as Weiss points out) for over a year by recreation advocates, the selectboard, and even the town's Community Preservation Commission, and covered sporadically in our selectboard coverage. It was also never meant to be long enough to appear comprehensive, or to present the reader with a balance of perspectives.

Nevertheless, as necessary background context was patched in during editorial revisions and extra quotes and photographs were thrown in to fill a yawning Page A8 space, the piece grew long enough to look like the kind of article in which speakers' assertions would be fact-checked...

And a few were not that it turns out should have been.

Perhaps most importantly, we wrote that Christopher Bouchard, the MassDOT administrator, "said he doubted whether FRCOG's participation was needed to approve the discontinuation." This sounded plausible – other procedural aporia have been opened up by the dissolution of Massachusetts county governments – and in our quick research we only found laws on road closures (MGL Ch. 82) that referred to "county commissioners."

But, as Weiss helpfully points out, if we had read back to Sec-

tion 1 we would have learned that by definition councils of governments are "in this chapter called county commissioners." Yikes! "Bouchard was wrong and now the readers of the Reporter are misinformed," writes Weiss.

Fair enough. We've also heard FRCOG has scheduled a date to hold a hearing on the topic, though it is not yet on the town calendar. We promise to round out our coverage in the coming weeks.

Two simpler errors made along the way also deserve correction:

1. We wrote that "[t]he road runs through the town-owned Rattlesnake Gutter Conservation Area; adjacent conserved parcels are owned by the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust (RGT) and W.D. Cows."

This is incorrect – RGT holds conservation restrictions on a number of adjacent parcels, but does not own any of the land in question. (This particular error was caused by misreading the "Rattlesnake Gutter Area Trails" map on the town website, and we do believe others might read that map and make the same error.)

2. We wrote that "[t]he summer [2023] flooding prompted discussions at town hall about the road's future." While technically true – this sequence is indicated in our own selectboard coverage after the major rain events – it has the effect of an error by omission; as Weiss points out, advocates had been marching the proposal to discontinue the Gutter through Leverett's institutions since at least the previous fall, and it was not a new idea last summer.

From there, the rest is a contention of assertions we quoted or cited. Weiss disputes Isaiah Robison's assertion that "he felt the selectboard made its decision without adequate public input" (our paraphrase), and condemns Bouchard's assertion that "[a]n engineering study to assess the washouts would cost around \$5,000" (again our paraphrase).

An engineer from Tighe & Bond, he writes, estimated \$300,000 for "simply doing the design work and permitting necessary to get a road reopening project ready to begin construction."

Mea culpa! And what a perfect storm. Our community newspaper is not an omniscient detective; it is an open forum for communication and clarification. Thanks to Mr. Weiss for the helpful pushback!



Sharon Loehr-Lapan was working behind the counter last Saturday at the Sawmill River Arts Collective in Montague Center. She has been a part of the cooperatively run gallery for 11 years, one of 15 member artists and 18 guest artists whose fine art and craft is on display. Loehr-Lapan paints with oils, acrylics, and watercolors and says she enjoys the cross-pollination of ideas that happens within the collective.

Letters to the Editors

Greenleaf: Town Should Preserve Rattlesnake Gutter Road

I believe that some people do not realize that the proposed opening of Rattlesnake Gutter to vehicle traffic, in order to provide a shorter route for emergency vehicles to North Leverett and Wendell, would actually create hazardous conditions that could likely result in more emergency situations than are assisted by this "good intention," which is not well thought out.

The idea of emergency vehicles, such as police or fire engines, speeding across the steep and narrow passages of the road, with its frequent blind spots, is alarming to say the least. And large heavy fire trucks tearing up the road (literally), in great haste, if the road were to open to public vehicle traffic, going both directions, is a sure recipe for dangerous situations.

When "the Gutter" was open around 20 years ago, I remember how hairy it was when another vehicle came from the opposite direction, usually necessitating backing up a long distance to a cramped pull-off area. Because traffic has only increased over years, I can only imagine what it would be like now to come upon an emergency vehicle speeding over this winding road.

In light of the fact that this road passes through a unique and vulnerable (yet so far preserved) natural environment, habitat of rare plant species, ancient trees, and multitudes of wildlife, some of them possibly endangered, and that any

construction or widening this road would drastically alter and destroy its pristine ecosystems, this should be avoided at all costs.

This precious area should in every way be considered a town treasure, to be rightfully protected from public vehicle traffic, and from construction and destruction. The DPW inspector was no ecologist and so could not properly assess the environmental impacts that proposed road work would have on the fragile ecosystems that have flourished here. The town should waste no time in discontinuing the road for public vehicle use and filing for conservation status. Then the land would be eligible for grants for upkeep and maintenance of the existing road to be kept as an access road for emergency vehicle use only, if needed by the police or fire departments, but not by public vehicles.

Towns like Leverett need to act now and properly value and protect their unspoiled natural places before they all disappear. It's time that Rattlesnake Gutter received the funding of a protected and preserved conservation area and given the appreciation that its unique and pristine natural beauty deserves.

We should also consider the rights of all the wildlife as well: are they to be "driven" out, displaced, or meet untimely death under wheels? Who will speak for those who cannot speak with spoken tongue? We should look to the

Seventh Generation, and wisely seek to protect and preserve these remaining places of natural beauty on Mother Earth, or this will become another case of "They Paved Paradise." We can't let that happen to this special place, and should exercise good stewardship to preserve Rattlesnake Gutter for All...

With Green Vision,

Sarah Greenleaf
Wendell/ Leverett

Naughton: Red Flags On The Field

I was pleased to read that somebody at Montague Town Hall woke up and realized that the Selectboard can't just change Article 6 Schedule II pay schedules without Town Meeting approval.

It does make me wonder, though. That seems like a rookie mistake, and there are plenty of people down there who aren't rookies, including the Selectboard. Maybe it's just one of those things, but coming after the Turnpike Road lot rezoning fiasco, it's a little worrisome.

Mike Naughton
Millers Falls

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also bring catalogs, magazines that have images or phrases that support their goals. Secure a ticket at tinyurl.com/TNSA-visions.

The **Roast Pork Supper** at the Montague Congregational Church this Saturday, January 20 has been canceled!

This Saturday, January 20, is the start of this year's **Foyeur Enjoyment concert series** in the Shea Theater lobby in Turners Falls. The show begins at 8 p.m. and features Opel and Reverend Dan and The Dirty Catechism. This is a pay-what-you-can event. Doors open at 7 p.m.

Oops! There was a glitch in the 60% water machine compiling Briefs last week, and the wrong date was printed for the **heat pump information session**.

Here is the correct notice: Heat pumps, also known as mini-splits, are a wonderful alternative to oil or gas heating and they provide air conditioning. Come to get the latest information about them from Bart Bales at 12 p.m. this **Sunday, January 21** at the Episcopal Church of Saints James and Andrew, 8 Church Street in Greenfield, as part of the church's Environmental Sunday series.

Bales is an engineer who specializes in green heating and cooling systems. Massachusetts offers generous support for installing them in addition to federal tax credits. Attendees should enter through the front doors on Federal Street and bring a bag lunch. Contact ejmail27@gmail.com for more information.

Lis McLoughlin has organized an **online poetry reading** this Sunday, January 21 at 1:30 p.m. as a fundraiser for our Poetry Page! The reading follows a launch event for a new anthology of works about nature. Sign up for a link at www.nature-culture.net/local-poetry-paper-place.

On Monday, January 22 at 4 p.m., **Bruce Watson** will read from his book *Light: A Radiant History from Creation to the Quantum Age* at the Montague Center Library. Light refreshments will be served.

MASS MoCA offers free admission on Saturday, January 27, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Find out what's in the North Adams contemporary art museum's galleries at massmoca.org.

Would you like to learn about different types of cooking oils, and how to choose oils for food preparation? LifePath's Healthy Living program, "Wellness Unplugged," is hosting a workshop on **"Understanding Oils and Fats for Nutrition and Health"** from 10 to 11:30 a.m. on Monday, January 29.

The talk, presented by LifePath nutritionist Bi-sek Hsiao, will de-

fine the role and importance of dietary fat in supporting optimum health. Hsiao designs monthly menus for the agency's home-delivered meal program, monitors food safety practices, provides nutrition consultation to individuals, and delivers education to the community. Register at tinyurl.com/fats-talk.

The **Artspace Market**, held each spring for 45 years, features work from local artists and craftspeople, and is the largest annual fundraising event for the Artspace Community Arts Center in Greenfield.

The organization is taking applications for vendors at its April 6 market, held at the Greenfield High School, from now until Tuesday, January 30 on a first-come, first-served basis. Apply online at tinyurl.com/artspace-app.

Attention **Western Massachusetts farmers**: The Harold Grinspoon Foundation has a \$2,500 award available for infrastructure projects or equipment needs that will help you compete in the marketplace. Basic eligibility includes having annual gross sales of at least \$10,000 from agricultural products, comprising more than 50% of your economic activity.

Learn about eligibility requirements and apply for the 2024 Local Farmer Award at farmerawards.org by Wednesday, January 31.

Jan Maher and the LAVA Center in Greenfield are offering a four-week **workshop for writers, actors, and directors** in February that will explore theater artistry and offer attendees experience in multiple theater roles.

Registration and commitment to full participation in all four workshops, held each Wednesday in February from 4 to 6 p.m., is required. The workshops are free to playwrights who have participated in LAVA's programming, and \$25 for others. Find out more at thelavacenter.org.

The Turners Falls fire department posted on its Facebook page about Massachusetts's **open burning season**, which began January 15 and goes through to May 1. This year, residents of the fire district wishing to burn must obtain an open burning permit from the department at 180 Turnpike Road, Turners Falls.

The permit fee is \$10 – cash, or a check made out to "Turners Falls Fire Department" – and is good for the entirety of the 2024 burning season.

View the stipulations for burning on your property at mass.gov/info-details/open-burning-safety and contact TFFD at (413) 863-9023 or your own local fire department with any questions or concerns.

Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

RECYCLE
BOTTLES & CANS
 Week of January 22 in Montague

 more info? call: 863-2054

Compiled by NINA ROSSI

There's a limited amount of **wood still available for Montague residents** at the Montague wood bank. Call the Gill-Montague senior center to find out how to qualify at (413) 863-9357.

Sand for Seniors is available again: the Montague public works department and Greenfield Savings Bank have joined together for the third year to deliver sand to home-bound seniors who might need it for icy steps and sidewalks.

To arrange delivery, contact Brandy Patch at the DPW, (413) 863-2054 x. 321, or Linda Ackerman at GSB, (413) 775-8261.

The offer does not include spreading the sand on your property, and your name and address verification will be documented in program records, according to the notice we received.

The next **Cinmastorm movie double feature** at the Shea Theater is tomorrow, Friday, January 19, from 7:30 until 11 p.m. The theme is "How the West was Won," and the two movies are *The Quick and the Dead* (1995) and *Tombstone* (1993). There'll be a trivia quiz before the show, and refreshments for sale at the bar.

The next **Greenfield Winter Farmers Market** is this Saturday, January 20, at the Greenfield Library from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. In addition to local food stuffs and crafts, the hosts of the Tumble Science podcast for kids will be there taking science questions from

youngsters 12 years and younger which may be used on the podcast.

Additional dates for the market are February 17 and March 16.

Want to clean out your closet? There's a **clothing swap** this Saturday afternoon, 1 to 3 p.m. at Looky Here on Chapman Street in Greenfield. Bring your clean, unwanted clothing and pick up new-to-you used items in return. Leftover clothes will be donated or upcycled, and participants asked to make a small donation to the community arts space.

Join the Montague Public Libraries for a **Winter Ecology Walk** this Saturday, January 20, from 1 to 2 p.m. Meet outside the Montague Center branch and take a hike in the woods with local ecology guide William Randolph from Adventure East. Before the trek he'll offer an overview of the human history of the Sawmill River, and participants will learn about winter tracks and sign, plant and animal life, and winter birds.

The walk is for all ages, skills, and fitness levels. Snowshoes or shoe spikes and poles will be provided. Children under 16 must be accompanied by a guardian. Register at tinyurl.com/MPL-winterhike.

A workshop at the National Spiritual Alliance in Lake Pleasant at 2 p.m. this Saturday, January 20 promises to help you "turn your dreams into reality" by making vision boards to define and illustrate your goals and aspirations with the guidance of expert facilitators.

All materials will be provided and participants are welcome to

for supporting the Science Page, as our current writers have never sought payment.

However, I must defend its inclusion as a valuable tool in the kit of modern investigators. LLMs enable users to access the collective information, ideas, and bias of a selection of human data. This is sometimes helpful in stimulating and informing analytical processes, such as writing an article; however fact checking is absolutely necessary. I am hopeful that "AI" in the form of LLMs will be a force helping people access information and ideas, though the problems of bias and inaccuracy need to be minded just as with any other source.

Spencer Shorkey
 Millers Falls

Another Letter to the Editors

AI: Science Page Editor Replies...

In response to Marny Ashburne's January 11 letter ("A Human's Trepidation"):

I have indeed been experimenting with using the ChatGPT large language models (LLMs) to generate content. I am glad you appreciated the irony of its use in an article critiquing the court case involving OpenAI, and I will continue to acknowledge uses of LLM tools to produce articles in this manner.

The trepidation is well founded, since there are plenty of unacknowledged LLM generated articles online already, even being circulated by fake authors. Googling "Sports Illustrated AI writers" will inform you on how these types of scandals might play out.

And rest assured, the newspaper's Writers' Fund is unnecessary


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DAVID HOLTT PHOTO

Franklin Tech's Layla Hammond drives the ball during Monday's cross-town JV matchup as Turners Falls' Marilyn Abarua rushes in to defend.

SPORTS from page A1

Putnam by 10 points in the second to increase the margin to 33-20 at the half.

It was the third quarter that put the stamp on the victory. Franklin outscored Gold 22-3 in the third, and coasted to a 64-38 win.

After the game I asked coach Joe Gamache about that dominant third quarter. "It wasn't even the starters," Gamache explained. "After three minutes, I rested them."

Lea Chapman led the scoring parade with 24 points, followed by Kyra Goodell (12) and Hannah Gilbert (11), who also led the team in steals and blocks. Cordelia Guerin and Haleigh Benoit each scored seven points – with Benoit pulling down nine rebounds – while Brayleigh Burgh contributed three points.

The varsity girls got a week's rest before they host Mohawk this Thursday.

On Monday, the holiday, the Franklin Tech junior varsity girls' team hosted the Turners JV. While it was only the third game this season for the Turners girls, the Tech JVs came into it fresh off a 37-18 victory over Putnam, and improved their record to 9 – 1.

It was a fun, high-impact game. In the first quarter the refs didn't call any jumps, though both teams grappled for the ball aggressively, going after every ball carrier and every potential receiver. At times, it was like watching a ping-pong match. Neither team was afraid to shoot, and missed shots led to multiple scrambles.

In the second quarter, the officials began to call jump balls as well as fouls. In the stands, it was lighthearted and exciting, and more

than one cluster of fans were cheering for both teams.

The game remained close until the third quarter, when Tech jumped out from a close 12-10 to a 35-22 rout. Towards the end, folks were just hoping that baskets were being sunk.

Brayleigh Burgh (11), Ariel Peters (10), Cayleigh Aldrich (5), Jenna Petrowicz (4), Madyson Lynde (3), and Emma Little (2) all scored points for Tech, while Dulce Berduo Galvez (8), Cadance Fisher and Brianna Preston (4 each), and Marilyn Abarua, Madison Haight, and Ivy Lopez (2 each) put up points for the Thunder.

The Thunder Ladies missed the opportunity to play back-to-back games as the storm postponed their date with the Athol Red Bears to next Tuesday, January 23, Tech's JV squad plays this Thursday against the Mohawk Trail Warriors along with the Tech varsity.

Boys' Basketball

TFHS 49 – Murdock 22

On Monday the Turners boys traveled to Winchendon, where they defeated the Murdock Blue Devils 49-22.

Granted, Murdock is having a rough year, but the Boys in Blue consistently put up points while holding the Devils to single digits in all four quarters. Brandon Truesdell, who hit two 3-pointers, led Turners with 16 points, followed by Alex Quezada (8), Caden Williams Senethavisouk (7), Jackson Cogswell and Dylon Richardson (5 each), Cameron Burnett (4), Kessick Beck (3), and Deven Sloan (1).

Williams Senethavisouk led the team in rebounds with seven.



CONTROL from page A1

part of a broader statewide debate over mosquito control in response to an outbreak of Eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) in 2019.

According to an EEE fact sheet on the Massachusetts governor's website, the viral disease, first discovered in 1938 and contracted from mosquito bites, is extremely rare – but also extremely deadly to the relatively few people who become infected. Outbreaks in 2019, with 12 cases and six fatalities, and 2020, with five cases and one fatality, prompted the state to declare an emergency and to conduct aerial insecticide spraying, primarily in its southeastern counties.

This spraying generated a good deal of opposition. Critics argued that the chemicals sprayed from aircraft were ineffective and created risk for humans and pollinators, particularly bees. They also suggested that the state's policy on mosquito control was outdated, reflecting legislation passed in 1918.

Then, in September 2020, potentially toxic PFAS chemicals were detected in samples of Anvil 10+10, a product used in the spraying program. Although it was later determined that the PFAS chemicals most likely came from plastic containers used in the insecticide's transport and storage, which were subsequently prohibited by state and federal health officials, this development encouraged the movement to ban or reduce aerial spraying.

The state responded by creating a "Mosquito Control for the Twenty-First Century Task Force," which issued its final report at the end of March 2022. The task force recommended that Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 252 be either significantly amended or repealed, and that the State Reclamation and Mosquito Control Board, the agency responsible for mosquito policy, "be renamed and restructured to reflect the present-day goals and needs for mosquito management."

A proposal to ban aerial spraying was not supported by the majority of the task force, however, and its recommendations did not include any

reference to the municipal opt-out provisions then established by the 2020 law, which expired at the end of 2022. None of the task force's very detailed legislative and administrative recommendations appear to have been implemented by the legislature in the last year and a half.

Perhaps in response to this policy vacuum, last February Montague's state senator Jo Comerford introduced Bill S.445, which proposes to adopt "Ecologically-Based Mosquito Management" as state policy. The legislation emphasizes elimination of breeding habitats, personal protection, "naturally occurring mosquito controls," and public education. It would ban the aerial spraying of chemicals to eliminate larvae and adult mosquitos. Spraying by vehicles or individuals with backpack technology would be allowed under limited emergency conditions, and a streamlined process would be made available for communities to opt out of any such spraying.

None of the task force's very detailed legislative and administrative recommendations appear to have been implemented by the legislature in the last year and a half.

More details about the bill, which would repeal and replace current mosquito control legislation and create a new mosquito control agency within the state Department of Environment Protection, can be found on the website of the MASSQuito Coalition, an anti-spraying advocacy group. The current status of the bill is unclear, and the Coalition's website notes that the ban on aerial spraying was a minority recommendation of the state taskforce.

As of this week, Montague health director Ryan Paxton said he still plans to go before the selectboard to request that it endorse

joining the PVMCD. The board of health, which opposed aerial spraying two years ago, appears to have had a change of heart. According to the minutes of its July 26, 2023 meeting, under "topics not anticipated," which refers to items not on the posted agenda, the board records the following:

"Ryan [Paxton] will be doing some more research and attending meetings regarding spraying for mosquitoes and the Pioneer Valley Mosquito meeting. The BOH members are not against spraying and given especially this year spraying is at the discretion of the state and the public safety and welfare of the citizens supersedes all else."

Town meeting member Ariel Elan, a vocal opponent of aerial spraying who has also opposed Montague joining the regional district, argued this week that the 2021 annual town meeting vote giving the selectboard the unilateral ability to join the PVMCD was premised on a commitment that it would only take this course during a statewide EEE emergency, which is not currently underway.

This newspaper reported that at an "information session" held prior to that meeting, "there was a great deal of uncertainty about Montague's recent application to 'opt out' of statewide spraying, what level of mosquito control services it needs to provide instead, and what the policy of the regional district would be," and that town administrator Steve Ellis "went on to say the town was 'hedging its bets' by allowing the selectboard, which has voted to opt out of aerial spraying, to make the decision in an emergency."

Paxton, on the other hand, stressed this week that the town no longer has the ability to opt out of aerial spraying, and that the control district offers a variety of mosquito control services that the town department cannot realistically implement by itself. "The Pioneer Valley Control District does not own any planes," he told the Reporter, "so they are not going to be doing any spraying."



ERVING from page A1

next year downward. This seems to have been successful.

Some increases should be expected, however, as costs are going up all around.

One possible place to raise some extra revenue is in the town's town sewer service. During the joint meeting, the three boards discussed raising the sewer rates and holding the proceeds in an "enterprise fund."

"I know this will be unpopular among the constituents," said selectboard member Jim Loynd, "but I would say we need an enterprise fund, because these systems will require upgrades and repairs and we better be in a position to pay for them."

"You mean like budgeting to put more back into it than just what it costs to operate?" asked selectboard chair Jacob Smith.

Loynd replied, "Yes."

Debra Smith, of the fin com and capital planning committees, said she agreed. She also suggested

charging residents for a service the town has been providing for free for some years: the annual "Almost Anything Goes" curbside trash pickup day.

"[Almost] Anything Goes is not something we are required to provide our residents," she explained. "I would like to see a proposal of how that becomes a pay program."

No votes were taken on these proposals, or on the department budget reviews. Most of this year's capital requests are for vehicles: \$84,615 for a new animal control van; \$100,000 for a plow truck; \$125,000 for a dump truck, and \$71,894.40 for a police interceptor. The fire department and selectboard agreed that a new fire truck will be needed soon, at a cost of between \$1 million and \$2 million, but this was kicked down the road to a future year.

The selectboard will have another joint meeting with the fin com and capital planning committee on Monday, January 29, in advance of the special town meeting that week.



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FIRE from page A1

cold kept this a strictly-business fire scene.

“All the occupants got out,” Turners Falls fire chief Todd Brunelle told the *Reporter*. “There were no reported injuries.”

The first alarm sounded at 10:28 p.m., and a second soon after. According to Brunelle, this meant 11 departments from area towns sent mutual aid, including Brattleboro and Gill, which provided an engine and crew to cover the host station up on the Hill.

Terri Wells, a first-floor tenant, said it all happened fast – she saw an “orange glow” coming from the apartment’s back room, and shook her sleeping boyfriend awake. “Our roommate was in the kitchen, making a Fluffernutter sandwich,” Wells said. “We don’t know at this point how it even started back there.”

The boyfriend, John, said he woke from a “dead sleep” and couldn’t see anything but smoke.

“Your lungs filled with smoke,” Wells told him.

John clutched a small-sized dog and shivered on the sidewalk. The dog was named Stormy, and he said a second dog had disappeared amid the chaos.

“My other one took off when we came out here,” John said. “If you see a little black dog running around...” He trailed off, and talk turned to the Red Cross, who are expected to swoop in and help save feet like John’s and Terri’s from imminent frostbite in such exact situations as this but whom no one on the ground had apparently contacted until roughly 12:15 a.m.

Neighbors offered temporary shelter, and a Turners Falls police officer solved the problem by offering the displaced trio and Stormy a ride to the public safety complex to await the Red Cross’s arrival indoors.

A man standing by himself on the sidewalk, holding a zipped-up Trapper Keeper and solemnly watching the battle against the top-floor flames drag on, said he was with a Greenfield company that “boards up the houses after most of these fires.”

“For a lot of these,” he said, tilting his head with the conspiratorial air of someone who solemnly watches three or four homes burn like this every week, “we have no competition.” He said the building was built long ago and well and could likely still be rehabbed, despite

all the fire and water and soot, and contrary to guesses offered by several other less-expert onlookers.

The building’s owner, Gary Smith, said he had been at work in Wilbraham when he heard the news. “I drive a semi truck, so I went back, dropped my truck off, and ran right home,” Smith said. “I got the call at 10:52.”

Smith held a dog on a leash, and said that he and his wife would likely spend the night with his inlaws.

“My 16-year-old, he’s pretty smart – he was the one that got everybody out,” he said. “He said that when he opened up the door, the room was already fully involved.”

Smith, who bought the building in 2009, said he did not know the cause of the fire, and did not feel the need to speculate. “At this point, we’ll see what our insurance does,” he said. “I’m pretty sure everything we own is pretty much ruined... We got our dog. I don’t know about our cat – my son said the door was open. I would think he would run out, but, yeah.”

He returned to the newspaper office.

“The bulk of the fire was knocked down fairly quickly, but the hidden fire under the roof and in the attic space was difficult to access, and that took some time,” Chief Brunelle, already back at the station for the day’s duty by 6 a.m., told the *Reporter* as these pages were readied for press. “It took probably close to three hours until I felt comfortable with saying that it was under control.”

Captain Luke Hartnett confirmed that the Red Cross had indeed arrived and offered its services to the first-floor tenants, and added that an incident support unit from the state Department of Fire Services had been among the masses of first responders on H Street.

“With it being so cold,” Hartnett said, the unit’s focus was on “rotating crews through, getting them warmed up, getting them fed – hot coffee is always a commodity.”

Brunelle said that the fire’s cause was still officially under investigation by his department and the state police fire marshal’s office, but that so far, “it does not appear to be of a suspicious nature.”

“Always, at any time, ensure that you have properly functioning smoke and CO₂ detectors in your home,” Brunelle added, as a wise word of advice to our readers.



MONTAGUE from page A1

over \$152,000 in the current fiscal year, he said, and the total shortfall is actually \$162,000 due to “unexpected repair and maintenance costs.”

A similar deficit is projected for the coming year, and as the FY’25 budget is currently being drafted, this will need to be addressed in the coming weeks so that the department budget can be sent to the annual town meeting in May. Camden told the *Reporter* he is hoping for some “breathing room” – either to take advantage of state legislation to mitigate interconnection costs, or to balance the airport budget without the solar revenue.

At Tuesday’s meeting, Camden said there was not a lot of “wiggle room” in his department, with its small staff and high fixed costs. “A reduction will bring us back to what the facility was five or six years ago,” he warned. “where it was not adequately funded to allow the facility to grow.”

Discussion turned to sources for bridging the gap in the current year, which could require action at the special town meeting on March 14. Ideas included pandemic aid from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) earmarked for “contingencies,” which would not require a town meeting vote; several well-endowed stabilization funds, which would; and various more modest sources with limited permitted uses, such as receipts from the sale of town-owned property.

Town administrator Steve Ellis reminded the selectboard that the ARPA contingency fund had partly been set aside in case of a building collapse at the Strathmore mill complex.

The board voted to add an article to the March warrant to cover just over \$24,000 in debt service in the airport budget using the town’s

sale-of-real-estate account. Kuklewicz then proposed adding about \$30,000 from stabilization funds, which would also need to be voted on by town meeting.

“I think that town meeting needs to understand the challenges here,” he explained, “rather than us just saying, ‘Let’s just fund it all from ARPA.’”

The board informally agreed with Kuklewicz that the shortfall should be addressed by transfers from “other town funds, whatever they are,” and to request that Ellis and town accountant Carolyn Olsen develop proposals by early February to go on the special town meeting warrant.

Without taking a vote, the board also asked Camden to come up with a plan in the coming weeks to address the plan for FY’25, which will be placed on the May annual town meeting warrant.

Wastewater Extravaganza

Clean Water Facility (CWF) superintendent Chelsey Little came to discuss a range of topics, including her monthly summary of required testing of the treatment plant’s discharge into the Connecticut River. Measures which met the criteria set by state and federal environmental agencies were marked in green. “There were no issues,” she said. “It’s all in the green.”

Kuklewicz suggested adding data on combined sewer overflows into the river to future reports.

Ellis said he believed that the number of these overflows had been reduced despite heavy rains in the previous months. “The measures we’ve been asked to implement with greater fidelity are making a difference,” he said.

The board approved hiring the environmental engineering firm-Wright-Pierce to conduct a local limits study, which judges the

plant’s capacity to process waste. Funding for this study, which does not require a formal bidding process according to Little, had previously been appropriated by town meeting.

The board also voted to spend \$9,664 in ARPA funds on an analysis of the town’s sewer rates, to be discussed at a sewer “retreat” in March.

Little announced that new heating technology has been developed for processing biosolids, and said the town should include this in its consideration of a local or regional sludge-composting facility. “It’s energy-efficient and captures heat during the process, so we’re definitely interested,” she said.

The selectboard was skeptical of a proposal to use a garage on the former Farren hospital grounds to house CWF employees currently working on projects in the waste plant’s operations building, which has been deemed a risky environment for extended use. The Farren property has largely been cleared and will soon be gifted to the town. Little proposed sending a capital request to town meeting for windows, lighting, insulation, and a mini-split on the garage.

Kuklewicz noted that the structure may need an electrical upgrade, as well as restrooms. “We need to get people out of that headworks building,” he said, but added that he was concerned that the “temporary fix” might last for years.

Selectboard member Matt Lord agreed, saying he felt the proposal represented “a bit of a curveball” given ambitious proposals to redevelop the Farren lot.

The board agreed to consider the idea after more “study and investigation,” in Kuklewicz’s words.

The board was also less than enthusiastic about a proposal from Little to apply for a Congressional earmark of “up to \$3 million” for major upgrades at the CWF. Lord

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TOWN OF MONTAGUE

FY24 Community Development Block Grant Request for Proposals for Social Service Programs

The Town of Montague requests proposals for public social service programs that will meet the needs of Montague residents for possible inclusion in its FY2024 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application. All proposed programs must address needs identified by the MA Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities and the Town’s 2018-2023 Community Development Strategy prepared by the Montague Planning and Conservation Department.

The Town will accept and open all proposals received at the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority, 241 Millers Falls Road, Turners Falls, MA, on Thursday, February 8, 2024, at 3:00 p.m. Postmarks will not be considered. Proposals submitted by fax or email will not be considered. An electronic copy of the proposal is required from each agency and should be submitted through the Neighborly software portal.

For a copy of the RFP, please access the online Neighborly software portal: <https://portal.neighborlysoftware.com/fcrhra> or contact Sharon Pleasant, Community Development Program Manager at (413) 223-5215 or spleasant@fcrhra.org.

Town of Montague Selectboard

said the town was actively seeking federal funds to help demolish the Strathmore complex, and should not “diminish the credibility of that message by saying ‘Oh yes, we also want money for this other thing...’”

Mystery Sewage

Public works superintendent Tom Bergeron joined Little to discuss the issue of water “infiltration and inflow” (I&I) into the Millers Falls sewer, which sends waste to be processed in Erving. Little said that in 2023 Montague sent “about five and a half million gallons” over the contractual limit of 33 million gallons of sewage to Erving, which led to an “overage fee” of over \$94,000. The line item for the expense in the CWF’s budget is capped at \$55,000.

Little discussed various options for closing the gap, which would affect the next fiscal year’s budget, and recommended a special article at the May town meeting to draw on stabilization funds.

Bergeron discussed the partially successful efforts of Kyle Bessette, his department’s new lead collection system operator, to identify the sources of the inflow. Bessette used cameras that showed several “laterals” pipes pouring fresh water into the system, but more sophisticated cameras would be needed to enter these smaller “laterals” and pinpoint the sources.

Bergeron said he was also considering lining leaky manholes in the village.

Ellis discussed developing a new agreement with Erving for processing the sewage. The towns’ current agreement expires in October, and town meeting would need to approve a new contract as it would potentially last for ten years. Ellis asked that he, Little, Kuklewicz, and assistant town

administrator Walter Ramsey be authorized to discuss a new agreement with Erving officials, and the board approved this without a formal vote.

Other Business

At Bergeron’s request, the board approved using \$178,682 in state Chapter 90 highway funds to replace guardrails, and \$52,795 from the same source to purchase a small blacktop roller capable of paving alleys.

Bergeron said some of this money would come from the town’s “millionaires’ tax” allocation.

The board discussed at length whether to hire an assistant for Bessette, and whether the newest position should be financed by the public works department, sewer fees, or a combination of the two. They decided not to approve the new position yet, but to fund Bessette through the regular public works budget next year, and encourage the department to staff itself fully under its current structure.

After the second discussion in as many weeks about the large gap between the revenue Montague earns at its electric vehicle (EV) charging stations and what it pays Ever-source for the electricity, the board voted to increase rates to users from 20 to 75 cents per kilowatt-hour as of February 1.

At Olsen’s request, the board approved an 8.4% increase for FY’25 in the town’s “shared services” budget, primarily due to a big jump in the cost of its annual audit.

After reviewing the upcoming schedule of meetings and deadlines to develop the FY’25 town budget, the board adjourned the two-hour and 44-minute-long session. Its next meeting will be Monday, January 22.



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FUEL from page A1

told the *Reporter*. “We have since hired and trained several new staff, leaving us better than where we were last year [at this time].”

Fourteen people currently work in CAPV’s fuel assistance office, she said, and the organization is in the process of hiring two more.

So far this season, CAPV reports that it has received nearly 7,600 fuel assistance applications, processed over 2,200, and found about 1,700 eligible for financial aid. The “vast majority” of the applications approved so far this year were expedited under emergency circumstances, according to Bartley, meaning that the applicants were nearly or completely out of heating fuel, or facing a utility shutoff.

“This season, we are seeing the unfortunate fruits of last season’s late payments,” Bartley said of the high number of emergency applications.

CAPV has received over 1,300 emergency applications so far this year. “This is a remarkable number considering last season, we had a total of over 1,000 for the entire season – which was remarkable in itself at that point,” Bartley said. “The increase in emergency applications means that more of our certifiers are reviewing emergencies rather than regular applications. This is a challenge, as the longer a regular application waits, the higher a chance it could turn into an emergency itself.”

Non-emergency applications are certified in the order they are received. The process typically takes about six weeks, Bartley said, but when an application is incomplete her staff must spend more time following up with the applicant and finding the necessary paperwork.

Applications were also received by CAPV later than it anticipated, Bartley said, again because of the state’s software system. “Application processing started out slow, but has since picked up,” she said.

Last January 26, a *Montague Reporter* investigation found that CAPV had processed fewer than half of the nearly 7,500 applications it had received, with roughly one-third expedited as emergencies. By the time the final applications for the season were received in April, over 9,900 people had applied for the aid through CAPV.

The organization continued certifying the applications into the summer.

Stuck in the Middle

Several oil and gas delivery companies the *Montague Reporter* spoke with this week said that LIHEAP approvals have been especially slow to arrive this season, and that customers have been calling them about the problem. Companies need these approvals to guarantee they will be reimbursed for the fuel by CAPV, which is in turn reimbursed by the state, which receives partial funding for the program from the federal government.

“The approvals have been dribbling in very slowly,” said Kieras Oil president Robert Kieras. “Last year we said it was the slowest the approvals have ever come in, but this year it’s worse.”

Kieras Oil delivers heating oil and diesel to about 4,000 customers in Hampshire and Franklin counties, and of those between 200 and 300 receive LIHEAP each year. CAPV typically sends the Amherst-based company a list of about 100 approved applicants in early November, Kieras said, but this year he started the season with just 10.

“A lot more communication would help, both for customers and for vendors... We have bills too, you know.”

Richard Strycharz, Walter’s Propane

“A lot of people count on fuel assistance, so this has made it very hard for them,” Kieras said. “We’ve been trying to work with people where we can, and we have some people who still have a balance left from last year.”

For small delivery businesses, keeping track of customers’ LIHEAP payment credits adds to their workload.

“I should not be the bank holding the money for these people, but they are all good people and I trust them, and they trust me,” said Richard Strycharz, owner of Walter’s Propane of Sunderland. “That’s the state of Massachusetts screwing that up.”

Walter’s Propane delivers gas to about 70 fuel-assistance households in the region, only 12 of which have been approved so far this season. Strycharz said he sometimes visits CAPV’s office in Greenfield himself to check on customers’ applica-

tions, and those visits have become more frequent in the last two years.

“I’m delivering to people right now that I know will get approved, but I don’t want any money from them because it will screw up the paperwork,” he said. “I can’t do that for everybody, because I don’t know if everyone has fuel assistance.”

Other fuel companies are also delivering oil to people they know need it on the assumption they will be reimbursed when the applications are approved.

“As a fuel dealership, we have to buy the oil up front,” said Sumner Heating owner Susan Sumner. “I can’t front everybody, because I don’t know if they’re going to be approved or not – and for how much – so it’s tricky for both of us.”

With locations in Amherst and Greenfield, Sumner delivers heating oil and propane to over 7,000 households in the region, hundreds of which receive fuel assistance.

“We have a lot of people who have not received approval yet, and we’re in the middle of the cold season,” Sumner said. “It’s been a real hardship for people.”

Sumner said her company has “hardly gotten any” LIHEAP approvals yet this season.

“We’re advocating nonstop for our fuel assistance customers, but we’re not getting anywhere, so it’s super frustrating,” she said. “I think [CAPV is] working their fingers to the bone.... We’re so grateful they have a program like this to help people, but I don’t really understand what the problem is.”

“I’m sure they’re trying their best with limited staff, but a lot more communication would help, both for customers and for vendors,” said Strycharz. “We all have bills too, you know.”

To fix the problem in the future, Bartley said, CAPV hopes to work with state legislators and other agencies to find ways to streamline the application process and communicate with applicants.

“We are building and furthering our relationships with various social service agencies and Councils on Aging, and working alongside the offices of several representatives and senators to respond quickly to constituents,” Bartley told the *Reporter*.

“[W]ith adequate staffing, we’re able to review applications at a much higher rate.... We are ahead of where we were this time last season, but still not where we need to be.”

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Montague Community Television News

Winter's Slow Spot

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

TURNERS FALLS – After all of last week’s excitement, this week we have just two new videos up. They are the Montague finance committee meeting and the GMRSD school committee meeting.

Remember, residents and readers, all community members are welcome and encouraged to submit their videos to be aired on Channel 9 and featured on the MCTV Vimeo page. If you have any ideas for films, MCTV is always available to assist in local video production as

well. Cameras, tripods, and lighting equipment are available for check-out, and filming and editing assistance can be provided.

And if you’re looking for more ways to get involved, consider joining the MCTV Board. If you would like to stop in for a meeting, even just to check the vibe, email infomontaguetv@gmail.com for a link to the Zoom.

Contact us at (413) 863-9200 or infomontaguetv@gmail.com, follow us on Facebook, or find us on Instagram [@montaguecommunitytv](https://www.instagram.com/montaguecommunitytv). Find videos and more on our website, montaguetv.org.

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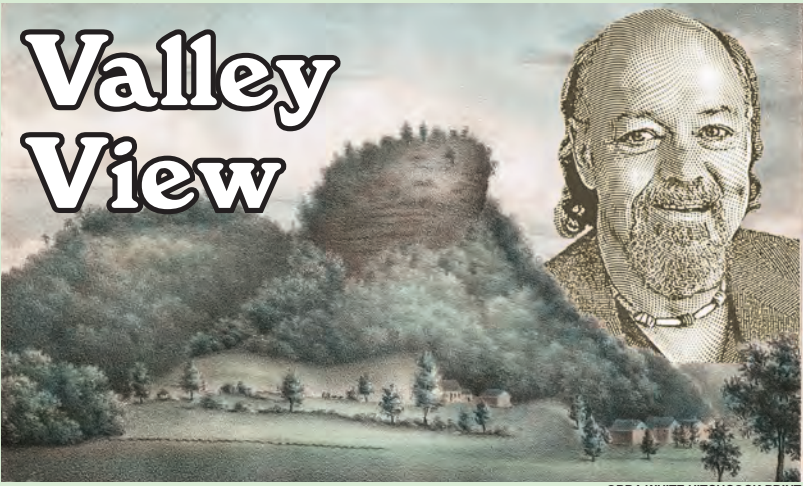
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OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER

JANUARY 18, 2024

Above: Swans and ducks fish and float on the dam impoundment at Turners Falls.



ORRA WHITE HITCHCOCK PRINT

Tragedy and Memory

By GARY SANDERSON

GREENFIELD – Boyhood memories, however vivid they may seem, can be unreliable.

Of this sobering fact I was reminded recently, regarding a Mount Sugarloaf suicide that occurred during my free and easy days as a South Deerfield youth. I have over the past decade or so tried unsuccessfully many times to chase down that story in newspaper archives. I couldn't understand why it was so elusive. I knew it happened, and thought I had clear memories of the details that spread around town like wildfire. Atop the list was the "unforgettable" name of the victim: Cheney Bigelow. How could anyone forget such a distinguished New England name?

My latest round of inquiry into this man of South Deerfield lore was inspired by friend Chip Ainsworth's recycled 2019 column about another tragic Sugarloaf death, that one an accidental fall involving a Smith College beauty queen in October 1965. The old column popped up on Facebook, recounting the tragic tale of Karol Rae Hummon, 21, then the reigning Miss Alaska from the '65 Miss America Pageant. I remembered the story well. It happened when I was 12. Hummon slipped and fell 300 feet to her death while casually hiking and sightseeing along the edge of the mountain's cliff face.

Ainsworth's column, which I had not seen when it was published in the *Greenfield Recorder*, immediately got my wheels spinning. I emailed Ainsworth to share my frustration following several unsuccessful attempts to find a newspaper story about the Sugarloaf suicide. I was quite certain it had occurred soon after the tragedy he featured, but he didn't remember it.

Hmmmm? Another Sugarloaf suicide chase was underway.

I cut and pasted my email to Ainsworth into a *Deerfield Now* Facebook post, added a few details, and trolled for community feedback that failed to appear. Not a word. I was surprised. Figured the post would stir interest. Maybe it needed time.

Later that day – and quite coin-

Editors' Note: This story includes discussion of suicide. If you or someone you know is considering suicide, resources are available to help. Contact the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline by calling 988 or 1 (800) 273-8255, or visit www.988lifeline.org.

identally, I might add – my phone rang. The caller ID read David White, an old townie friend we called "Hopper." I had chummed around with him as a kid and hunted pheasants with him as a young man, but had lost contact with him since I moved to Greenfield in 1997. Recently retired and building his family tree, White knew I, too, chased genealogy and was eager to chat about what he had thus far learned about his rich Yankee roots reaching back to the Mayflower.

"So," I interrupted early into our conversation, "you're not responding to my Facebook post from earlier today?"

"What Facebook post?"

"I trolled about that guy who leaped to his death off Sugarloaf when we were kids. I think his name was Cheney Bigelow."

"Cheney Bigelow?"

"Yeah. That's the name I remember."

"Not me. I think it was Edgar Mathias."

"Hmmm? Maybe so. That name does ring a bell."

I thanked my old buddy for the tip and promised to dig deeper on Edgar Mathias. Inspiring. Finally, a new clue.

Our rambling conversation ended and I went immediately to my laptop. There I pulled up *Fultonhistory.com* online, did a few Mathias searches and – Bingo! – finally got a local hit. It was a Memorial Day, front-page *Greenfield Recorder* story below the fold, headlined "Man Killed in Jump off Summit." Dated May 29, 1967, the suicide had unfolded the previous day, a Sunday. The victim's name was indeed reported as "Edgard F. Mathias," the second "d" in the first name likely a skeleton-crew holiday typo that wasn't caught.

Born in 1932, Mathias was 35 see **VALLEY VIEW** page B4

THEATER REVIEW

Young Shakespeareans Brave a *Tempest*

BY HUGH FINNERTY

TURNERS FALLS – The Shea Theater hosted the Young Shakespeare Players East this past weekend for a performance that will likely set a yearly record for lowest average age of performer. The up-and-coming thespians tackled *The Tempest*, one of Shakespeare's later works, in four showings, with the troupe's final performance coming on a snowy Sunday matinee.

Taking place in just one day, the play follows Prospero, the ousted Duke of Milan, who uses his powers to create a great storm, or tempest, to shipwreck his rivals on the very island upon which he has been stranded. It is

a story filled with magic and metaphor, and the Young Shakespeare Players (YSP) waste no time immersing the audience in it, bringing us aboard a forsaken ship with an opening salvo of enthusiasm and humor.

Onboard are a collection of nobles from Prospero's home country, his own usurping brother among them, and from Naples. We follow the shipwrecked as they are manipulated by the puppetmaster Prospero, commandingly played on Sunday by Solena Davidson Carroll, and engage in deceit, drunkenness, and dramatic intervention.

The Tempest has beckoned for deeper analysis by see **TEMPEST** page B8



FINNERTY PHOTO

*Curtain call: Final bows on the final show of Young Shakespeare Players East's *The Tempest*.*

BOOK REVIEW

Prince Harry, *Spare* (Random House, 2023)

By CLAIRE HOPLEY

LEVERETT – Like all memoirs, Prince Harry's *Spare* is a fiction. That's not to say it's factually untrue. It's to say that it is shaped by its author's choices – this event, not that; my memory, not his. At its root the word fiction – from the Old High German and the Latin *finigo* – means to finger, to shape, to give a form.

Specific hurdles shape this story: the terrible death of his mother Princess Diana, which is traumatic; his training as a soldier and experiences at war in Iraq and Afghanistan, which he values; and the constant press attention, which he loathes. Not surprisingly. The fierce British tabloids expose him and his family to flashlit intrusions from paparazzi seeking photos or quotes to splash on front pages, headlining him as "the naughty one," "the thicko," "the spare" – the younger prince whose only role is to inherit the throne if the elder prince dies.

That task has receded. Now he's fifth in line after the



Prince of Wales and his three children. But the idea that he's a not very smart bad boy lives on; indeed, it ballooned when all the press attention spread to include his wife, distressing her and constraining their lives so much that they decided playing Royal Family roles was not for them and decamped to California.

There's a bit more in *Spare*. It has a significant section on Prince Harry's life at England's most famous boarding school Eton, and tells us of the many times when the going got tough and he took himself off to Africa, loving places roamed by elephants and giraffes rather than camera-toting paparazzi. Then, too, meeting and marrying his wife Meghan is a vital shaping experience.

But he leaves a lot out: all his early life while his mother was alive, what he studied at Eton, and, especially, the detail of his interactions with his family. Contrary to earlier reports of his closeness to his brother, he points out that Prince William told him he didn't want to be associated with him at Eton, and

see **BOOK REVIEW** page B3

Pet of the Week



CARMODY COLLAGE

'GROOT'

While we don't know a lot about his background, we have noticed that Groot is a very social and high-energy guy. He would do well with older kids and no cats, and would do best in a home as an only dog. He does well with other dogs, he's just not a fan of sharing his food or treats.

Groot loved all the snow we got, and enjoys catching snowballs!

If you're ready to adopt and want to learn more about, meet, or adopt

this pet, you can come in during open adoption hours Tuesdays through Saturdays, 12:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. For in-shelter pets – those not in foster care – coming in as soon as possible is the fastest way to adopt!

For more information, call (413) 781-4000 or visit www.dakinhumane.org.

Want your pet featured? Email a photo and information about them to jae@montaguerreporter.org.



By LEE WICKS

MONTAGUE CENTER – I don't know about you, but I have mixed feelings at this time of year: relief that the frenzied holiday season is over – in my family we have four birthdays between December and the first week of January – and apprehension about the cold, non-festive days ahead. It is nice to resume a normal schedule and depressing that we must get through January, February and March, only to end up at tax time.

The good news is that there is help for both the doldrums and tax preparation at the Gill-Montague senior center. Director Roberta Potter is pleased to report that certain seniors who own or rent residential property in Massachusetts, as their principal residence, are eligible for a refundable tax credit through the state's Senior Circuit Breaker Tax Credit.

Finding out if you qualify and how to apply is complicated, but here's a summary from the *Mass.gov* website:

"As a senior citizen (65 or older by December 31 of the tax year), you may be eligible to claim a refundable credit on your Massachusetts personal income tax return. The Circuit Breaker tax credit is based on the actual real estate taxes or rent paid on the Massachusetts residential property you own or rent and occupy as your principal residence. The maximum credit amount for tax year 2023 is \$2,590. If the credit you're owed exceeds the amount of the total tax payable for the year, you'll be refunded the additional amount of the credit without interest."

Here's the website address for more details: www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-senior-circuit-breaker-tax-credit

People who still want help will find it at the Gill-Montague senior center in March and April. The calendar will list dates and times when a person will be there to explain everything about the process and answer questions. The fuel assistance program is ongoing through April as well.

A new drop-in program for digital equity is also exciting. On Tuesdays from 12:30 until 2 p.m., students from the Franklin County Technical School will be on hand to troubleshoot and answer questions. "No appointment is needed," Potter says, "just come with your questions about your laptop, computer or cell phone and volunteers will be there to help." Absolute beginners are welcome, as well as people who have been using technology for a while.

Right now, the photos on my phone don't show up on my iPad, and text messages that come in on my iPad don't show on my phone. And where are all the photos I took the other day? I'm sure I saved that file, and now I can't find it. My goodness – I'm heading to the senior center as soon as I can.



WICKS PHOTO

Student helps Danielle Walker and Theo Shaban (at left), both juniors at the Franklin County Technical School, and instructor Marcus McLaurin help Rochelle Nabamias learn about technology. "They are amazing," senior center director Roberta Potter says of the students.

Potter said she expects this drop-in program to be very popular, since even those who regularly use computers and smart phones often run into problems.

The Senior Digital Equity Program is starting up, too. This six-week training program includes a free tablet to participants who attend each session. Spaces are limited. If you are interested, you can go to the senior center to sign up, call (413) 863-9357 or send an email to councilonaging@montague-ma.gov.

It takes a lot of cooperation to identify and then respond to the needs of seniors in our community. These two digital access programs emerged from a collaboration between the Massachusetts Office of Elder Affairs and the Franklin County Regional Council of Governments' Mass in Motion program, in partnership with the Montague Council on Aging and the programming and web design program at Franklin Tech.

After a recent technology drop-in session, Potter said the student volunteers, who are getting service-learning credit for their time, are amazing.

I think I've said this before, but there's no harm in repeating myself; the senior center is an impressive community resource, and I wish I'd learned this sooner.

I felt a little shy before I went to my first Tai Chi class. In fact, I convinced two friends to come with me for comfort. It turned out to be unnecessary. I encountered welcoming folks who immediately introduced themselves. They

came from all over. Most senior centers welcome people from any town, and some elders have a weekly schedule that takes them from town to town for the classes and activities they prefer. There are regulars who've been coming to these classes for years, and it's great to stand behind one of them to keep up with the Tai Chi moves.

I was reluctant to go to the senior center at first. Me? A senior? How can that be? Our culture isn't kind to seniors. In books, films, and advertising we're portrayed as dithering and forgetful, if we're represented at all. It's not easy to say "that's my tribe," and accept that chair yoga might now be better than trying to balance on a mat and twist into impossible shapes. But chair yoga is better than no yoga, and a visit to the senior center can feed both the body and soul.

The Mass in Motion report cited loneliness as an issue affecting too many elders. Joining a class, getting to know helpful high-school students, and learning new skills are invigorating pursuits.

The friends who joined me for the Tai Chi class are now going to yoga on Wednesdays. I'm trying to check the schedule each morning to make sure I'm not missing anything. Making use of this free community resource is a New Year's resolution that will be easy to keep.

Looking forward: "Memory cafés" are showing up at local senior centers. I'm looking forward to learning more about them and reporting here on my discoveries.

Senior Center Activities JANUARY 22 THROUGH 26

WENDELL

Foot care clinic is the first Wednesday of each month. Call Katie Nolan at (978) 544-2306 for information or appointments. For Senior Health Rides, contact Jonathan von Ranson at (978) 544-3758.

ERVING

Open Mondays through Fridays from 8:30 am to 3 p.m. Daily snacks and coffee. Fitness room and pool table open.

Monday 1/22

9 a.m. Interval Workout
10:15 a.m. Seated Workout
12 p.m. Pitch Card Game

Tuesday 1/23

9 a.m. Good For U Workout
10 a.m. Line Dancing
11 a.m. Social Stringers

Wednesday 1/24

9 a.m. Strength & Conditioning
10:15 a.m. Chair Aerobics
11:30 a.m. Bring Your Lunch Bingo

Thursday 1/25

9 a.m. Core & Balance
10 a.m. Barre Fusion

Friday 1/26

9 a.m. Quilting & Open Sew

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. For more information please call 863-9357.

Monday 1/22

10:15 a.m. Aerobics
10:15 a.m. Outdoor Chair Yoga
11 a.m. Chair Exercise

Tuesday 1/23

9 a.m. Chair Yoga
9:30 a.m. Tuesday Knitters
10 a.m. Zumba Lite
12:30 p.m. Tech Help Drop In
3 p.m. Tai Chi

Wednesday 1/24

9:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
12 p.m. Bring Your Lunch Bingo
4:15 p.m. Mat Yoga

Thursday 1/25

1 p.m. Pitch
3:30 p.m. Tech 4 Seniors Class

Friday 1/26

10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
12 p.m. Pizza Party
2 p.m. Chair Dance

LEVERETT

Chair Yoga classes are held on Wednesdays at 10 a.m., hybrid, at the town hall and on Zoom. Foot care clinic is held monthly.

For more information, contact the Leverett COA at (413) 548-1022 x 2, or coa@leverett.ma.us.

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BOOK REVIEW from page B1

later opposed much that he wanted to do. He notes too that his father was more concerned with ensuring that his second wife Camilla would become Queen than helping him deal with problems.

So the fundamental tale this book tells is that of someone who resents the people around him. Harry's father is not as supportive as he would like. His brother is privileged. All have their own agendas in which Harry is of minor significance. The exception was, of course, his adored mother, whom he invokes as the lost angel who would have helped him. So, like the novels' Jane Eyre and David Copperfield, Harry presents as the child abandoned in a cruel world populated by unsupportive relatives and fiendish paparazzi because of a parent's death.

Perhaps, like Jane and David, he will find his reward in a happy marriage. He certainly suggests that that is the case.

Yet while the novels *Jane Eyre* and *David Copperfield* grip readers and never let them go, *Spare* does not. One problem is that it is written in brief paragraphs, often no more than one sentence long. This style does not lend itself to exploration of character. As a result, Harry always focuses on himself; we cannot assess or understand his brother, his father, or indeed anybody else because these wee paragraphs don't show us enough.

This may be inevitable given that he specifically says he wrote the book because his father and brother told him they had no idea why he moved himself to America, and the book is his way of explaining and justifying himself. But self-justification can seem like navel-gazing. No other person exists in this book except as they affect him for good or ill.

Nor do the quick-fire paragraphs work well for analyzing cause and effect. He feels trauma and pain, and it seems nobody comes to his aid. Really? He has therapists. He is constantly attended by three bodyguards to fend off the paparazzi and other dangers. He has many friends. He often travels to Africa or other places, invariably with or to meet friends. He never reflects on choices about what he does.

At the end of the book, there are five options for how Harry and Meghan might combine the freedom they want with life in the Royal Family. Option 5 is that they simply leave. Harry says that his father and brother chose this option. Why? This is left as an accusation, without any discussion about the reasons they chose it, whether or not he thinks it the best option, or what, actually, he and Meghan would have preferred.

These problems may not be Harry's. They are problems of form. Tiny, undeveloped paragraphs are just not fitted for serious analysis of either oneself or others. They work better for action, so some of the most interesting parts of this book are the clearly focused descriptions of his Army life. Such descriptions are easier to convey to a ghostwriter than the nuanced assessments that would have made this a better book. Indeed, the use of a ghostwriter is likely one of the problems with it, because it's hard to know whose voice we are hearing: Harry's or J.R. Moehringer's, the journalist who put it together for him.

One thing that emerges loud and clear is Harry's hatred of paparazzi. They were seriously implicated in his mother's death, and have hounded him and his family mercilessly, including bugging cars and cell-phones. Harry is far from their only victim, and he is currently pursuing them in the British courts.

An associated group that he despises are the "comms" – the communications professionals who work to feed newspapers with approved stories about the Royal Family. Harry has a comm, so do his father and brother, and they often tell different stories, or feed the press a story that favors their client at the expense of someone else.

In his role as ghostwriter Moehringer is a comm hired to tell Harry's side of a sad saga. The comm's job is to massage it into an appealing shape. Readers can recognize and sympathize with the abandoned child, the put-upon younger brother, so the tale told in *Spare* is familiar. It tells us some truths – as do *Jane Eyre* and *David Copperfield* – but like them it has been constructed and shaped as an apologia by its author(s).



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Hard Time With Ketchup; Finger and Nerf Drive-Bys; Strange Claims; Nouria Held Up Twice; Trees Vandalized

Monday, 1/8

8:36 a.m. Caller from Federal Street reports a ladder and roof rake in the middle of the roadway. Officer advises he located items and set them to side of roadway.

12:50 p.m. 911 caller reporting that he was just in a minor motor vehicle accident on Avenue A; no injuries. Tractor-trailer unit moved to First Street so it is out of the way. Someone from the company is coming with registration information on the semi truck. Caller will call when he has the info. Citation issued.

3:43 p.m. Walk-in reporting a past assault with an involved male party at the Five Eyed Fox an hour ago. Reporting party left written statement at the PD and is OK with being contacted by an officer later. Officer spoke to party and advised of options.

4:31 p.m. 911 caller states that she was trying to get her stuff and her mom wouldn't let her. Yelling could be heard in the background. Caller stated "Never mind," and disconnected. Officer made contact with mother, who stated there was a verbal argument but her daughter left and is no longer there.

Tuesday, 1/9

6:47 a.m. E-911 caller states a female party stole his backpack full of his belongings. Caller did not provide personal information or information pertaining to what was stolen, other than that it was their personal and household items as they are homeless. Area checked; unable to locate.

9:21 a.m. Caller would like to speak to an officer about a possible threat to Baystate Franklin Medical Center. No answer upon callback. Caller left message at 10:31 a.m. requesting a call back at a different phone number. Officer advised.

11:06 a.m. Fire alarm activation notification at 253 Farmacy via Shelburne Control. TFFD on scene investigating.

11:18 a.m. Caller from Montague Garage states someone in the neighborhood continues to drive by and flip him off while he is working, then yell things at him. He is wondering if something can be said to the male party before the situation escalates. Hesitant to give any more information. Does not know name of party who is doing this but believes he lives in the old firehouse and has issues with the shop owner. Caller advised of options.

7:47 p.m. Caller complaining of house on Federal Street not clearing their sidewalk during snowstorms. States his child has a hard time walking by. Unsure what number house it is, but states the guy who

lives there does it every year. Referred to an officer. 8:17 p.m. Caller from Keith Apartments reporting female banging on walls and screaming in the hallway. Officer spoke to female, who was upset that her ketchup tasted funny. Officer helped her throw it away, and now she feels better.

10:51 p.m. E-911 caller from Bridge Street states he was outside his residence smoking a cigarette and observed a black vehicle drive past his house multiple times. Caller initially thought it was a DoorDash car. Caller states the vehicle pulled up next to him and the operator began to berate him and stated he was going to shoot at him. Caller advised the person then left, got a BB gun, and started shooting at him. Caller states they don't know the party but believes they may be intoxicated, as they nearly crashed in front of his house. Caller states vehicle left towards Carroll's Market. Officer advises it was not a BB gun but a variation of a Nerf gun with gel BBs. Involved vehicle described as a small four-door vehicle, possibly a Jetta. Officer will check area. Report taken.

Wednesday, 1/10

6:29 a.m. Shelburne Control advises they took a call reporting a Buckley Cable truck in the middle of Meadow Road, not moving, without anyone around. Contacted party who reported to Shelburne Control; he advises he attempted to check on who-ever was inside the truck with no luck. Caller advises there are pylons around the truck, and the truck has its lights on and is running. Officer advises he spoke to vehicle operator, who was lying down before his detail started at 7 a.m. No issues.

8:19 a.m. Caller from Eleventh Street states that one of his 52-foot tractor trailers was taken from this location early this morning by a tow truck. There is a GPS locator on the unit. He is waiting for a call back from the company, and they will give him the current location. Investigated. Trailer was not stolen; it was picked up by his company to be brought in for repairs.

10:07 a.m. School resource officer advises that the father of a Turners Falls High School student has been making strange claims against the principal. He has come to the school to harass the principal and has harassed him in a motor vehicle. Services rendered.

11:47 p.m. Commercial burglar alarm at Silvio O. Conte Anadromous Fish Research Center; solar building east entrance/

exit. Officer advises area checked; nobody around; no alarm sounding.

Thursday, 1/11

5 a.m. Greenfield PD requesting female officer for a search at their station. Services rendered.

8:31 a.m. 911 call reporting neighbor disturbance on Bridge Street. Referred to an officer.

9:22 a.m. DPW advising there are multiple unregistered cars on the Sixth Street extension that have not been moved during snowstorms, as well as vehicles on Ninth and Bulkley streets that are hindering plowing and snow removal. Officer checking areas. Unable to contact registered owner of vehicle on Sixth Street. Requesting tow for a Subaru Impreza with no plates on Ninth Street and for a Corolla on Bulkley. Rau's responding.

6:20 p.m. Caller states that the resident of an L Street apartment is yelling loudly at his children. Officer advises he spoke with the dad and with the kids. Everyone appears happy and healthy, and they were eating dinner.

6:47 p.m. Officer standing by at town hall during public meeting.

10:45 p.m. Walk-in requesting to speak to an officer regarding a scam on a dating site. Advised of options.

Friday, 1/12

5:08 a.m. 911 caller from Nouria states that the gas station just got robbed again; states parties came into store with ski masks on and showed a weapon. Parties have since left store. Investigated.

11:09 a.m. Walk-in requests an officer meet her at her house because her grandson called and told her he smashed the TV. Situation mediated. Parties advised of options.

11:17 a.m. Report of raccoon hanging around yard on Davis Street. Message left for animal control officer. ACO en route.

6:01 p.m. Report of threatening/harassment at Third Street Laundry. Referred to an officer.

6:45 p.m. 911 report of neighbor disturbance on Bridge Street; second caller states this is the loudest he has ever heard the neighbor. Officers responding.

11:56 p.m. Caller from Eleventh Street states there is some sort of verbal altercation occurring. Involved female states there was a verbal argument over car keys; will take it inside and keep it quiet.

Saturday, 1/13

9:35 a.m. Caller states that three small trees were vandalized at Peskeompskut Park over the last twelve hours. Caller is on the town's tree committee and advises he tried to fix them, but they are heavily

damaged and cost hundreds of dollars. Officer verified damage. One tree was ripped totally out of the ground. Report taken.

10:44 a.m. Caller from Fifth Street states that two motorized bikes have been driving erratically up and down the downtown streets all morning. Drivers are not wearing helmets. Area checked; unable to locate.

10:51 a.m. Report of neighbor disturbance on Bridge Street. All quiet upon arrival; no answer at door.

5:59 p.m. Caller states that he went to use the ATM at Greenfield Savings Bank around 4 p.m. and there was a male party there with hand tools who told the caller that the ATM was broken and he couldn't use it.

Sunday, 1/14

12:48 p.m. Walk-in states that a yellow Mustang car was driving around the Millers Falls Road area and appeared not to have a muffler. Area checked; unable to locate.

2:08 p.m. 911 caller from Montague City Road reporting sparks coming from a cable wire inside her apartment. Call transferred to Shelburne Control. PD responding.

Monday, 1/15

4:45 a.m. E-911 caller states he was just robbed at Nouria; male party wearing all black approached him with a large kitchen knife and screwdriver and demanded money. Caller states male wanted safe opened along with cash register money. Caller advised he could not open the safe; however, money from the register was taken. Individual exited the store and appeared to walk left after leaving. Officer reached for K9 track; will be responding. Greenfield PD and Shelburne Control advised. Officer and K9 unit starting track at 6:05 a.m. Officer advises units back to their cruisers.

9:04 a.m. Walk-in reported that someone tried to get into their house on L Street yesterday afternoon. The lock on one of the doors was damaged. Advised of options.

9:28 a.m. Caller states that her brother's car was vandalized overnight in the Third Street public lot. Report taken.

1:43 p.m. Caller states that a vehicle sideswiped his car while he was sitting in it at Food City. Report taken.

5:20 p.m. 911 caller reporting two male parties physically fighting in the road near the Survival Center on Fourth Street. Someone yelled and requested police be called. Both parties denying any sort of altercation. One party highly intoxicated; will be taken care of for the night by two other parties.



EXHIBITS

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Rivers of Franklin County*, geology-inspired, map-based art by Joe Kopera. Through May.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *On the Ground and In the Air and Inbetween*, Amy Dawn Kotel. Through February 23.

LOOT, Turners Falls: *Paintings and Prints* by Amy Chilton, colorful geometric paintings and fine art prints. Through February.

Sawmill River Arts, Montague: *Maddie Maney*, outdoor landscape, lifestyle, and portrait photography. Through February.

Greenfield Savings Bank, Greenfield: *Eyes Above Franklin County*, aerial photographs, in the main lobby. Through January.

Looky Here, Greenfield: *Quilt Show*, textile works by Emily Carris and Rae Heller. Closing reception Friday, January 26.

Leverett Library, Leverett: *Jen Lambert Solo Show*, monoprnts and paintings. Through February. Reception Tuesday, January 30 from 5 to 8 p.m.

Gallery A3, Amherst: *In Residence: Art for the Soul Gallery*. Through January 27.

Shelburne Arts Coop, Shelburne Falls: *Peace, Joy, and Art*, group show by member artists, through January.

D'Amour Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield: *A Gathering: Works from Contemporary Black American Ceramic Artists*, through March 24.

Springfield Science Museum, Springfield: *Ways of My Ancestors: We Are Nipmuc. We Are the Freshwater People*. New installation celebrating the diverse culture of the Nipmuc, featuring photography by Scott Strong Hawk Foster and Andre Strong-BearHeart Gaines, Jr. Through February 25.

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VALLEY VIEW from page B1

and living in Springfield when he decided to end his life on South Deerfield's ancient Connecticut Valley landmark. According to *findagrave.com*, he was an Army veteran and, given his age, most likely served during the Korean War (1950-53). He is buried at West Springfield's Saint Thomas Cemetery next to his father, Edgar F. Mathias, Sr. (1894-1974), and mother, Yvonne Montmeny Mathias (1899-1998).

My recollection all along was that the suicide did not occur on a school day, because I remembered being out and about when word hit the street. So, Sunday makes sense. I'm sure the first hint of trouble would have been the sound of the downtown fire alarm rallying call-firemen to the station. Then speeding cars, flashing lights, sirens, and the other typical commotion brought by the loud alarm horn.

Reports started circulating about a suicide leap witnessed by Sugarloaf sightseers and an active search for the body. Kids raced to the

scene on their bikes. Many of us knew Sugarloaf and its northern brother well as our childhood playgrounds.

I can't say I remembered state trooper Ralph Olszewski finding the unconscious victim still breathing at the base of the cliffs, but that was what the newspaper reported. I knew Olszewski from the downtown drugstore. His family was from South Deerfield. In fact, a day or maybe even hours before finding the newspaper account naming him, I had read his obituary.

Isn't it strange how things like that happen? Had I remembered Mathias's name and found the newspaper article years ago, I could have probed Olszewski deeper for all the gory details. I often bumped into him near his River Road home in Whately, long after confidentiality restrictions had passed.

Judging from the 1967 *Recorder* story's content, confidentiality policies back then weren't nearly as strict as today's. Not only did the paper immediately name the victim, it even

reported that he had been a recent Northampton State Hospital patient and carried in his wallet papers to prove it. That would not have been reported today. At least not the next day.

Although the paper didn't report the time of Mathias's leap, memory tells me it occurred at midday, perhaps between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Sugarloaf-reservation caretaker Charles Sadoski of Whately reported seeing Mathias "quite deliberately jump." The newspaper was, however, wrong in reporting that Sadoski had "emerged from the summit house" just in time to witness the leap. That was impossible, because the summit house did not exist in 1967. It had been destroyed by fire some 15 months earlier, on the snowy night of March 7, 1966. Sadoski must have, instead, exited an adjacent toolshed that survived the fire.

Whoever wrote the front-page story may have missed another little tidbit that bounced around town like a Superball that day. The story I recall was that witnesses sensed something bad was about to happen when they noticed Mr.

Mathias lingering in peculiar fashion along the chain-link fence bordering the cliffs. Their suspicion was validated when he pulled his wallet from his back pocket, removed his wristwatch, wrapped it around the wallet, placed the tidy packet on the pavement, scaled the fence, and took a swan dive to his death before anyone could "talk him off the ledge."

Only the wallet is mentioned in the newspaper article, because it revealed his identity and mental-health issues.

Mathias was near death when loaded into the ambulance and pronounced dead on arrival at Franklin County Public Hospital. The official cause of death was a skull fracture but, obviously, many additional traumas would have resulted from such a fall.

So, now that I've pinned down the victim's name, a blaring mystery remains. That is, where did the name Cheney Bigelow come from? I have no answer. It must, I suppose, remain a mystery buried far too deep in memory for recovery.



MONTV / MUSIK / MOUNTAIN



68. Samara Lubelski

Interview by J. BURKETT and TROY CURRY

TURNERS FALLS – Samara Lubelski is an exciting musician who has been playing in bands since the early '90s and is still going full force. If you are a music head like us, you have probably seen her a few times in one of her many different bands, or maybe you were lucky enough to see her doing a rare solo song set or an instrumental violin set, like she did a couple months ago at Mystery Train in Amherst.

Here are a few of her projects: Hall of Fame, Sonora Pine, The Tower Recordings, the Thurston Moore New Wave Bandit (a.k.a. Chelsea Lighting), Metal Mountains, Metabolismus, Of A Mesh, The Salmon Skin, Pacer, Augenmusik, Dosed Skipper Blues Implosion, MV+EE, the Lubelski/Nace Duo, and the Lubelski/Bassett Duo. Check her stuff out ASAP.

MMM: Hi Samara! Can you share any early music memories?

SL: Oh, ya know, you're a little kidd-o and some older cat plays The Beatles, starts dancing around, and your brain explodes with that little taste of the fantasy, and then there's no looking back. I had a deep relationship with the radio that helped to inform my pre-teen and early teen years.

And, of course the record shops, the big MSG concerts (dragging my dad along), and then loads of local stuff and hanging around with the older kids.

MMM: What are your thoughts about your earlier bands: Hall of Fame, Sonora Pine, Tower, Metal Mountains?

SL: I met Metabolismus in S. Germany – they were the ones who first exposed me to the collective band concept – no rigid membership, style constraints, or take-over-the-world agendas. I've played, toured, and recorded with them for over three decades – slipping in and out, and doing almost all of the tracking for the solo records at their Sumsilobatem studio in a small village between two mountains.

Hall of Fame was one of those intense, dedicated collaborations – we played and recorded (on four-track cassette) together daily, and had a drum kit and amps set up in one of the rooms in a small tenement/railroad apartment on Ridge Street in the Lower East Side, where a couple of us lived. No one ever complained about the sounds, but the building was only partially occupied and I think we might have been the only occupants paying rent at the time.

The Tower Recordings were kindred spirits of constant playing and listening. There was a lot of time spent with Matt Valentine, who lived in the next neighborhood over. We shared a mutual fascination for the under/overground English '60s and Can, and we're both equally intent on the integration of free music and tunes, live and on record. It seemed natural that Matt would coax me in to The Tower Recordings.

The TR was fluid about incorporating new players – Tim Barnes came in around the same time as a second drummer. The band was also quite big and I recall occasionally falling into duo musical conversations with PG Six within the broader live sounds going on – elevating.

I was more of a support player for The Sonora Pine, but it was very intense due to the emotional

quality of the tunes.

No idea what happened to MM.

MMM: How about favorite touring or recording memories?

SL: Early '90s touring with Metabolismus in Germany was so dreamy and very exciting. There was always a high level of chaos around them, or maybe it was the drugs and the language barrier? That one alone provided juice for the next couple of decades.

Memorable gigs? Playing a super-intense one with Thurston and The New Wave Bandits in Austin – we were covering "I'm Not a Young Man Anymore" by the VU. It was a tribute gig to Lou Reed and we were up for the one tune. Thurston, always an excellent performer, excelled in those situations and it was hot from the jump with waves of luv crashing back and forth between the stage and audience until Thurston jumped in and became one with 'em. I couldn't hear shit and was sawing away very much feeling it all – Chris Brokaw playing that riff on guitar – until I looked down halfway through and saw I wasn't plugged in.

But then you play at Radio City Music Hall and can't help but be stunned by the beauty and sound of the room.

MMM: Are there certain artists or LPs that really changed your life, perspective, or playing in a dramatic way?

SL: Music has always been there, calling the shots and dictating the course of things, including all those classical lessons and youth orchestras. I seem to be at its beck and call.

Metabolismus was a big game changer (see my above answer) and I was looking for it. But, ya know, you meet someone, you start a band, or join their band, and/or get involved with someone in that band, and all of a sudden you're either making records or homeless.

MMM: Do you still write songs, or are you mostly improv-based now?

SL: Definitely more improv. With live improv I can fixate and get that super-heady thing in a way that I never could with the tunes. I can get super heady and fixate writing tunes too, just not performing them live. Still doing that.

MMM: Do you want to talk about your connection with NYC? Are there any eras that you really connect with, or wish you could visit?

SL: NYC has been one of those

great romantic affairs of my life. (Also smoking cigarettes.) Sometimes it really lets you down, but I'm very hopeful that we're turning a corner (again). I still think it's most beautiful late at night when it's devoid of people and you can hear the buildings humming in conversation.

I grew up in a commercial building – not legal, heat shut down after business hours – in a neighborhood that completely emptied out after 5 p.m. and weekends, SoHo in the '70s and '80s. My childhood and youth in downtown NYC was one of liberation – born into the downtown hippie mindset of drugs, extended foreign travel/living, community, folk music, etc...

There would be collective art shows on the street that my dad was part of – he did conceptual art and abstract painting – and, in true Yippie spirit, kids' birthday parties in the street that involved naked dancing, and live frogs as contest prizes.

That all later gave way to clubs, gigs, tension, and my first band. There was a pretty clear line in the sand when lofts became hip, and slowly it wasn't just artists and community running the feel. In compensation, there was a slew of new clubs in the city: the Mudd Club, Danceteria, the Peppermint Lounge, Rock Lounge. They all had a mix of the dance floor and live bands. IDs were not checked. Plus, our crew got let in regularly for free at some of 'em due to an abundance of style.

It was through the nightlife hangs that I met the members of my first band, Of A Mesh, and began the cross-town move towards the East Village/Lower East Side.

MMM: How about Tony Conrad, Harry Smith, Angus MacLise, Loren Mazzacane Connors...

SL: Hometown heroes and guiding spirits always whispering in your ear. I would add Henry Flynt, Cale (*New York in the 1960s* and the Dream Syndicate), La Monte Young, and a slew of others. They're all essential listening, and a testament to the free energy seeping out of the dark corners of NYC streets.

Most of 'em came out of various NY scenes or bands – a bunch of them from the same scene – and forged those very singular visions as individual artists after splitting the group dynamics.

Mazzacane is the one not from that era, but he's a definite gateway energy keeper reminiscent of that time – a visionary portal to some previously unknown vast expanse.

MMM: Any new musicians, la-

bels, or reissues that you dig?

SL: Been digging these reissues: Club Skull; Les Rallizes Dénudés + Be, *There's No Heaven Like Hell*; Harry Bertoia; Angus MacLise, *New York Electronic, 1965*; the *Solaris* soundtrack. And thought it was very cool that the early France Gall records got reissued stateside by Third Man Records.

MMM: Can you recommend any books or films that you've connected with recently?

SL: I'm re-reading *A Scanner Darkly*, and just re-watched *Le Samourai*.

MMM: Do you have any favorite venues or memories out here in western Mass?

SL: Oh, yeah. Hall of Fame did an Ecstatic Yod night as a duo. Byron Coley had made a big pot of stew. Jutta Koether and Jim O'Rourke played after us.

It wasn't too crowded – perfect size and a very attentive, warm listening feel in the room with a tinge of electricity. Tom Verlaine, who was married to Jutta at the time, was hanging out and very friendly, talking about guitars. Chris Corsano was working there and returned our electric egg that made wave sounds and passed through the audience's hands during the gig.

We played in front of Byron's personal record collection. It ran floor to ceiling and I had the feeling that any bum notes and the history of music would fall upon my head.

MMM: Do you have any new projects or releases in the works? Or tours?

SL: I've been working on a couple of larger pieces for almost a year. I'm trying to capture the feel of the solo violin with many violins. It's required some time and upgrading of technical skills, which have helped and hindered. There's been enough time spent in the rabbit hole that I've started decorating the walls, and brought some furniture down.

Parallel with that, there are recently-released duo cassette collaborations with Bentley Anderson and with Metabolismus head honcho Werner Nötzel (*Augenmusik*). There's also a solo live cassette released not too long ago, songs and violin, from a gig at the Spectacle Theatre a while back (accompanying scenes from *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors* and Amos Poe's *The Foreigner*), working on duo recordings with longterm collaborator Bill Nace, and Marcia Bassett and I are gonna tour in California in March.

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LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here's the way it was on January 16, 2014: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

Leverett Contract Approved

After working without a contract since last August, the Leverett Education Association has reached an agreement with the school committee on contract terms for the next two school years.

To be consistent with state and federal laws, family and medical leave policies have been changed. Also new is how online courses can count toward salary advancement.

Because of deadlock in the fall, a mediation session was necessary to get agreement from both sides. According to school committee chair Catherine Brooks, it took

only one session. "We left the table with an agreement," she said.

If You Plow It, They Will Come

On Monday, the Gill selectboard continued a discussion about snow removal on the new Turners Falls-Gill bridge sidewalk, a conversation at least 63 years old. The problem? No one is in charge of plowing, not the state that owns the bridge nor the two towns at either end. Should the salted snow be flung into the river, which might raise environmental concerns, or onto the roadway where it might impede traffic?

Member Randy Crochier wondered if the towns would be open to liability if a pedestrian fell. "I'd like to think we can solve this before another 63 years go by," he added.

20 YEARS AGO

Here's the way it was on January 15, 2004: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

WMECo Gift Boosts Brick House Renovation

The Western Massachusetts Electric Company recently donated \$1,000 to the Brick House Community Resource Center of Turners Falls. The donation is for the renovation of the Third Street building which the Brick House purchased in 2003. The property housed the Turners Falls fire department for many years, and then Montague Community TV.

"The Brick House stands as an increasingly important catalyst for the redevelopment of downtown

Turners Falls and the Montague community," said WMECo spokesperson Jeb Garber. "The new location will root its programs and services in the heart of downtown and provide accessibility for the community that will ensure its success."

Gill Transitional House Closing

After 14 years of service to kids in crisis, the Gill Transitional House on River Road is closing. Rising costs of utilities, employee salaries, and insurance doomed the program, along with a reimbursement level from the Gill-Montague school system that never fully compensated for the special education teachers provided at the Gill House classroom.

150 YEARS AGO

Here's the way it was on January 14, 1874: News from the Turners Falls Reporter's archive.

Local Matters

Erin and The Brennans at Schuler Hall tomorrow night. Remember it.

What has become of the new schoolhouse building committee? Are our schools to remain as they are for another year?

Mike Fitzgerald and John O'Brien keep pegging away at the ledge on Avenue A. What are they going to do there?

The Turners Falls Lumber Company will run their mills on half time through the winter months, but are arranging for an unusually large business in the spring.

The ice went out of the river on Thursday. The water has been the highest for five years, and winter don't stay "worth a tinker." The past week has been more like April than January.

A strange butcher's horse and cart went tumbling into the pond on First Street on Saturday. No damage but a ducking and a swim in the mud. That pond is a nice thing to have just there - besides it

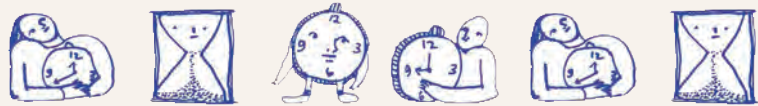
is so fragrant in summer.

Willie Jacobsen would have lost his life on Sunday, in the slough hole at the foot of First St., but for the presence of mind of Georgey Markley and Charley Kohr. That hole will bring our town into repute one of these days.

The Montague Paper Company are putting in another steam pump.

A boy named Jacob Stotts was rescued from drowning in the pond at the foot of First Street on Sunday afternoon by Andy Ring. Oh, that mud hole is convenient, and then the bridge is such a beauty, with its stately shade trees! Wonder they don't petition to have it moved down to the Ferry and swung across the river. It would be a heap of accommodation.

Rector L. Goss of this town has taken the contract for furnishing the brick and doing the brick work on the new State Insane Hospital at Worcester, and will begin work early in the spring. It is estimated that about 11,000,000 brick will be required, and three years is the limit of the contract for its erection. The brick will be shipped from the yard at Montague City over the Vt. & Mass. and Boston, Barre & Gardner railroads.



Artist Profile: Ingrid Kallick

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD - As I have mentioned in a previous article, Cara Finch has opened another gallery in Greenfield. She brought some prints to put in there, and I found that I liked one by an artist named Ingrid Kallick. Cara helped me get in touch with her.

When I interviewed Kallick, I learned she has been an artist since she was three years old. Her educational background includes a degree in sculpture and one in graphic design.

Kallick is an illustrator of books - mostly picture books, of which she has done several; the title of one is *Two Troll Tales from Norway*. She told me an organization called the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators helped her out with becoming an illustrator of these books.

The troll tales were collected in Norway in the 19th century and retold by Margrete Lamond. The book can be described as having a cover with two trolls that look to me like they are some kind of married couple.

"It is popular with people," Kallick told me. "The picture books are moderately popular. Most of the books are about folklore," she said when it comes to picture books she has illustrated. It's European folklore - she did an-



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

Frost Dragon, by Ingrid Kallick, originally appeared in Cricket magazine.

other one with Irish folklore.

"I see all sorts of fancy worlds in my head, and I draw them," were her words when I asked her why she has drawn what she has in her prints.

Several of Kallick's paintings have been in *Cricket* magazine. Two of its covers that she has illustrated are called *Rasa's Library* and *Frost Dragon*. The library one can be described as someone sitting in the library with a book, and part of the library is decorated with actual faces. The painting *Frost Dragon* is of a white dragon made out of snow. She has also made internal illustrations for the magazine.

Kallick has shown her art at conferences - "cons" - and sells it online on the website Redbubble. The biggest cons she has been to are IX Art's Imaginative Realism in Reading, Pennsylvania; Arisia in Boston; and Philcon in Philadelphia.

As for her other degrees, Kallick said she hasn't done much with them, though she mentioned that she has made some collages that are three-dimensional.

I particularly like her *Frost Dragon* painting, and find the cover she has done for the troll picture book to be cute. "You can find my art on my website at ikallick.com," she said.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

December: Loud Trucks; Bag of Needles; Fast Van; Log Splitter On Fire; Stolen Tips; Unknown Presences

Friday, 12/1

3:58 p.m. Assisted Montague PD with accident with injuries, Avenue A.

Saturday, 12/2

9:56 a.m. 911 misdial, South Cross Road. Denied any emergency.

Sunday, 12/3

3:21 p.m. Officer requested for unwanted subject, Riverview Drive.

Monday, 12/4

3:30 p.m. Stray black Labrador reported, Main and West Gill Roads.

Tuesday, 12/5

8:46 a.m. Disturbance, South Cross Road.

10:47 a.m. Assisted citizen, Walnut Street.

Wednesday, 12/6

8:37 a.m. Caller states a Volvo with CT plates just passed him in a no-passing zone doing 80 m.p.h., French King Highway.

1:22 p.m. Resident found a bag with syringes, Main Road. Requested assistance disposing of them due to having COVID.

Friday, 12/8

1:04 p.m. Summons service, Chappell Drive.

5:09 p.m. Paperwork service, Chappell Drive.

Sunday, 12/10

8:42 a.m. Caller from Dole Road reports being woken up throughout the night by trucks driving at high speeds past her home.

11:53 a.m. Call about suspicious activity, Mount Hermon Station Road.

12:01 p.m. Welfare check,

Main Road.

Tuesday, 12/12

2:07 a.m. 911 open line, Mount Hermon Road. No response to silent call or TTY procedures; busy on callback. NMH security stated police not needed.

4:04 p.m. White Amazon van reported driving at excessive speed, Main Road. Unable to locate.

4:48 p.m. Report of dog barking for a couple of days with no one home, Munn's Ferry Road.

Wednesday, 12/13

11:07 a.m. Officer wanted, Riverview Drive.

12:14 p.m. Caller advises she lost her wallet last night somewhere between the Gill Mill and Route 91.

Thursday, 12/14

9:26 a.m. Small chocolate Labrador loose with leash attached, Main Road.

1:52 p.m. Request for an officer to look at and possibly remove a bicycle that showed up, Main Road.

2:18 p.m. State police advise a DCR dump truck broke down and will be parked in the French King Highway rest area until tomorrow.

3:02 p.m. Assisted Northfield PD. Multiple calls for an accident involving a Fed-Ex truck, with injuries.

Friday, 12/15

3:07 p.m. Assisted Bernardston PD. Two-car accident, no injuries.

Sunday, 12/17

11:52 a.m. Log splitter reported on fire in the

woods, Mountain Road.

Monday, 12/18

4:43 a.m. Transformer blew up and wires are on fire up in the air, Boyle Road.

7:56 a.m. Trees down, no wires but road completely blocked, Mountain Road.

9:03 a.m. Caller states a tree hit power lines, French King Highway.

9:27 a.m. Two primary lines down in the road, Barton Cove Road.

2:01 p.m. French King Highway caller reports someone took a barn door.

7:57 p.m. Dog in the roadway, West Gill Road. Notified resident; dog retrieved.

Thursday, 12/21

12:36 p.m. Caller asking to speak with an officer about Christmas tips left for the recycling people being stolen, River Road.

3:12 p.m. Walk-in report of damage to a trail camera on a Wyart Road property.

3:35 p.m. Trespass reported on Hoe Shop Road.

5:24 p.m. Paperwork service, Chappell Drive.

Friday, 12/22

3:57 p.m. Caller states they and other vehicles were almost struck head-on by a vehicle driving completely on the wrong side of the road; they had to pull over, but didn't have much room.

Saturday, 12/23

9:23 a.m. Caller states his wife lost her glasses in the Riverside area.

12:29 p.m. Caller from Main Road inquiring whether

PD has received reports of missing packages.

6:26 p.m. Male with gray hair, puffy jacket, socks, and no shoes reported running around the pumps at the gas station.

8:02 p.m. Officer requested, Walnut Street. Caller can hear something in his front yard but does not know what it is.

10:17 p.m. Clerk advising subject is back stating that he is being followed, French King Highway.

11:45 p.m. Main Road caller reports someone is ringing her doorbell and knocking on her door.

Monday, 12/25

8:36 a.m. Caller locked herself out of her home and does not have access to a spare key, Riverview Drive.

3:51 p.m. Officer requested, Walnut Street.

Tuesday, 12/26

5:33 p.m. Box spring in the road, Main Road.

Wednesday, 12/27
8:06 a.m. Subject upstairs has been stomping around for two days, Main Road.

3:58 p.m. Caller reports striking a deer, French King Highway.

Thursday, 12/28

6:22 p.m. Checked on a possible disabled vehicle, Center Road.

Friday, 12/29

1:31 p.m. Caller found what appears to be a mountain bike in a ditch, Main Road.

10:32 p.m. Assisted Northfield PD.

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Words by Beverly Ketch
Pictures by Hannah Brookman

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 18

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Achings, Three Word Name, Barrett Gelineau Gussin Trio*. \$ 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 19

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Cinemastorm* double feature: *The Quick and the Dead* (1995), *Tombstone* (1993). Free. 7:30 p.m.

Parlor Room, Northampton: *Winterpills*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

Next Stage Arts, Putney, Vermont: *Lonnie Holley, Mourning [A] Blkstar*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

90 King, Northampton: *The Civil War in France, Pyre, Letters of Marque, wheredoesthecoldtakeyou*. \$ 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 20

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

Deja Brew Pub, Wendell: *Full Moon Reggae Dance Party with Simon White, The Roots All-Stars*. \$ 7 p.m.

Bookends, Florence: *Nanny, Teen Driver, Rage Honey, Doll*

Flower. Fundraiser for Middle East Children's Alliance. \$ 7 p.m.

Montague Common Hall: *Orkestar Banitsa, Myrtle Street Klezmer*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

Mount Toby Meetinghouse, Leverett: *Windborne*. \$ 7 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Wolfman Jack, Lexi Weege*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Opel, Rev. Dan and the Dirty Catechism*. \$ 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Terrafunk, Massive Prophet*. \$ 8 p.m.

LaPop, Northampton: *Sad Noise, Marie Carroll, Cursed Image, Joe Mygan, Dimension Viewer*. \$ 8 p.m.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Creepin Cadavers, Greatest Failure, The Agonizers, Bag Lady, HardCar*. \$ 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Jeff Unfortunately, Cycles Inside, Spectre Folk*. No cover. 9:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 21

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Jon Carroll, Eavesdrop, Lexi Weege & JJ Slater, Scrapple w/ Mtali Banda, The Greys, Cloud-belly*. Benefit for Palestine Children's Relief Fund. \$ 6:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *The Boys From '69*. \$ 8 p.m.

Red Cross, Northampton: *Carinae, Gold Setter, Big Destiny, Dutch Experts*. \$ 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 25

Parlor Room, Northampton: *Heather Maloney*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 26

Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *Chuck and Biscuits*. No cover. 7 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *2 Step Night with Les Taiouts, The Honky Tonk Angels*. Two-step lessons; classic country karaoke; no cover. 7 p.m.

Parlor Room, Northampton: *Heather Maloney*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

Rat Trap, Holyoke: *Halo Bite, KO Queen, Robbery, Strange Fate*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

Greenfield Records, Greenfield: *Johnny Gifford, Asa Etc*. \$ 8 p.m.

90 King, Northampton: *The Treasury, Michael The Generator, marseille, Barbie.AI*. \$ 8 p.m.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *PWRUP, Mega Infinity, Skapostitory, Double Star, Green St. Fiends*. \$ 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls:

Bluegrass and Beyond. No cover. 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 27

Nova Arts, Keene: *All Feels, Chodus, Sunset Electric*. \$ 7 p.m.

Pioneer Brewery, Turners Falls: *LakeSide Drive*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Bent, Cazador, Olde Bard*. \$ 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed: *2 Car Garage*. \$ 8 p.m.

The Drake, Amherst: *The Bones of J.R. Jones, Billy Keane*. \$ 8 p.m.

Bookends, Florence: *Bashful Slasher, bobbie, Cow Person, Magick Lantern*. \$ 8 p.m.

Red Cross, Northampton: *Nux Vomica, X Harlow, Sediment Club*. \$ 8 p.m.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Prawn, Glom, Little Fuss, Two Wrong Turns*. \$ 8 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *The Suitcase Junket, Cloudbelly*. \$ 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Paul Kilmer, magic, Ezzy P.*, hip hop. \$ 9:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2

The Drake, Amherst: *J. Mascis*. \$ 8 p.m.

looking forward...

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 3

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Rough Francis, YourArmsAreMyLegs, Robbery*. \$ 8 p.m.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6

The Drake, Amherst: *Jon Spencer*. \$ 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17

Hawks & Reed: *Mephiskaphelles, The Prozacs, Threat Level Burgundy, Green Street Fiends*. \$ 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *50th Anniversary Celebration of Lovejoy's Nuclear War*. \$ 7 p.m.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25

Bombyx Center, Florence: *Rebirth Brass Band*. \$ 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 1

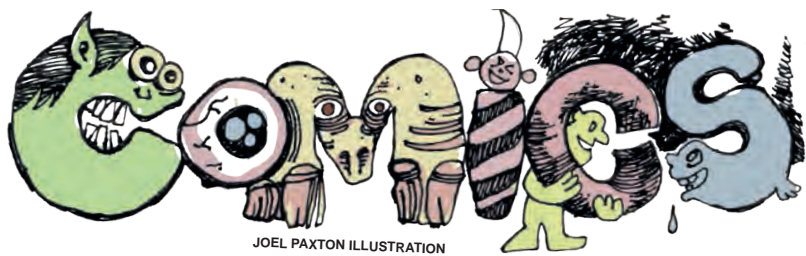
Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Puddles Pity Party*. \$ 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 7

Palladium, Worcester: *GWAR, Cancer Bats, X-Cops*. \$ 7 p.m.

SUNDAY, MARCH 17

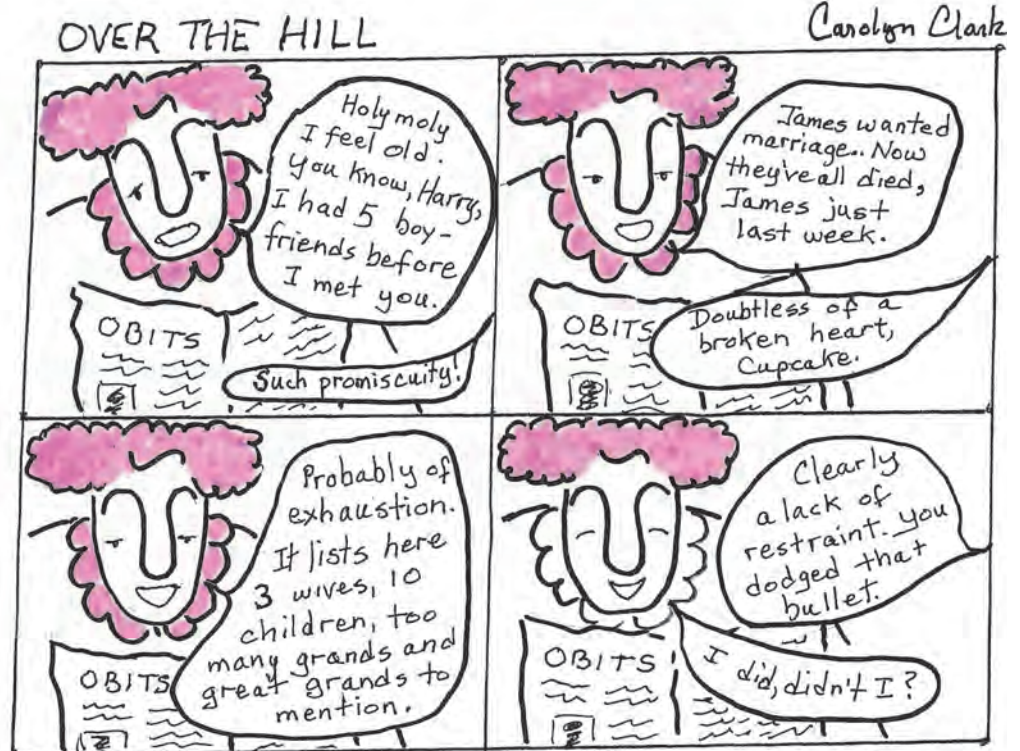
Nova Arts, Keene: *Horse Lords, Ka Baird, Know Your Program*. \$ 7 p.m.



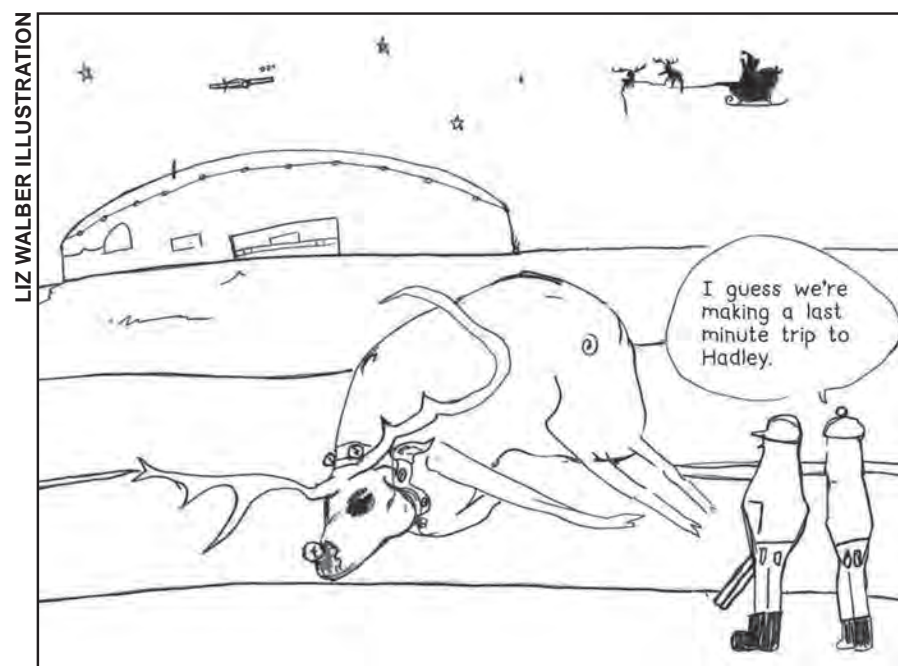
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TEMPEST from page B1

Shakespearean scholars. It is positioned amidst the colonization underway in the 16th and 17th centuries, with some citing the wreck of a ship headed for the Jamestown colony as the inspiration. It is also said to be the last work Shakespeare completed as sole author.

One interpretation which maintains relevance *ad infinitum* sees the work as a metaphor for the creative act, with Prospero's powers and the storm he creates symbolizing the creative process itself. In the setting of a young person's theater, this interpretation of *The Tempest* takes on new dimensions.

The members of the YSP troupe range in age from eight to 18, and the performers are quite spread across that spectrum. Inevitably, a caretaking reflex springs forth in the audience. The mind cries out to help these young actors in some way, to lighten their load. Watching a person as young as eight reciting the dense and antiquated language of Shakespeare to a near-capacity crowd compels one to assure them that their task is so massive that they should have no fear that we, as an audience, will judge them.

Such concerns, however, never came into play Sunday afternoon as flawlessly executed dialogue filled scene after scene. While the audience's screaming hearts may have hearkened back to the tempest of their own youth, these players, unlike the squabbling nobles whom they portray, faced the storm with great courage.

The actors embraced the challenges of each character, as well as their own strengths. Sandu Rager used the power of his voice to swing his Caliban from righteously to fear, while Emma Hale's hapless Trinculo played hilariously off the more power-hungry characters.

YSP's motto – "the readiness is all" – seemed to be an understatement as we witnessed the Herculean efforts onstage, and especially after learning that not one but two

full casts performed throughout the weekend, with one serving as the technical crew while the other acted and vice versa.

While childlike curiosity and wonder are often seen as the fount from which creativity springs, with "readiness" being a final ingredient, this motto takes on a grander meaning. In the formative, altering tempest of youth, cultivating the power of readiness to brave the bright lights can inspire bright futures for those willing to do so, and this in turn brings new meaning to a centuries-old masterpiece.

The work's epilogue underlines this in a particularly poignant manner as it implores the audience to set the protagonist Prospero free with their applause: "... [R]elease me from my bands / With the help of your good hands / Let your indulgence set me free." The audience takes on a role in the play itself, its applause symbolizing the appreciation of the community. But at a production such as this, the applause means much more – it is an attempt to tell these actors that with their creativity and fearlessness, their ship will always find land.

As one of his final plays, some see *The Tempest* as somewhat of a farewell to the stage for Shakespeare, but in this format it feels more like the passing of a baton through the ages. The young actor on stage inciting applause may have been drawing the curtain on Shakespeare's solo act, but she was also drawing the audience into a cycle that will continue.

To maintain the joy and artistry of the theater from the time of Shakespeare until now has been no easy task. It has relied on generations of courageous people doing what others simply believe they cannot do, creating an experience to be enjoyed by the broader society. Not all of us are fearless in our creative pursuits, but nearly all of us, from Elizabethan England to now, owe a debt to those who are.



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ANNOUNCEMENT

Montague Shakespeare Festival Launches

TURNERS FALLS – The Montague Shakespeare Festival is proud to announce its inaugural season, from March 18 to April 7, at the Shea Theater Arts Center at 71 Avenue A in Turners Falls. This three-week celebration of Shakespeare's timeless works will feature a series of workshops, professional training sessions, and the staging of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

The festival is under the artistic direction of Nia Lynn, who brings her experience as voice coach and text coach for the Royal Shakespeare Company (Stratford-upon-Avon) to her role leading the Montague Shakespeare Festival.

With more than 18 years of experience, Lynn has honed the talents of professional actors on some of the most renowned stages globally. Her career spans prestigious institutions such as the Royal Shakespeare Company, Donmar Warehouse, London's Young Vic, Horace Mann School in New York, Connecticut's Eugene O'Neill Theatre, and the Fonact School of Acting in France. Her expertise encompasses a comprehensive approach to performance, combining voice coaching, body and breath work, and accent and dialect training, making her a sought-after mentor in film, theater, and television.

In the debut season of the Montague Shakespeare Festival, Lynn will lead a series of immersive workshops designed to delve into the intricacies of Shakespearean language. These intimate group sessions will cover a range of topics, such as "Mastering Verse Like a Pro," "The Art of Speaking Shakespeare's Sonnets," "Shakespeare in the Classroom: An Educator's Retreat," "Ensemble Building," "Making Shakespeare Your Own: A Personal Approach to the Bard," and "Character Development."

"These workshops are crafted to unlock the richness of Shakespeare's language and make it accessible and engaging," says Lynn. "We've got 27 muscles in the tongue. If I don't know how to use those 27 mus-

cles, then how can I really make a choice about how I want to enunciate a particular word? Because for me, the difference between a puppet, an actor who's very good, and an artist is the choice. I'm making a choice here with my entire musculature and with my ownership of experience."

Complementing the festival's leadership, Maggie O'Connor Moore, a founding member of Til Tomorrow Theater, joins as the Assistant Artistic Director.

On March 29, 30, and 31 and April 5, 6, and 7, the community is warmly invited to experience a captivating performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Additionally, Nia Lynn will use the talents of the ensemble cast to craft a new, innovative performance inspired by Shakespeare's rich texts. Actors keen on auditioning for a role are encouraged to submit their headshots, resumes, or a letter of interest to info@montagueshakespearefestival.com.

"The Royal Shakespeare Company is one of the most prestigious theater companies in the world," says Shea Theater Arts Center managing director Linda Tardif. "We couldn't be more excited to launch a festival like this right here in Montague! We are very proud to host workshops, performances, and classes led by renowned artists right here in town, and all are welcome. We're putting the Shea in Shakespeare this spring!"

The Montague Shakespeare Festival, envisioned and brought to life by executive director Kenny Butler, dedicates its proceeds to the Shea Theater Arts Center. This vibrant celebration of Shakespeare's work is made possible through the collaborative efforts of the Shea Theater and RiverCulture, and the generous support of a Mass Cultural Council Festival Grant.

For additional details, audition opportunities, or to enroll in one of our engaging workshops, please visit www.montagueshakespearefestival.com.

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