

# The Montague Reporter

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

OCTOBER 10, 2024

FAREWELL

## Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno (1/4/1951 – 10/3/2024)



TRISH CRAPO PHOTO

It is hard to share the news here that our colleague, neighbor, and friend Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno died last week, surrounded by loved ones, after years spent contending with illness. An announcement about a public memorial is still forthcoming, as is an obituary. Look for both next week.

This newspaper, which Chris loved and nurtured, is nevertheless due again at the printer, and the tributes have been rolling in. Chris was a writer's writer, and good-naturedly pragmatic about publishing. I can almost see him grin: "Well, let's print them!"

From April 2013 to December 2014 the two of us edited the *Montague Reporter* together. I found the collaboration fruitful, and hugely enjoyable. We decided his title would be "editor-in-chief" and mine "managing editor," but our positions were roughly front- and back-of-house. I had hundreds of questions about this place, which he answered diligently and thoroughly, while my job was to figure out how newspapers were made.

For such an internationalist, Chris was at all times putting down roots. He paid close attention to the experiences of those around him and was able to speak openly about his own feelings. The love he shared with Patricia Pruitt radiated out to everyone. I watched him endure a winter of chemotherapy, working and frustrated to be tired, and then bounce back reinvigorated during our second summer.

Chris worked on full joyous blast and then stopped – doctors' very strict orders – but he stayed in the *MR* orbit even as he turned his attention to building immunity. Patricia edited the Poetry Page until 2016, when her own health concerns eclipsed his, at which point he took it on. During the pandemic, that Page's schedule became our monthly chance to catch up.

Chris has been an inspiring presence in so many of our lives, and I will turn the pages over to others. My thoughts are with his family.

Mike Jackson

I will miss having afternoon merendas under my garden with Chris. Nothing better than conversation with him over crusty bread, manchego, prosciutto, and a glass of Vinho Verde on a warm afternoon. We were due for another one and kept pushing it forward, till he was better. Sigh!

I am grateful for those afternoons, for his wit and intelligence on so many planes, for his gener-

osity and openness and encouragement.

So much good in this community can be attributed to him. Thank you, Christopher.

Edite Cunha

The world lost a truly remarkable man on October 3. After a long and incredibly hard-fought battle, my brother Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno passed from this earth.

An incredible poet and biographer who leaves behind dozens of works that will always help us to remember his words, a professor and linguist, an artist, a world traveler many times over, a loving father, grandfather, and brother, and dear friend to hundreds.

He joins his soulmate Patricia now on that beach in the Yucatán, in that temple in India, on the banks of the Connecticut River steps from the place he finally called home in his beloved Turners Falls, culminating a life richly lived. He made all of our lives better with his kinship, kindness, wit and wisdom. There will never be another like him, but we must promise to keep the flame burning, to take what he gave us and pass that along as we live.

Farewell and Godspeed, brother, to whatever heavenly reward awaits a man such as you!

R. Martin Garcia

When Chris Sawyer-Lauçanno and his wife Patricia Pruitt moved to their beautiful home on Prospect Street overlooking Unity Park and the Great Falls of the Connecticut River in 1992, they immediately began hosting literary salons, inviting local and regional poets and writers to read in the cozy confines of their living room.

I had not met them yet. But their reputation preceded them, all the way down to the Avenue.

A few years later, those gatherings had moved to the warm environs of the reading room in the Carnegie Library, where Patricia was working as the night librarian.

I remember collaborating with Chris and Patricia to honor the passing of their friend Allen Ginsberg with a reading in his honor in 1997. Surely that was not the first time I met Chris, but it was one of the most memorable of our early engagements.

In 2001, when the Montague selectboard, in their wisdom, decided to sever the town's contractual relationship with the local see **FAREWELL** page A6

LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

## No Takers For Fourth Full-Time Police Job

By GEORGE BRACE

Check-ins from town departments continued at Leverett's selectboard meeting on Tuesday, with the board hearing about hiring woes from police chief Scott Minckler and new programs from library director Hannah Paessel.

Minckler said his department is still having difficulty filling the fourth full-time officer position approved at town meeting last April, despite a significant advertising campaign over the past seven weeks. He said the town had only received one application, which was subsequently withdrawn.

"It's not just us," said Minckler. "Everybody's struggling." He said he believed that the towns of Pelham and Montague each had two openings as well, and that while the salary being offered in Leverett was comparable to other small towns, larger towns pay more. Minckler added that a \$10,000 signing bonus offered by Montague was not helping Leverett, but that he did not believe those positions had been filled yet either.

Minckler said he had seen a decrease in interest in careers in policing in recent years, and that when he started out there would be 25 to 30 applicants for full-time police jobs. "And a lot of people don't want to work nights, weekends, and holidays anymore," he added.

Board member Patricia Duffy said she believed this might be the case generally for higher-stress careers, including in healthcare.

The chief also said the state's move away from part-time policing, and closure of its part-time police academy, were contributing factors, as people are no longer able to try out policing without a full-time

see **LEVERETT** page A5

## Canal, Bike Path, Bridges To Stay Closed For Weeks

By SARAH ROBERTSON

**MONTAGUE CITY** – The Turners Falls power canal will be drained of water for at least three weeks longer than anticipated, owner FirstLight Power announced last week, so the company can address a decades-old leakage issue along the canal's southwest wall. The state, meanwhile, will take advantage of the extended break to make repairs

to the Fifth Street canal bridge.

For one week every year, the canal that diverts Connecticut River water from the Turners Falls dam to Montague City, where it is used to generate electricity at the Cabot Station power plant, is drained for inspections and maintenance.

According to filings with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), FirstLight has also see **CANAL** page A7



BOB HATCH PHOTO

Walls to watch out for: The "left dike" of the Turners Falls power canal has taken on seepage for years – perhaps the entirety of the impoundment's century-long existence.

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

## Library Plan Could Stabilize Staff; Weed Review Off To a Bumpy Start

By JEFF SINGLETON

Montague public libraries director Caitlin Kelley came to Monday's selectboard meeting with a proposal to significantly increase the department's staffing, which she said was necessary to provide services comparable to similar libraries, and to retain staff. The debate over cannabis odor in the industrial park continued, meanwhile, and the board approved the November election warrant for November 5.

The library proposal, a revision of a plan Kelley presented last

spring, would expand the library technician from a part-time to a full-time position, and add a new full-time adult services coordinator. The technician would manage more tasks, including more customer service, and the adult services coordinator – similar to the existing youth services librarian – would provide research support, administer the interlibrary loan program, update the library's collections, and organize programs for adults.

"There have been some longstanding issues with retention," see **MONTAGUE** page A8

## High School Sports: Conference Calls

By MATT ROBINSON

**TURNERS FALLS** – The presumptive high school conference champions were decided this week in volleyball and golf, while in football the two teams still undefeated in the Intercounty North Conference go helmet to helmet this Friday.

The Franklin Tech golf team edged out the Pioneer Panthers to earn a share of the Bi-County East title, but the Turners Falls volleyball team lost their shot in the Northern Conference after a marathon match against Mohawk.

And Tech's Football Eagles jumped another hurdle, outpunching the Athol Red Bears 34-12, but their season doesn't get any easier, and their next hurdle comes Friday.

Golf

FCTS 159 – TFHS 214

FCTS 166 – Ware 197

FCTS 165 – Pioneer 170

The Franklin and Turners Falls golf teams are not strangers: many Tech players golfed for Turners in middle school. On Monday the schools went head to head at Thomas's.

see **SPORTS** page A4



DAVID HOITT PHOTO

Turners Falls's Rowan Deery tees off at Hole #1 during Monday's crosstown match at Thomas Memorial. Teammates Andrew Eichborn (left) and Noah Blanchard (right) watch his drive. Tech would win the match, 159 to 214.

The Housing Crisis and the Staffing Crisis Are the Same Thing

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# The Montague Reporter

"The Voice of the Villages"

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August 2002

**WANTED:** A volunteer or part-time staff member to: post our digital edition to our website each Thursday; email the link to digital subscribers; manage our email subscription list; occasionally help update our website; keep up a light but regular weekly presence on social media (currently Facebook and Instagram); and field inquiries received via those platforms. Modest pay available if wanted. Inquire at [editor@montaguereporter.org](mailto:editor@montaguereporter.org).

## Asking Around!

What do our readers think of the ballot questions going before Massachusetts voters November 5?

Two recent polls – WBUR/Commonwealth and Suffolk University/Boston Globe – show both Question 1, which would grant the state auditor authority to audit the legislature, and Question 2, which would allow high schoolers to graduate without passing the MCAS test, as likely to pass.

The WBUR poll skipped Question 3, allowing Uber and Lyft drivers to form unions, but the Suffolk polling suggests it's likely to pass as well (59%/34%).

Question 4, legalizing small amounts of entheogens such as

mushrooms and mescaline, came in 42%/44% 'No' in the WBUR poll and 47%/46% 'Yes' in the Suffolk one. Both data sets have a 4% margin of error, which means it's anyone's game – it may come down to turnout, i.e. who is more depressed come November.

Question 5, bringing the base pay for tipped workers up to \$15 by 2029, was statistically tied in the WBUR (43%/40%) and solidly losing in the Suffolk (40%/52%). Oh, and the Suffolk poll was conducted a few weeks later, which could mean the "No on 5" campaign is gaining more traction.

Where are you at with these proposals? We welcome your letters!



Sam French, owner at Gill CC Woodworks, at his workshop where he and helper Dylan Rogers will soon be making a new ADA-compliant reception desk for the Millers Falls branch library. Most of the wood they use comes from the tree farm started by Sam's father, Dick French, who taught him the business. Sam has had a taste of fame working with architect Maya Lin on benches and tables she designed for the Neilson Library at Smith College, and on renditions of her Ghost Forest installation for galleries in New York City.

## CORRECTION

A caption in our October 3 edition contained an error. We wrote that the Page B1 "header" photo, which showed a Jack-o'-lantern-headed scarecrow gesturing at pallets of gourds and flowers, was taken "at Ciesluk Farmstand in Deerfield."

This was incorrect! The photograph was in fact taken at Kolakoski Farm, nearly two miles south of the

Ciesluk stand and on the other side of Routes 5 and 10.

The *Montague Reporter* never intended to mislead our readers in this way, and we are grateful for the stern phone call alerting us to the mixup and for the opportunity to set the record straight. The information submitted with the photograph should have been fact-checked. We ask forgiveness, and promise to do better in the future.

## OP ED

# Wendell Group Criticizes Healey's Energy-Siting Proposals

(This letter was sent to state senator Michael Barrett and representative Jeffrey Roy, chairs of the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy, from Wendell's No Assault & Batteries coordinating committee.)

Dear Chairman Barrett and Chairman Roy,

On September 11, 2024, Governor Maura Healey inserted Outside Sections into a supplemental budget request to the General Court, comprising nearly 23,000 words on energy permitting policy. "While a final bill has not yet reached my desk," the Governor wrote, "I respectfully ask that you consider advancing these items in the coming weeks so that we can capitalize on the potential to grow our clean energy sector and advance our climate goals."

We are writing to you as citizen activists in Wendell, MA and greater Western Massachusetts who are deeply concerned about the state's clean energy and climate goals. We have seen first-hand how small populations with large unprotected environmental resources can be overwhelmed by what passes today for energy siting and permitting.

Here are some reasons why H.5049 falls short of meeting our goals for siting and permitting reform:

- "Small" solar or wind facilities of less than 25 megawatts, and battery storage facilities of less than 100 megawatts, will be reviewed by cities and towns. But the state controls "uniform sets of public health, safety, environmental and other standards" that local governments must follow to issue small permits. Local energy zoning has, in effect, been nullified.

- Large solar projects of 25 megawatts or over, and battery storage of 100 mega-

watt-hours or more, will be reviewed by an updated eight-member state Energy Facility Siting Board (EFSB), with four members appointed by the Governor. If a city or town has a large project located within its borders, it is granted "intervenor status" and can "submit statements" about permit conditions – but the EFSB reviews the big projects and makes the final decision in all cases.

- If a local government "lacks the resources, capacity or staffing" to review a small application, it has 60 days to request that the state take over the review. For years, rural communities have felt locked out of DPU and EFSB dockets because of lack of funding to retain legal representation and independent experts. We want the power to process land use reviews within our borders. Kicking the can over to the state does not solve our need for local permitting.

- Developers must try "to avoid or minimize environmental impacts," and "mitigate negative impacts on the environment" – but mitigation is limited to this: "only to the extent practicable." Many projects have proceeded by insisting that true mitigation was simply not "practicable."

- A new division of clean energy siting will promulgate regulations and criteria for small clean energy projects – but the state law that exempts solar and batteries from local zoning, Chapter 40A §3, is not repealed.

- The local site approval process is narrowed to a "single permit consolidating all necessary local approvals to be issued." A developer of a small clean energy facility can submit a request for a consolidated permit to a city or town. The local government gets only 30 days to decide if an application is complete

and must follow all state requirements. It must issue a consolidated "final decision" within 12 months – or the project automatically receives "constructive approval" to proceed. This is unrealistic for a town that has no in-house expertise to study the benefits and drawbacks of some very technical clean energy projects.

- Within 30 days of a "final" consolidated permit, a developer of a small project can file a petition to the state EFSB seeking a "de novo" adjudication of a permit application. Developers can go over the heads of locals for their permit. Local government needs to have a collaborative role in the final decision-making at the state level.

- Any large energy storage project that has been exempted from local zoning bylaws can petition the EFSB for a "certificate of environmental impact and public interest," and once such a certificate has been issued, "no state agency or local government shall impose or enforce any law... that would delay or prevent the construction, operation or maintenance of such energy storage system." Local communities do not seek to "delay or prevent" projects, they simply want to make sure they are done safely for the area residents and are compatible with local zoning and general bylaws.

- The state is mandating that every distribution company enter into long-term contracts for energy storage systems, for a total of up to 5,000 megawatts of energy storage by July 31, 2027. That's 50 times larger than the battery storage proposal that imploded in Wendell. Our concerns about the dangers of industrial-scale lithium-ion battery storage have not been addressed. A major expansion of this technology is imprudent and ill-advised.

- There are some useful provisions in the

Governor's bill, like providing \$3.5 million for an intervenor support fund to help public and private groups pay for legal and expert witnesses at public utility or EFSB hearings, and we support "site suitability" regulations to help developers avoid inappropriate energy sites. But our communities feel that we have been "written out" of clean energy permitting, with the control usurped by the state.

There is a gaping hole at the center of this legislation: the lack of any municipal program that stimulates customer investment in community-based energy.

Most Massachusetts residents and businesses already have their electricity procured by their municipalities under Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) programs. Locally-owned renewable energy systems reduce carbon, and lower peak demand for grid power. Customers should be encouraged to build renewable microgrid cooperatives. Cities and towns must be leaders, not back benchers, in local energy planning and development.

We urge you include a prominent role for municipalities in any energy permitting legislation, and work with advocates to develop community aggregation proposals that use distributed end users to shape demand in locally-controlled networks. We would be pleased to work with your committee to explore how to integrate these ideas into any legislation being considered.

Yours sincerely,

*The No Assault & Batteries  
Coordinating Committee:*

**Christopher Queen, Nina Keller,  
Bill Stubblefield, Laurel Facey,**

**Anna Gyorgy, Court Dorsey, Al Norman**

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Compiled by NINA ROSSI

**Montague Villages** is having a fundraiser tonight, Thursday, October 10, at the Element Brewing Company in Millers Falls from 6 p.m. to closing. The brewery will donate 20% of all sales to the new nonprofit, which seeks to match Montague residents over 60 in need of assistance with volunteers (see article, page B2).

The **Montague Fall Festival** takes place on the Montague Center Common and lawn of the Montague Church this Saturday, October 12 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. There will be craft vendors, cars, quilts, music, dancing, fried dough with maple cream, baked goods, chili, corn chowder, gift basket drawings, balloons, animals, and a bloodhound demonstration.

**Acorns are an important food** all over the world. Learn about harvesting and processing these abundant kernels of nutrition at a presentation at the Harvard Forest in Petersham at 10 a.m. this Saturday, October 12. The talk includes a short, level walk, rain or shine. Wear long pants and closed-toed shoes. Contact [eed@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:eed@fas.harvard.edu) with questions.

**Great Falls Books Through Bars** is holding a volunteer day this Saturday, October 12 from 1 to 5 p.m. at 104 Fourth Street in Turners Falls. Volunteers are needed to respond to letters and pack up books. Masks are required indoors.

The space is shared with the Finders Collective, which has been collecting **hurricane relief supplies** to send down to the Asheville, North Carolina area in the coming days and weeks. They currently have more supplies than vehicle

space, but if you're planning to drive to that region and want to connect, email [finders@riseup.net](mailto:finders@riseup.net).

The **Box Shop Duo** will perform as part of the Open Mic event this Saturday, October 12, at the Montague Common Hall. Singer-songwriters Geno Stamell and Mitch Mulholland play original songs and covers after the folk style, with some blues and rock. Doors open at 6:30 for signup, and the open mic starts at 7 p.m.

All are invited to a community discussion about **making some Avenue A buildings more ADA-accessible**, among other improvements, next Tuesday, October 15, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls.

There will be a review of existing conditions and proposed designs including ADA-accessible ramps, and opportunities for community feedback. Light refreshments and childcare services will be provided. Doors open at 5 p.m.

The final event in the **Honoring Local Elders** series at the Wendell Meetinghouse is coming up Tuesday, October 15 at 6:30 p.m. The honorees this time are Alys Terrien-Queen and Christopher Queen. They first came to Wendell in 2002 and have since served on local boards, offered music performances, and volunteered to support many local and regional groups and causes.

Community members are invited to share stories, memories, and appreciations of Chris's and Alys's contributions. The event is free and open to the public. For more information – or for support in organizing similar events in other towns – contact Gail at [rushingwaters01@gmail.com](mailto:rushingwaters01@gmail.com).

Wondering if you want to invite artificial intelligence into your life? Learn about this new technology at a free **presentation for seniors on how to use ChatGPT** next Tuesday, October 15 in the dining commons at Greenfield Community College. The event runs from 4 to 6:30 p.m., including a 30-minute dinner break.

Presenter Sarah Schmidt will explain the digital magic of ChatGPT and teach you how to harness this convenient tool to assist with almost anything. Participants need to create a free ChatGPT account prior to the session. For help with this, contact Judy Raper at [raperj@gcc.mass.edu](mailto:raperj@gcc.mass.edu), or arrive 15 minutes early and bring your smartphone.

Looky Here, the community arts space on Chapman Street in Greenfield, is having an **"art opening, beer release, and trivia"** event at the People's Pint next Wednesday, October 16 from 8 to 10 p.m.

The organization will show some of the artwork that is being auctioned as part of their ongoing fundraiser, and the Pint is releasing "Looky Beer" – every glass sold will earn Looky Here one dollar. There will also be a trivia game with prizes.

A free panel program next Thursday, October 17 at 6 p.m. in the GCC dining commons at GCC, **This is What Democracy Looks Like**, will help examine the ways individuals can contribute to democracy.

"Casting votes in local and national elections is important, but there are many ways to play a part in helping democracy thrive, like using art or writing or assuming leadership positions in schools or organizations!" reads the invitation. "Come learn and talk about all of the ways in which we can practice responsible citizenship." Dinner will be provided, but guests should RSVP at [gcc.edu/events](http://gcc.edu/events).

The **Sawmill River Arts Collective** in Montague Center will hold an Open House next Saturday, October 19 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at their gallery in the Montague Mill complex. The 15-member gallery is focusing on supporting emerging artists and those with financial needs for their 2025 guest artist program.

The purpose of the open house is a silent auction and seconds sale to fund a new scholarship.

All purchases on October 19 will help artists support artists. Guest artist applications will also go live on the day of the open house.

If you are contemplating funeral options, you may have interest in a free presentation by the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Western Massachusetts called **"You Can Do This: Family-Led Funerals."** Lee Webster, a renowned author and advocate of funeral reform, presents this on Sunday, October 20, from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Unitarian Society, 220 Main Street in Northampton. Visit [funeralconsumerswmass.org](http://funeralconsumerswmass.org) for more information.

Why did Poles leave the heart of central eastern Europe for America between 1880 and 1920? Dr. Patrice Dabrowski will present on **"Poland, 1880 to 1920"** next Sunday, October 20 at 2 p.m. at the PVMA, 10 Memorial Street in Deerfield.

As part of the "New Roots in River Banks" exhibit and Eastern European Heritage Day, Dabrowski will present on Polish history and life there while exploring various reasons people were willing to leave everything they knew behind.

Between 1 and 5 p.m. that day, there will be free eastern European desserts, displays of photos, maps, and artifacts, Pysanky egg demonstrations and sales, and more Polish culture and craft. The exhibit begins on Memorial Hall Museum's lawn with displays of old farm equipment used by Eastern European farmers in the Valley. It demonstrates the importance of these immigrants who came to the farming communities of Deerfield, Sunderland, and Whately, beginning in the 1880s.

Also on October 20, the Discovery Center in Turners Falls is hosting **The Commonality Project**, comprising six performances that take various present perspectives about "community" through the lens of entertainment. Participating performers include Haile Eshe Cole, Jayme Windell, Zazie Tobey, Daniel Kinsey, Grey, Amy Dawn Kotel, Josef, Matthew Swift, Win Ridabock, and Jim Gipe. The free event will run from 2 to 4 p.m.

Grayson Funk, manager of strength and conditioning at Franklin County's YMCA, will join the Kitchen Club at the Gill-Montague senior center on Monday, October 21 from 1 to 2:30 p.m. to present "Understanding the 'Why' Behind **Fitness and Nutrition for Seniors.**" This is the first of a three-part series and will cover different types of fitness, the importance of strength training, and an interactive small weight demonstration. Healthy Heart Ambassador and nurse Kathie Curnick will also be there to take blood pressures for those interested.

Senior Tech Time at the same senior center follows from 4 to 6 p.m., also with the first of a three-part series, **"Smart Phones 101: Apples and Androids."** Teachers from Franklin County Technical School will give overviews of these two phone brands, as well as one-on-one help. All are welcome to both events; no appointment needed.

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

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The Turners Falls Fire District will be holding special elections on November 12, 2024, to fill several important positions: two Prudential Committee seats, Treasurer, and Moderator. This is a unique opportunity for residents to get involved in shaping the future of the Fire District.

Interested Fire District residents who wish to run for any of these positions are encouraged to pick up nomination papers at the Turners Falls Water Department, located at 226 Millers Falls Road, Turners Falls, MA 01376.

The deadline to submit the completed nomination papers is October 31, 2024.

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# UNNAM E ABLE BOOKS EVENTS

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SPIRIT DUPLICATOR  
W/ BAGELS & LOX @ SUNDOWN  
ed. by Adam Tobin & Catherine Bresner  
JOINED IN READING W/  
**DEJA CARR**  
**DARCIE DINNIGAN**  
**BETHANY IDES**  
**REID KURKERWICZ**  
**SHEA MOWAT**  
**PAIGE TAGGART**  
**ALAN SONDEHEIM**  
**ZOE TUCK**  
**SARAH WISBY**  
SAT OCT. 12 • 7PM

**POETRY**  
**JULIE CARR**  
**TRAVIS SHARP**  
**KATIE NAUGHTON**  
SUN. OCT. 13 • 4PM

66 AVENUE A • TURNERS FALLS

## MR Wrapping Paper Edition Artist Profile #1

**TURNERS FALLS** – This summer we invited people to submit design proposals for our fourth Special Wrapping Paper Edition, to be printed in late November. This fundraiser for the *Montague Reporter* will feature full-color designs printed on double pages of newsprint, meant to wrap presents in. Seven pages will feature the work of local artists chosen from the proposals we have received, with an in-house cover design as the outer page.

We will be introducing our winning artists and their design proposals every week leading up to Thanksgiving, when the Edition is printed and put out for sale online and in stores. Every year we get such a great selection of designs, the judges have a very hard time deciding which ones will get the ink! This year we have our first repeat winner, and our second-

ever youth winner.

We asked each artist the same three questions, and solicited a selfie from them.

**Linda Aubry** is featured this week. Her design shows flora and fauna captured in her Leverett backyard – deer, ferns, mushrooms, salamanders, and more.

**MR: What would you want your wrapping paper to say, and feel like,**



SUBMITTED PHOTO

*for the person it is being gifted to?*

**LA:** I would like the wrapping paper to invoke the happiness of discovering the hidden things that live and grow in the woods, and the joy of seeing the does and fawns that appear in our yard.

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

**LA:** A small bouquet of autumnal dried perennials and grasses, although a fresh baguette would work, too.

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

**LA:** I like the blend of digital and print media, and discovering the *Montague Reporter* has been a part of the unique experience of living in this area, which we moved to last year.

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**PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT**

**Arc, League Team Up for 'Voter-Fest'**

**TURNERS FALLS** – The advocacy committee of the United Arc, a longstanding human services non-profit organization serving all of western Massachusetts, and the Franklin County League of Women Voters will be holding an educational session for all community members to attend. The session will take place on Wednesday, October 23, from 5 to 7 p.m., at the United Arc office on Avenue A in Turners Falls.

This session, "Voter-Fest," is intended to provide as much factual information regarding candidates, their positions on different topics of concern, and referendum questions that voters will be asked to consider.

Information is intended to be provided in an un-biased manner, aiming not to sway voters

one way or another but to ensure they have as much information as possible when making the choice that is right for them.

Members of the United Arc Advocacy Committee have been working to ensure that all members of our community, regardless of background or ability, are able to understand the information being presented. As such, the session will be conducted in plain language, as much as is possible, to ensure that everyone in attendance is able to gain as much insight from the event as is possible. This aspect of the educational session sets it apart from other such sessions.

Further inquiries regarding this educational session can be addressed to [info@theunitedarc.org](mailto:info@theunitedarc.org) or [lwvfranklincounty@gmail.com](mailto:lwvfranklincounty@gmail.com).

**PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT**

**Fuel Assistance!**

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) enrollment period for the winter heating season opened October 1. HEAP assists eligible renters and homeowners by paying a portion of their bills directly to their heating companies. They can apply online or through local agencies. Assistance runs from November to April.

HEAP grants do not need to be repaid. Eligibility is determined by factors including household size and annual income. Households do not need to be on public assistance or have unpaid bills.

You can apply at [www.toapply.org/CA](http://www.toapply.org/CA). For more information call (413) 774-2310, email [fuelassistance@communityaction.us](mailto:fuelassistance@communityaction.us), or visit Community Action, 377 Main Street, Greenfield, weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to noon or 1 to 4:30 p.m.

**SPORTS** from page A1

Tech's Gabe Mota led the day with a double-bogey 37. Also golfing for the Eagles were Braeden Talbot (39), William Belval (41), Jack Day (42), Grady Deery (49), John McIntyre (54), Ayrton Hemingway, Jr. (58), and Evan Wright (63).

Cam Cogswell led the Thunder with a 46, followed by Liam Kerivan (55), Austin Smarr (56), Will Tyler (57), Rowan Deery (59), Andrew Eichorn (64), and Noah Blanchard (64).

Tech also out-swung the Ware Indians at the Cold Spring Country Club on Tuesday. Mota finished second with a 39, but Tech took the next four spots – Day (40), Belval (42), Deery (45), and Talbot (45) – while Hemingway (56) finished ninth.

On Wednesday the season hung in the balance as Pioneer and Tech battled for the Bi-County East championship belt.

Pioneer was the only team to have defeated the Tech team this season. When I spoke to coach Sean Knightly about that earlier razor-thin loss – Pioneer won by a single stroke – he said, "We didn't lose. Pioneer beat us."

Still smarting, Tech came out swinging this week and earned a share of the conference title. This time Day topped the leader board with a 37, Mota finished third with a 40, and Belval tied for fourth with 42. Deery (45), Talbot (49), Hemingway (54), McIntyre (56), and Wright (65) rounded out the scoring for Tech.

**Cross Country**

On Tuesday the nascent Turners Falls cross-country team raced against Greenfield in Highland Park. It's nice to see a cross-country team again at Turners, especially after Bob Avery, the team's founder, passed away last week. Rumor has it the Turners cross-country course will be named in honor of Mr. Avery.

**Field Hockey**

*FCTS 3 – Hampshire 0  
Smith Academy 2 – TFHS 1  
TFHS 2 – Mohawk 1  
TFHS 4 – Mahar 1*

Last Thursday, Franklin Tech's field hockey team shut out Hampshire Regional 3-0 in Westhampton. The Eagles were a whirlwind of activity, making 24 shots on goal; goalkeeper Maddie Markwell only had to make three saves. Hannah Gilbert scored twice and gave an assist, and Avery Heathwaite scored Tech's other goal.

The same night, the Smith Academy Purple Falcons came to Turners and defeated the Thunder 2-1. Smith held a 1-0 lead through



Franklin Tech's Grady Deery puts out on the Hole #3 green as the Eagles hosted the Thunder at Thomas Memorial Golf Course last Monday.

out the first half, but in the third Ledwin Villafana tied it up. In the fourth, Smith hit the net again to ice the contest 2-1.

Turners won a home match on Monday against the Mohawk Warriors. This was an interesting game to watch. The Thunder scored an early goal when Villafana fed the ball to Ella Guidaboni, who shot it in – but that was it. The ball seemed to stay near the midfield stripe for the rest of the contest, except for sporadic attacks into Mohawk territory.

Both teams had their chances, but the score remained 1-0 until Mohawk tied it up late in the game. Unwilling to settle for a tie, Villafana scored again as time was running out to clinch the win.

On Wednesday the Thunder celebrated Senior Night with a win against the Mahar Senators. It was cold and dark, but luckily the concession stand offered hot chocolate and coffee. After Guidaboni and Villafana received their just desserts, play commenced.

Mahar took a temporary lead in the first period when the ball bounced off a Thunder player into the goal, but in the second Villafana raced from end to end and knotted the game at 1 each. The half ended on a corner penalty, so the game went on; Villafana received the ball and slapped it in again to give Thunder a 2-1 lead at the half.

In the third quarter, the Mahar

goalie dove onto the ball. "I've never seen that before," one of the fathers remarked. The officials conferred and awarded Turners a penalty shot. Guidaboni marked it up and shot it in to widen Blue's lead.

In the waning seconds, Eva Larreau shot the ball at the net. The goalkeeper got a glove on it, but it bounced past to give Powertown a 4-1 victory.

**Volleyball**

*Mohawk 3 – TFHS 2  
FCTS 3 – Mahar 0  
PV Christian 3 – FCTS 2  
Greenfield 3 – FCTS 1*

Turners and Mohawk duked it out for the Northern Conference volleyball championship last Thursday.

Blue held on to take the first set 25-23, and the second was magnificent as they put the Warriors away 25-14. People were beginning to think it would be a sweep, but Mohawk gained momentum, defeating the Thunder 25-14, 25-19, 15-11 to take the game and the championship.

The Franklin Volleyball Eagles, meanwhile, swept the Mahar Senators 3-0 in Orange that night. Shelby O'Leary finished with 16 assists, Emma Peterson eight kills, and Sarah Beckwith nine digs; Madison Pettingill made two blocks and Jenna Petrowicz one.

On Friday the Eagles lost a five-set heartbreaker to Pioneer Valley Christian. Because the football game

had started while volleyball was still going on, many fans missed the final sets. Lily Josephs had four kills, Skylei LePan made a dig, and Laura Fuess had a kill and an assist.

On Tuesday, Tech saw an early lead dissolve in a 3-1 loss against the Green Wave in Greenfield. Greenfield uses flagmen as line judges, even in the JV games, which led to some groans from the Tech folks on closer calls. Tech took the first set, but saw their advantage lapse in the next three.

O'Leary led the team in assists and digs, Beckwith finished with nine digs and four kills, Petrowicz seven digs and four kills, and Pettingill blocked three shots.

**Boys' Soccer**

*Hampden East 3 – FCTS 2*

On Friday, before the football game, Hampden East edged out the Eagles 3-2. Mason Thurston and Jack Gancarz each scored goals in the loss.

**Football**

*FCTS 34 – Athol 12*

I got to the football game a little late, and by then Franklin was on top by a 14-6 margin and Josiah Little was sidelined. "He scored both touchdowns," one of the regulars explained. "He's already got about 200 yards, so [Coach] Gamache must be resting him."

This meant that the Eagles had to adjust their attack. Maxon Brunette stepped in. He scored with 3:30 left in the third quarter to make it 20-6, then hit paydirt again in the fourth to widen the margin. After Athol scored on a first-and-goal to make it 26-12, Brunette scored his third touch of the night to put an exclamation point on the victory.

Tyler Yetter completed one pass for 36 yards and one for a 2-point conversion, and rushed for 26. Little had 200 rushing yards and scored two touchdowns. Brunette logged 98 yards, three touchdowns, and a 2-pointer; Nathan Sabolevski rushed for 21; Hunter Donahue caught a pass for 36 yards and returned a punt for 32; and Ethan Smarr scored on a 2-pointer.

Defensively, Zaydrien Alamed, Nolyn Stafford, and Wyatt Whitman led the gang in tackles, Donahue grabbed an interception and knocked away a pass, Sabolevski and Zachary Haskell shared a sack, and Camryn Laster, Brady Gancarz, and Madix Whitman pestered the Athol quarterback all night long.

The Eagles, still undefeated, go on the road this Friday to challenge the 4-0 Palmer Blue Panthers for the top spot in the Intercounty North.

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## NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

# Assessors Wait on Staffing Study; Harvest Fest Declared a Success

By KATE SAVAGE

At Monday's meeting, the Gill selectboard again finished their business in under half an hour. The biggest action was taking out a loan for a truck: following treasurer Peter Turban's recommendation, the town awarded a one-year bond anticipation note for \$141,407 to bankESB, with a 4.5% interest rate. The interest rate was the lowest of three bids. "Considering the way rates are, that's not bad," said selectboard member Charles Garbiel.

Before approving the loan, selectboard member Randy Crochier noted, "My daughter-in-law is a vice president of something at bankESB. She's not involved with loans at all... I don't think it has an effect on what I vote."

Along with ARPA funds, the loan will pay for the town's "newest big red truck," which Crochier describes as a vehicle slightly smaller than a traditional fire engine. The board chose a one-year period for the bond in the hope that interest rates will be lower in the future.

The board of assessors is requesting a wage increase for the assessors' assistant, from \$25.70 an hour to \$30.05 an hour. The selectboard

recommended that the personnel committee wait for the results of a wage study being done by the UMass Collins Center before they weigh in. The study will also consider whether the town should create a new position of principal assessor.

"I appreciate you guys coming back and keeping it on the front burner," Garbiel told board of assessors chair William Tomb and assessors' assistant Diane Sumrall.

The town declared as surplus a number of items found in a basement storage room at the Riverside municipal building. These include old chairs and desks from the time the building was a grammar school, along with an assortment of glass bottles. Town administrator Ray Purington said any residents interested in the items should contact him, and that after a time he will auction them online.

The board signed the warrant for the November 5 state and presidential election. "It's a doozy," sighed Purington.

Purington announced that the state boat ramp at Barton Cove will be closed for a week or two for repaving. "Rumor has it the pavement there might date back to the very first time it was paved," he said.

Purington also announced that Cultural Council grant applications are due Wednesday the 16th, bulky waste recycling day is Saturday the 19th, and free COVID test kits are available at Gill's town hall, as well as by mail through [covidtests.gov](https://covidtests.gov).

Garbiel ended the meeting by celebrating this year's turnout at the town's Harvest Festival. "I've never seen so many people at that festival in the years I've gone. It was a good time and everyone had fun," he said, giving a special shout-out to the animals and the hayride. "Hopefully it continues again next year."

"A couple residents did request a beer tent – just throwing that out there," he added.

Lastly, an important correction on this reporter's previous article on the Gill selectboard (September 26, *Gill Energized By Engines, But Tired of Tire Hiccups*, Page A1): A joke about being able to take the train home from the governor's mansion rather than a chopper was wrongly attributed to Randy Crochier. It was Charles Garbiel who said the line. The misattribution was particularly egregious as it inspired the meeting's biggest chuckles – and, as Crochier let this reporter know, he is not even jokingly interested in the governorship.

## LEVERETT from page A1

commitment. While the Leverett department is seeking applicants who have been through either bridge or full-time academy training, Minckler said, it may want to consider funding applicants' training.

Minckler said the department was adjusting full-timers' shifts to cover the busiest times, but having trouble covering part-time shifts.

Year-to-date incidents, he reported, were roughly on par with last year at 82, but arrests rose from 22 to 30, mostly due to motor vehicle infractions such as suspended licenses and OUIs.

Minckler said the department responded to "a ton" of speeding and traffic complaints by increasing enforcement, causing citations, which include verbal and written warnings and tickets, to rise from 572 to 821. He attributed a decrease in accidents, from 34 to 29, to stopping more cars.

Mental health calls, he said, were up "a slight bit," along with "domestics" and restraining order violations. "Usually with a domestic comes a restraining order," he commented, "and it's almost guaranteed that the restraining order will be violated within the first week." He said the department has had a few such cases this year.

Things are going well with the joint-policing agreement with Wendell, Minckler told the board, and he had received only positive feedback from the Wendell selectboard and residents. He said his officers were "well-liked over there."

"They're well-liked in this town, too," added Duffy.

Minckler summed things up by saying, "We're chugging along, doing the best we can with what we got. I just don't want to burn the officers out."

## Library Hopping

Paessel reported that "things were going well" at the library. The patio music program on Tuesday nights has been "vibrant and fantastic," she told the selectboard.

A survey sent out by new programming librarian Elena Pepe-Salutric, she said, found that residents were interested in more craft and arts programming, which led the library to add a six-week drawing class and a monthly crafting night, and the department is hoping to add a nature program led by local "treasure" Jean Bergstrom.

Minckler added that his department is working with the library on the possibility of creating a "Coffee With a Cop" program, providing opportunities for residents to chat with officers at the library.

Paessel said work toward creating a "pocket park" on the library grounds is also moving forward. The project includes landscaping work, an accessible boardwalk through wetlands, and a small covered

stage. She also noted that the building's new air source heating system is working well, and that she is particularly happy about the installation of three rain barrels.

The library received 775 visitors in September, she reported, and its budget is "right on target." Board members indicated their approval throughout her presentation.

## Discontinued Roads

The selectboard announced its intention to hold a forum to seek public comment and answer questions about a legal challenge to a public right-of-way from Shutesbury Road to the Gordon King Estate, but that it would not set a date until it had received more information on the dispute. Nathhorst asked if the highway department could clean up the "mess" of snowfence, chains, and signs currently blocking the entrance, pointing out that the right-of-way has not been denied, but the board rejected the idea.

Two members of the steering committee for the Rattlesnake Gutter Road restoration project, Eva Gibavic and Steve Weiss, reiterated their desire for the planning board to provide an assurance that work proposed for the project does not violate the town's zoning bylaws.

Nathhorst, a member of the planning board, stated his opinion that "there really is nothing for us to do on this," but agreed, at the selectboard members' request, to solicit a consensus at the next planning board meeting that there was no conflict.

## Other Business

The selectboard signed the warrant for the November 5 election, which will be held from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. at town hall.

Town administrator Marjorie McGinnis updated the board on efforts to reconcile discrepancies in two Leverett Elementary School (LES) accounts showing deficits. The deficit amounts had been revised downwards to \$9,134 and \$15,388 by the town accountant, but not yet reconciled with the LES finance director's figures.

"Not good enough," board member Jed Proujansky replied. "We need them to both sign off on the same numbers."

The board signed a letter of support for the Statewide Accelerated Public Health for Every Community Act, or SAPHE 2.0., a bill coming before the legislature as H.2204 and S.1334.

The board unanimously voted to adopt a policy that the highway department's three large electronic signs are to be used for municipal or governmental purposes only, and that applications must be approved by the highway superintendent.



## GILL LOCAL CULTURAL COUNCIL SEEKS UNIQUE PROPOSALS

Have you a brilliant idea for building community through arts and culture in Gill? How about a music performance (or more than one) on the town common? A photographic calendar featuring the twelve most beautiful trees in Gill? A nature hunt in the Gill Town Forest? An Arts Tour/Open House? A prize-speaking competition, a magician, a dance troupe? An historical skit at the Town Hall?

The Gill LCC urges you to submit your creative proposals for building community (preferably in Gill, but nearby communities considered) by October 16, 2024. Our FY25 allocation is \$5,700. Applications can be found at [www.massculturalcouncil.org/communities/local-cultural-council-program/](http://www.massculturalcouncil.org/communities/local-cultural-council-program/).

Questions about Gill projects or applications? Email [lcc@gillmass.org](mailto:lcc@gillmass.org).

## PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE MONTAGUE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

In accordance with the Mass. Wetlands Protection Act, M.G.L. Ch. 131, Sec. 40, the Montague Conservation Commission will hold a public meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 17, 2024 to review the Request for Determination of Applicability RDA #2024-05, filed by Ron Rodden to determine whether the installation of a septic system repair within the existing lawn at 392 Old Greenfield Road (Parcel #39-0-050) is subject to the Wetlands Protection Act. A hybrid meeting will be held at the Montague Town Hall Annex, 1 Avenue A in Turners Falls, MA. Remote meeting login information and the filing are available for review at [www.montague-ma.gov/calendar](http://www.montague-ma.gov/calendar).

## PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE MONTAGUE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

In accordance with the Mass. Wetlands Protection Act, M.G.L. Ch. 131, Sec. 40, the Montague Conservation Commission will hold a public meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 17, 2024 to review the Request for Determination of Applicability RDA #2024-06, filed by U.S. Geological Survey, Eastern Ecological Science Center, S.O. Conte Research Laboratory to determine whether the proposed discharge of small amounts of bentonite clay to the Connecticut River mainstem as part of conducted experiments at the S.O. Conte Research Laboratory, 1 Migratory Way (Parcel #08-0-3 & #08-0-1) is subject to the Wetlands Protection Act. A hybrid meeting will be held at the Montague Town Hall Annex, 1 Avenue A in Turners Falls, MA. Remote meeting login information and the filing are available for review at [www.montague-ma.gov/calendar](http://www.montague-ma.gov/calendar).

## PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

## Bulky Waste Recycling Day!

**FRANKLIN COUNTY** – The Franklin County Solid Waste Management District is holding its Fall 2024 "Clean Sweep" Bulky Waste Recycling Day on Saturday, October 19 from 9 a.m. to noon. The three collection locations are Erving Highway Garage, off Route 2 at 16 Public Works Boulevard; Mohawk Trail Regional School at 26 Ashfield Road in Shelburne Falls (Route 112); and the Whately Transfer Station at 73 Christian Lane in Whately.

Residents and businesses from any of the District's 21 member towns may bring bulky items to one of these sites. Acceptable items include tires, appliances, refrigerators, dehumidifiers, scrap metal, furniture, carpeting, construction debris, computers, TVs, propane gas tanks, and other large items. Materials will be recycled whenever possible.

There are charges for most items. Disposal fees, cash only, will be collected during check-in at each site. A complete list of prices for the most common items is at [franklincountywastedistrict.org](http://franklincountywastedistrict.org). Pre-registration is not required for this event.

Mattresses and box springs will not be accepted. For locations, pricing, and hours of the six regional mattress recycling locations, see [franklincountywastedistrict.org/mattress-recycling](http://franklincountywastedistrict.org/mattress-recycling).

Electronics are accepted at the bulky waste day, but residents are encouraged to recycle computer equipment and TVs at their town's

transfer station or at the Greenfield Transfer Station. Staples stores accept computer equipment free of charge; call the store for details.

Clean, dry textiles and books will be accepted for free reuse or recycling. Textiles are now banned from the trash. They must be contained in a sturdy plastic bag. Acceptable items include *clean and dry* clothing, shoes, accessories, curtains, sheets, towels, and stuffed animals, unless moldy or wet. Books can also be in any condition except moldy or wet.

Bulky rigid plastics will be collected separately at \$5 per load. This special program only accepts: clean and empty five-gallon pails; plastic lawn furniture; laundry baskets; storage totes; plastic trash barrels; recycling bins; and milk crates.

Before sending unwanted items for disposal or recycling, consider offering them for reuse. Various charities, including local Salvation Army and Goodwill stores and non-profits, accept donations of household items and working electronics. Call ahead to ask if they can accept your item. Or, offer items on a local "Buy Nothing" Facebook group, Freecycle, or local groups such as NextDoor.

For more information, see [franklincountywastedistrict.org](http://franklincountywastedistrict.org) or contact the District office at [info@franklincountywastedistrict.org](mailto:info@franklincountywastedistrict.org) or (413) 772-2438. MA Relay for the hearing impaired: 711 or 1-(800) 439-2370 (TTY/TDD). The District is an equal opportunity provider.

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**FAREWELL** from page A1

cable access TV provider, Montague Community Cable, Inc. (MCCI), Chris and Patricia were among the first to throw their backing behind MCCI's shaky new start-up venture, the *Montague Reporter*. They felt strongly that the citizens of Montague should be able to tell their own stories, report their own news, and not be an adjunct or an afterthought to the fine folks who were providing cable TV services and newspaper coverage in the neighboring town of Greenfield.

Patricia felt so strongly about this issue that she ran for a seat on the Montague selectboard in 2004, and won, pledging to work for the restoration of local control of the town's TV station. With her solid backing, MCCI recovered the local cable access assignment in 2005.

In those years, Chris was Patri-

cia's greatest political strategist and supporter, even though he was still commuting regularly to his writer-in-residence gig at MIT in Boston, where he taught budding engineers to appreciate the fine points of literature. His syllabus was wide-ranging, including books like Ken Kesey's *Sometimes a Great Notion* and the *Historia de las Indias*, Bartolomé de las Casas' first-hand account of the depredations Christopher Columbus and his men perpetrated against the Indigenous people of the Caribbean.

He did not content himself with teaching what others wrote, but devoted himself throughout his career to his own writing, including innumerable chapbooks of poetry along with major biographies of Paul Bowles and e e cummings.

His residency at the legendary Shakespeare and Company bookstore in Paris, where he was living

when it was largely destroyed by fire in 1990, served him well in writing *The Continual Pilgrimage*, *American Writers in Paris*, 1944-1960. He went on to organize the "Fire Readings" in New York and San Francisco to raise funds for rebuilding that noble institution.

Chris was of Basque and Mexican heritage. He said he gained the patronymic "Sawyer" when his father offered that name to the border guards when he crossed over from Mexico, because Tom Sawyer was the first American name his father could think of.

As to the Basque side of his heritage, Chris used to tell me he regarded Basque as a "stupid language." Stupid, perhaps, but unique – the only "language isolate" still spoken in Europe, unrelated to all contemporary Romance or Celtic languages spoken on the continent.

Whether this odd linguistic heritage was somehow embedded in his genes, I can't tell. But Chris was the sort of linguist who could walk into the Yucatán jungle, find an ancient Mayan stele, and instantly begin to translate it. His book *The Destruction of the Jaguar* – translations from the ancient Mayan *Chilam Balam*, possibly the last surviving fragment of pre-Columbian written literature in the Americas – stands in testimony to his powers.

He was a self-taught architect, carpenter, and electrician, and helped rewire the *Montague Reporter* office when it moved from the former MCTV building on Third Street (now the Brick House) to the basement of my home here on Fourth Street. To this day, no one can understand which switches work to turn on which lights down there, and now it's too late to ask him for a diagram.

Chris was instrumental in so many ways in the development of the *Montague Reporter*. As a member of the paper's community board of directors, he drafted and filed the complex paperwork needed to achieve the *Reporter's* non-profit status. He proposed the motto for the *MR's* Poetry Page, William Carlos Williams' lines from *Asphodel*: "It is difficult to get the news from poems, Yet men die miserably every day for lack of what is found there."

He and Patricia took turns editing the Poetry Page over the years. Sometimes, when they traveled abroad, they handed that duty over to brilliant local poets like Chris Janke and Janel Nockelby, further enriching our lives.

The work he has done to assist the town of Montague in maintaining the integrity of historic buildings in the course of renovation – buildings that are essential to the architectural heritage of our town, including the Old Montague Town Hall, the Shea Theater, the American House, and the Hibernian Hall – will remain an enduring aspect of his legacy.

He suffered through more than a decade of the most arduous medical treatment for what proved finally to be incurable cancer, yet he bore this fate not only with equanimity, but with an uncanny optimism and grace.

He was always just a few days away from being restored to health and ready to join me for a beer... a glass we never got the chance to raise.

He was the kindest and most generous of friends, quick with advice and support, always delivered with

incisive wit and good humor.

Long after the 2018 death of his beloved wife, he continued their home literary salon by reading to Patricia, he told me, every night.

May they continue that cherished communing of spirit now, in some better world, free from the pain they both endured in departing this one.

Chris and Patricia have to be eulogized together, I feel. They were inseparable in life. In leaving it, they left us so immeasurably enriched by their presence, and their friendship. We shall not forget them, nor shall we see their like again.

David Detmold

It is unacceptable to eulogize Chris Sawyer-Lauçanno: No more so than to eulogize the rich late-spring sunlight that filtered through my filthy living room windows one afternoon when I hadn't been feeling well myself, as Chris softly described his favorite Paris haunts, and as I reveled in his cackle in describing the burning of the Bank of America in Isla Vista in 1970.

Better that the afternoon sunlight endure, and that he endure within it. Better to simply dig the profound dignity of the man.

With Love and Respect,

Wesley Blixt

"... wharf rats costumed as natty bankers.... kicking the ravaged poor out of the way.... I denounce it all. I denounce it all. I denounce it all..."

How we will miss him and what he brought to this paper, in this small independent town, and to the bigger reach that it made.

I for one was grateful for his raising the bar for my own writing. His sense of risk in printing new writers raised the bar for all poets. His street creds combined with his poetic skill were a perfect match for this rebel gem of a paper.

Our backyard visits, over Pimm's Cups and Pegu Clubs moved conversation to literature, nuance, family, and Samuel Beckett. I asked him to read Beckett's writing aloud someday. Just an informal backyard thing.

Perhaps, when he read his poem at the Unnameable Bookstore in June, he told us where he was going: "I will go where the cows are wrung dry." We were so fortunate to have had our work uplifted.

Mary Feeney

## An Absence Now That Will Forever Be a Presence

By RICHARD ANDERSEN

Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno died on National Poetry Day and the Feast Day of Saint Francis of Assisi.

His timing couldn't have been more appropriate. Or more Christopher.

The *Montague Reporter's* "Poetry Page" editor since the newspaper's inception more than a decade ago, Christopher was an internationally renowned poet whose work continues to be read and cherished throughout much of the Western world. He has been referred to as the last of the great Modernists.

But poetry's world wasn't large enough to contain Christopher's range of literary interests and forms of expression. Also to his credit: the first biography of Paul Bowles; the definitive biography of e e cummings; a bio-opera libretto of Federico García Lorca, with music by Andrey Kasparov; numerous works as an essayist, eulogist, editor, and translator in multiple languages; and the best-selling memoir of American writers living in Paris after World War II. *The Continual Pilgrimage*, published in 1992, is still in print.

It would come as no surprise to those that know Christopher that he was friends with many of the people he wrote about. When his granddaughter Imogene helped him organize his memorabilia for distribution to special collection libraries in Delaware and California, she discovered 73 letters from John Ashbery, a poet who was as close to a celebrity as a poet can become in this country. (Need I mention that Christopher had forgotten all about the letters?)

Then there was the time his daughter Sarah noted that their dinner guest had the same name as the author of a poem they'd read in school that afternoon. When Christopher pointed out that the two Seamus were one and the same, Sarah asked Christopher if the future Nobel Prize winner from Ireland would speak to the students in her class. "You'll have to ask him," Christopher replied.

And Mr. Heaney's response, without any hesitation? "Sure."

Somehow, between dozens of books and hundreds of poems and articles, Christopher served as a much beloved full-time professor of architecture, writing, and French for 25 years at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. But there was no time limit for Christopher, no matter what he did or when.

In the months before his death, he team-taught an MIT graduate course in architecture with a former student protégé; helped implement the affordable structural improvements he had created and developed for the old Montague Town Hall; participated in two Zoom poetry readings in Spanish; and continued to prepare books for Alysamps, the press in Paris that featured his poetry in its inaugural edition several decades ago.

Asked to cite the best review he ever received, Christopher recounted the time when, crossing the English Channel, he provided an American tourist with suggestions of what to see and do in London. Afterwards, an eavesdropping French passenger complimented Christopher on his ability to speak English without any indication that it was his second language. Again, not surprisingly, he also spoke French and Spanish without a foreign accent and translated works as far distant from

the Atlantic coast as Turkey, Romania, and Bulgaria.

And not to put too fine a point on all of Christopher's many accomplishments, but he was also a musical composer and an abstract expressionist painter.

Buddhist by temperament and casually devoted by practice – he wrote for *Time/Life* in Tokyo for four years – Christopher was also something of a modern-day Francis of Assisi. Like the patron saint of animals, who verbally persuaded the wolf living outside of Gubbio to spare the sheep on whom the medieval town's citizens depended for their livelihood, Christopher used his extraordinary linguistic skills to similarly convince his peripatetic dog Dorito to refrain from harassing the multiple generations of bunnies residing in their backyard: "I merely told Dorito to be nice; he's very smart; he understood immediately."

If I didn't know better, I would have asked Christopher to show me his stigmata.

Also like Saint Francis – the first poet to compose in the spoken Italian of his time – Christopher worked miracles for countless numbers of writers. A one-person coaching and promotional support wave, he not only helped them improve the quality of their texts, but often went so far as to make sure their completed works got published. He didn't feel it was beneath him to lean on fellow writers to subvert the printing costs of small press publishers who otherwise couldn't afford to print large, often illustrated books on their own limited budgets.

Contrary to what any of the above might imply, Christopher was not what you might call a typical bookish type. Warm, friendly, personable, outgoing, and easy to be with regardless of age or background, he was enormously intelligent without taking himself too seriously, quick-witted with a finely tuned sense of irony, knowledgeably wide-ranging without heavy-handedly informing others with what he might have thought they needed to know, an empathetic listener regardless of the subject or the viewpoint being shared, and never one to boast about himself or say an unkind word about anyone else. He could be found ridding a neighbor's attic of bats, or rewiring the office of a then-struggling *Montague Reporter*.

When asked recently what he thought was the meaning or purpose of his life, Christopher replied, "To help others get through it."

No consideration of Christopher's life, however, would be complete without including his late wife Patricia Pruitt, an internationally renowned poet in her own right who also served as a Montague selectperson. To say they loved intensely, were completely devoted to each other for more than 50 years, and never gave up on their struggle to improve the human condition fails, as words often do, to adequately convey the many life-changing, inspiring contributions they made to their own lives, to those of their children and grandchildren, and to the lives of the many people all over the world who were fortunate enough to be touched by them personally or through their artistic achievements.

Now they are gone. The void they left behind will never be filled, but Christopher and Patricia will continue to serve as heroic models for those who believe, like Saint Francis, that all we can take with us when we die is what we've given to others.



ANDREA LIBIN PHOTO

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**CANAL** from page A1

been monitoring the rate at which water is leaking from the reservoir above Cabot Station and seeping into the ground. The “left dike” or southeast wall, in particular, has been a topic of study and concern.

The issue has been on the radar of the company and its predecessors for decades. “FirstLight observed wetter ground in this specific area, which indicates seepage,” FirstLight communications manager Claire Belanger told the *Reporter*. “Our concern was that left unaddressed over an extended period of time, seepage could weaken the dike and present a safety hazard.”

For over two decades, Belanger said, the company has been monitoring groundwater levels and the integrity of the embankment. A tubular device known as a piezometer is used to measure the water’s level and pressure. Removing vegetation from the dike is necessary for inspectors to look for any depressions, boils or heaves in the earth, according to a 2023 letter by a FERC dam inspector.

“While there has been no change in the embankment condition, FirstLight decided to carefully plan, engineer, permit, and now construct a permanent fix solution, and we have been communicating with FERC throughout the process,” Belanger told the *Reporter* this week. “While seepage of water is normal, water traveling under the dike could eventually cause erosion of the interior of the dike, which could cause structural issues... [T]he proactive installation of a seepage management system will resolve the issue and prevent future problems.”

The fix, according to Belanger, involves installing a perforated pipe to catch water flowing underground and deliver it elsewhere. The ongoing work also means the section of the Canalside Rail Trail bike path that runs from Eleventh Street to Depot Street will remain closed until the project is complete.

The company says it expects the work will be finished and the canal refilled by Sunday, October 20.

“FirstLight is committed to safely completing the work on the most aggressive possible timeline and will provide updates should the project schedule change,” Belanger wrote in the company’s announcement.

**Bridge Opportunity**

The Fifth Street bridge, or the “Green Bridge,” is a metal grate that hums every time a vehicle crosses the canal, and hangs just feet above the swift-moving water. During a recent inspection of the bridge, Montague town administrator Walter Ramsey told the *Reporter*, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) identified repairs which can only be carried out while the canal is drained.

“This bridge repair by MassDOT as well as FirstLight’s repairs to the canal dike just highlight that as a community we are managing a legacy of aging infrastructure,” he wrote. “We appreciate the public’s patience during these repairs. Ensuring public safety is the number one priority. Sometimes that comes at the cost of convenience in the short term.”

The bridge will be completely closed until October 18, according to a MassDOT advisory released on Monday. Built in 1954 and rebuilt in 1992, this bridge has appeared in recent years on state and federal listings of “structurally deficient” bridges.

It is scheduled to be completely replaced, along with the connecting bridge across the river to Greenfield and an adjacent bridge to the Patch neighborhood, in a project beginning in spring 2027.



ED GREGORY PHOTO

“Underdeck repairs are being made by MassDOT,” roving photographer Ed Gregory reported Wednesday. “Rusted and stress-worn steel parts are being replaced with new steel components. The work is being done to ensure a safe structure will be available until the eventual replacement of this bridge.”

Mike Jackson contributed additional reporting.



**A Steady Drip**

For decades, seepage from the canal has been an issue identified in safety reports. A 1967 inspection of the dam and canal, then owned by the Western Massachusetts Electric Company (WMECo), noted leakage through the Fifth Street bridge abutment.

“The canal is in reasonably good condition and, under the present operation, does not endanger public safety,” read the report the Stone & Webster Engineering Corporation prepared for the company. “The repairs to the Fifth Street Bridge abutment should be undertaken at the earliest practicable date.”

In 1991 FERC ordered Northeast Utilities, the canal’s owner at the time, to address a seepage issue within 14 days by submitting a report with a proposal to remediate it.

This report – and many others like it – are no longer available for public viewing on the FERC website because they are said to contain “critical energy infrastructure information,” a category the agency ruled in 2003 is exempt from public records laws due to “the terrorist acts committed on September 11, 2001, and the ongoing terrorism threat.”

After Tropical Storm Floyd caused several yards and basements on Depot Street to flood in 1999, the Montague selectboard complained to FERC that existing drainage around the canal reservoir was inadequate, and that they believed increased flooding in recent years had to do with seepage from the canal.

FERC ordered Northeast Utilities to investigate the issue. Engineers hired by the company produced a 140-page report that determined that while increased beaver activity was visibly responsible for increased flooding within the previous five years, the left dike of the canal reservoir was leaking, and likely always had been.

“The data review indicated that seepage has been occurring downstream of the left embankment virtually since its construction in about 1915,” read the report by Kleinschmidt Energy and Water Resource Consultants. “A drainage system, known as the Burnham Field drainage system was installed a few years later, consisting primarily of an open ditch leading to a culvert beneath Montague City Road.... In addition, beavers have constructed dams across the open ditch and elsewhere in the vicinity, which has raised local groundwater levels and impeded drainage discharge.” The report outlined steps that could be taken to bypass the beaver dams and restore the field’s drainage capacity.

The engineers also assessed potential risks to the community if the canal breached the embankment at Cabot Station. Some parts of Montague City Road could be inundated with up to 2.45 feet of water, the report determined, unless the gates at the Turners Falls dam and hydro plant are immediately opened.

“Breach flows from the downstream or upstream canal embankment breaches would greatly exceed the capacities of existing ditches and culverts, and would likely produce significant flooding and erosion in Montague City,” the report concluded. “The likelihood for loss of life associated with an embankment failure seems small, due to the relatively flat terrain that will tend to spread the flows laterally.”

**Excavation Efforts**

FirstLight subsequently overhauled the surface drainage system between the canal and Montague City Road, and the company has been preparing an application to FERC since at least 2015 for upgrades to protect the dike, which it submitted last November.

The project began late last month, but once the canal was drained, Belanger said, it became apparent it would require more time.

On September 24 the company told FERC it would need to extend the drawdown “to support excavation efforts and installation of seepage management system.”

“Understanding that this drawdown extension coincides with a portion of the downstream fish migration season,” Belanger wrote, “FirstLight is actively consulting with the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife and the US Fish and Wildlife Service [USFWS] to identify approaches to supporting effective fish passage during the drawdown to mitigate its impact.”

An attempt Wednesday to reach a representative of USFWS for comment was unsuccessful as of press time, but documents FirstLight shared this week with FERC in its request to extend the drawdown included emails from employees of USFWS and the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife.

Both agencies appeared to support the company’s “conceptual proposal” to help fish migrate downstream by repeatedly building up water above the Turners Falls dam and releasing a higher flow around sunset.

**LOOKING BACK:  
10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK**

*Here’s the way it was on October 9, 2014: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.*

**Swaying Away at Unity Park**

The Montague parks and recreation commission unanimously voted to accept the ADA-compliant Sway Fun Glider chosen by the Committee for the Unity Park Accessible Swing Project. The committee noted that the swing’s motion appeals to the sensory element of play for people of all abilities. It has been endorsed by Heather and Greg Norwood, whose son Jacob is the inspiration for this endeavor, which began in 2013. Installation is set for the spring of 2015.

**Fiberglass Tops Cedar or Slate**

When the Wendell town meeting cut the budget for replacing the town gazebo roof, the possibility of using more costly slate was eliminated. Ed Hines offered the town cedar shingles, but did not have

enough, so the board approved fiberglass shingles. Building and grounds coordinator Ted Lewis expressed disappointment that the voters had not approved funds for slate, which would last 100 years and match the senior center roof.

**A Full-Service Café Bar**

As of this week, Turners Falls will have another new eatery. The Five Eyed Fox, under the ownership of Ashley Arthur, Aric Binaco and Meredith Merchant, aims to be a full service café and beer and wine bar, specializing in locally sourced and crafted drinks and food.

**Next Friday at the Brick House**

Downtown Boys play driving, catchy anthems – best seen live, where Victoria Ruiz can get right up in your face to tell you what she believes. Openers include Hard Nips, Holy Vex, and the Final Frontiers. The show starts at 8 p.m. sharp, and is all-ages and substance-free.

**20 YEARS AGO**

*Here’s the way it was on October 7, 2004: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.*

**Want to Buy a Used Paper Mill?**

On October 21, Montague town meeting members will be asked to consider purchasing the Strathmore Mill. Western Properties LLC, a Boston-based property management company owned by Scott Jones, purchased the Strathmore Mill from International Paper Co.

in 2002 for \$40,000. Jones’s father, Jerry Jones, has since used the mill as a warehouse for his paper recycling business, and has lately approached the town with an offer to sell the complex for \$300,000.

At the October 4 selectboard meeting, town planner Robin Sherman said, “We’ve been discussing the future of Strathmore since 1994 when IP shut down the mill. It is integral to the history, cultural landscape, and economic future of downtown Turners Falls.”

**150 YEARS AGO**

*Here’s the way it was on October 7, 1874: News from the Turners Falls Reporter’s archive.*

**Local Matters**

Our boys whipped the South-Deerfield fellers at base ball on Saturday.

Campbell & Hazelton’s men are at work upon a drain from the foot of L street to the pond below.

The Chapman & Co. Cutlery of Millers Falls, used their new drop yesterday for the first time. It weighs some 8000 lbs. and strikes a blow of 700 lbs. It is reported as working splendidly. Striking a steel handle at each blow.

The Fitchburg Fusiliers will hold a Grand Military Tournament and Target Shoot at Lake Pleasant on Wednesday, Oct. 14. They will be accompanied by the Fitchburg Cornet Band and Orchestra, who will furnish music for dancing. Prizes to the amount of \$150 are offered.

Diogenes should visit Turners Falls. We have one honest man in the place. When Mrs. Blake was leaving town the other morning, and while in the stage, she recollected that there was a small debt

due Mr. Chas. E. Barton and handed him what she supposed to be a two-dollar bill; before he could or did look at it, the stage drove off. He, soon finding that it was a \$20 bill, hastened to hire horse, followed her to the Greenfield depot, and returned the money, like an honest man, that he is.

Justice is a condiment that sweetens journalistic life and it is a matter of duty as well as pleasure for us to be able to give the facts of the fracas of Saturday night between a pair of roommates on Ave A. The affair did not occur in or even near Schuler Hall, but on the Avenue below the corner of Second Street. It was a little personal matter over as soon as done. The dances at Schuler Hall are properly conducted, as we can testify.

**NOTICE.** The subscriber hereby gives notice that he has given his daughter, Elizette Augusta Schuler, her time from this date, and that he shall claim none of her earnings. He also gives notice that he will pay no debts of her contracting, and for bids all persons to harbor or trust her on his account. **WILLIAM SCHULER.** Turners Falls, Sept. 14, 1874.



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**MONTAGUE** from page A1

Kelley told the board. "Lots of people want to work at the library, but unfortunately, three out of the four people who've left in the last three years left because they're not making enough money."

The technician, she added, plans to retire this year, and Kelley predicted it will be difficult to find a "qualified person" for the position, which has been 13 hours per week but was recently reduced to five because the employee needed another job.

The board did not vote on the proposal, which will be considered in the process of drafting next year's town budget. Kelley said she and town administrator Walter Ramsey estimated the changes would increase the library budget by \$146,000 and add \$16,000 to the town's benefits budget. The current year's library budget is \$518,233, and benefits for all town employees are budgeted at \$2,657,083.

Selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz, citing a recent wage study by the UMass Collins Center, said that "there's a lot of work that needs to happen over the next few months between the personnel board and the finance committee..."

The board did approve a \$19,000 contract with the website developer Clearpeak Interactive, Inc. for a "full-scale redesign and development" of the library system's website. Kelley said the company had strong references, and its bid came in slightly lower than the only competitor. The upgrade will be partially funded by a Libraries Transforming Communities grant from the American Library Association.

The library's current site was created by the Greenfield-based Montague WebWorks, as were those of all other town departments. Kelley said having a different developer for a library website is not unusual, as a library site needs "a ton of content," including document and book searches, the ability to book meetings, and compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act.

Clearpeak's proposal assumes that after the initial launch the site will be managed by library staff.

**The Smell Test**

The selectboard also approved a contract with the Waltham-based Tech Environmental, Inc. to evaluate measures taken by the cannabis company Flower Power, Inc., to reduce odor from its growing facility in the industrial park.

The independent review was ordered two weeks ago by the selectboard after complaints by the nearby Ja'Duke Center for the Performing Arts that strong cannabis odors were disrupting its preschool programming. Residents of summer cabins along the Connecticut River have also complained of the odor.

Flower Power had responded with its own research, which it said showed measures it has taken to reduce odor have been effective, but Ja'Duke management, citing the

town's agreement with the cannabis company, called for an "independent" evaluation of the issue. The decision to solicit an independent review was endorsed by the board of health.

Ramsey came before the board on Monday with a proposal from Tech Environmental to "review any odor control management plans, permitting documents, and any drawings that are provided," and give "written comments and feedback on the mechanical ventilation and filtration plans, as well as any odor mitigation policy of the proposed operation." The company offered to include one site visit.

Ja'Duke co-owners Kim Williams and Nick Waynelovich strongly objected to this limited scope of work. "We need to assess the odor around our building," said Williams. "This is just coming in and confirming that their systems are working - you can say 'Yeah, they're working,' but we're still smelling marijuana all around our building."

"I don't know how you have a scientific study when you don't go and test any of the areas that are smelling," added Waynelovich. "That is anti-science to me."

"We need to do something to keep moving us in a positive direction - or in a direction, positive or however," said Kuklewicz. "This could further your case," he told the Ja'Duke owners.

Selectboard member Matt Lord pointed out that what the town was doing, namely hiring an outside firm to make sure the facility's odor mitigation systems are working properly, was what the host community agreement prescribes.

The board voted to move forward with the contract and proposed scope of work, at a cost of \$4,900.

In its proposal, Tech Environmental wrote that it "has reviewed or is reviewing marijuana projects for odor/noise in one half to one dozen towns." The company's website describes ten recent odor control projects, none of which involve cannabis, but it was recently hired by the town of West Stockbridge to evaluate odor control at an outdoor pot farm following complaints by its neighbors.

The system implemented in West Stockbridge involved blowing the odor mitigation compound Ecosorb, which Flower Power is also spraying into its greenhouse exhaust, over its operations during the late summer and fall harvest season.

Tech Environmental recommended that the town require the company to expand the area it was fumigating, though this was opposed by a different consultant hired by the cannabis firm. This led to a "battle of experts" at an August selectboard meeting, according to an account in the online newspaper *The Edge*. The West Stockbridge board eventually voted to require the mitigation technology be used "on a continuous basis," and to monitor the result during this year's harvest.

**Screwing Up**

The board approved a \$2,397,461 contract with Associated Construction Services to replace the two large screw pumps at the Clean Water Facility. The project will be funded by a prior town meeting appropriation, a grant from the US Department of Agriculture, and money remaining from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

Another project funded by ARPA, the restoration of the windows at the library and old town hall in Montague Center, has been completed, according to assistant town administrator Christopher Nolan-Zeller.

A quick review of the town's ARPA funding by Nolan-Zeller revealed that \$61,588 of the original \$2,454,622 remains to be allocated. It was originally thought that any remaining funds need to be committed to specific projects by the end of the year but, as Nolan-Zeller told the board, the Treasury Department is no longer enforcing that policy, so "we now have until December of 2026."

Nolan-Zeller also announced some "unfortunate news" - that both bids to repair the Eleventh Street Bridge came in well over the project's budget. He said he would schedule a follow-up meeting with Ramsey and the engineer to "adjust the scope of the project" or find other funding.

**Other Business**

The board approved a lengthy warrant for the November election after reading it aloud in its entirety. The ballot includes the President and Vice President; the town's representatives in the US Senate, US House, and state house; the Clerk of Courts, the Register of Deeds; and member of the Governor's Council and the executive committee of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG).

The warrant also includes five ballot questions, which would give the state auditor the authority to audit the legislature; eliminate the requirement that students pass the MCAS test to graduate high school; give "rideshare" drivers the right to form unions; allow adults to possess and use certain natural psychedelic substances that are now illegal; and phase in an increase in hourly wage for tipped workers to the minimum wage while allowing them to pool tips with non-tipped employees.

At the request of FRCOG, the board endorsed legislation known as State Action for Public Health Excellence (SAPHE) 2.0. The bill, according to the state public health association, would establish minimum public health standards for municipalities, encourage sharing services, create a uniform data reporting system, and move toward more equitable funding of public health, potentially with state aid.

Ramsey introduced an invitation from the Franklin County Technical School (FCTS) for a selectboard

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member to participate in contract negotiations with tech school staff. Neither Lord nor member Chris Boutwell, the only eligible members since Kuklewicz also chairs the FCTS school committee, volunteered, so no one was appointed.

At the end of the meeting, under "topics not anticipated" on the agenda, Ramsey announced that the annual drawdown of the Turners Falls power canal, which usually lasts for one week in September, will be extended until October 20. He said this was required for repairs to the canal's southwest wall. (See article, Page A1.)

Ramsey also said the state Department of Transportation had informed the town that it will use this opportunity to make repairs on the Fifth Street bridge, or "Green Bridge," across the canal. This bridge, which leads to the "White Bridge" to Greenfield, will therefore be closed until October 18. Ramsey added that both bridges are scheduled to be replaced beginning in 2027.

The next selectboard meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 21.

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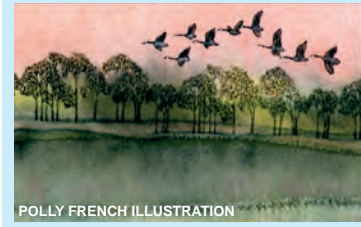
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FEATURES@MONTAGUEREPORER.ORG OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER OCTOBER 10, 2024



WEST ALONG THE RIVER  
OCTOBER MORNING  
WITH ASTERS

By DAVID BRULE

**THE FLAT, ERVINGSIDE** – These first few mornings of October have coaxed forth a bounty of asters, both wild and domestic.

Oh, for sure, and for good measure, October brings wreaths of early fog, the first wave of white-throated sparrows coming down from the Wendell hills, and no hint of frost. The white-throats will spend the winter in the flatlands of this river valley where there are lots of easy pickin’s at the birdfeeder.

Yet, along with the golden rays of sun reaching the yard on a slant from the east, the asters hold the ephemeral center stage of early autumn.

We let the lawn’s borders go free from the mower this time of year, knowing the wild asters, a pale mauve, will spring up under the lilacs and along the picket fence.

Just now a small group of nervously busy ruby-crowned kinglets grace the young peach tree, pirouetting just above the domesticated asters with the late-blooming rose who calls herself Tottering By Gently.

I call these asters “domesticated” because this deep purple variety comes from a garden. My sweet cousin Annabelle, who always walked our woods with her dog Daisy, and later her little scamp Bonnie, left us this aster variety from her garden when she passed over in mid-winter this year at the age of ninety-three. And now her flowers grace this yard, reminding us of her. Just like the peonies planted here more than one hundred years ago by our grandmother Hannah. These flowers will continue to bring back the memory of those two gentle women from another century.

The banks of flowers hold a whole heaven-full of bees. Bumblebees of every size imaginable, multiple honey bees, stinging yellow jackets, all swarm in the

sweep of mauve and purple October blooms. All these pollinators are gleaming the last sources of nectar before the coming inevitable cold. These bee-loud glades will help them winter over and emerge again in spring.

*October 3:* The bumblebees are still fuzzling the asters, birds bustle about the yard as if everything was normal on this October day.

But earlier at 4:30 a.m., the great owl who haunts our woods called from just beyond the open bedroom window. Now, I usually consider this owl’s hooting as reassuring, knowing that our land and the woods beyond is home to this mysterious bird of the night. It’s good to know that life out of doors is the way it should be, as it has been for thousands of years.

I then remember in my half-sleep that our Native American informants also tell us that the owl carries a message from the other world. Sometimes, owl arrives to accompany a person from this world into the spirit world.

It crossed my mind that the owl could be calling my name, but I knew I wasn’t ready yet. I pinched myself, maybe figuratively in this lucid dream, to be sure I was still here. Yep. And so I turned over and thought no more of it.

Then the news came later in the day.

The word went out shortly after 3:10 that afternoon. Our dear friend and mentor, Chris Sawyer-Lauçanno, had passed over. A few times in my life when a friend has passed away, I have had a startling and fleeting image of that person in my mind making a quick visit, but this time, I’ll take that call of the owl to mean the same visitation.

Chris was a true Man For All Seasons – an *enfant du siècle*, to use a phrase from French literature that he would instantly recognize.

He was first and foremost a see WEST ALONG page B2



MONIQUE BRULE PHOTO

Cousin Annabelle’s asters, with the “Tottering-By-Gently” rose.

Above: “At 8:45 we got a call regarding smoke in the building,” Turners Falls fire chief Todd Brunelle said of a house fire that brought five departments to Fifth Street Monday morning. The fire’s cause is still under investigation, but Brunelle said all residents were safe: “Working smoke detectors save lives... Any delay could have changed the outcome of this fire drastically.”

Fallen Trees Find a Second Life

By WILL QAULE

**ERVING** – The new burlled maple stool by the public computers at the Erving Public Library doesn’t have an adjustment lever underneath the seat like the nearby office chairs do, but it does have an old tap hole in one of its legs.

Library patrons can now connect with a Quabbin sugar maple and the internet at the same time, select books from a magic treehouse, and rest on a bench supported by oaks that until recently stood in Erving State Forest, thanks to a recent collaboration between the state Department of Conservation and Recreation (MassDCR) and the Massachusetts College of Art and Design (MassArt).

“One of the classes that’s most exciting to me,” recently-retired professor Mitch Ryerson told a gathering at the library’s reception for the student artists on Sunday, “was this class that’s focused on a communi-

ty-build aspect of furniture. We would take local wood and make something for the community.”

Ryerson had taught the class many times before, but for the fall semester of 2023, “I wanted to try something different.”

A year earlier, on July 21, 2022, a microburst with wind speeds up to 90 miles per hour had carved a two-mile path of destruction through Erving State Forest. “I was walking through after the microburst,” said MassDCR director of wood utilization Sean Mahoney, “saying ‘Hey, we have this major change to the forest – wouldn’t it be great to document this in a culturally significant way that benefits people?’”

Mahoney and Ryerson had worked together for years in an ongoing collaboration where MassDCR sources wood to be milled by Winwood Sawmill in Winchendon for Ryerson to use with his students. In past years, Ryerson’s classes had made tables for state park visitor centers and MassDCR facilities with wood Mahoney salvaged and provided. This time, he reached out to Erving library director Abigail Baines with the idea that each student could create an artistic piece of furniture, using the wood from Erving State Forest, that would serve a real function for the library.

Ryerson recognized that making bespoke furniture might present a new challenge to some of his students. While other craft schools emphasize traditional furniture-making techniques and ideas – “form follows function” – Ryerson noted that “MassArt is sort of this hybrid situation: it’s an art school that also has this very good technical facility.”

Baines, he said, was “really encouraging and really appreciative, but she was also really clear that what she wanted was things that would work in the library. She was looking for specific things that did specific jobs. So it was really good for the students as a professional practice exercise – it was like a commission. They had a job to do, and they were given design freedom to do that job. She wanted their own personal creativity to be a part of it.”

see FURNITURE page B8



QAULE PHOTO

Danielle Marie Richard with her Magic Treehouse Shelves, designed for use by Erving’s Friends of the Library.

EVENT PREVIEW

‘Happening’ Reaches Leviathan Scale

By BELLA LEVAVI

**TURNERS FALLS** – Breaking News: The Shea Theater has been swallowed by a Leviathan.

Thirty artists have come together to simulate a world inside the belly of a whale and invite audiences to experience this conjured world during their annual Immersive Arts Festival, titled *A Happening IV: Leviathan*, at the Shea Theater on Friday and Saturday, October 25 and 26.

“It’s like a first-person point of view video game,” K. Adler, co-director of the show, told the *Montague Reporter*. “We take the ‘theater’ out of people’s minds. The theater can be daunting... We like to expand that experience and have the audience themselves be just as much a part of the work.”

This show marks the fourth year of an annual immersive arts festival organized by Cloudgaze Productions, called *A Happening*. Co-directors include Adler, Sam V. Perry, Joshua Ruder, and Ashley Kramer. The festival has evolved over time, taking on new themes while maintaining the goal of showcasing a wide variety of local artists across disciplines.

see LEVIATHAN page B6



SUBMITTED PHOTO/EGGTOOTH PRODUCTIONS

The annual Happening, an “immersive arts festival,” makes use of a range of backstage and interstitial spaces at the Shea.

# Pet of the Week



## ‘SASSAFRAS’

Sassafra, true to his name, has a bit of that sass in him. This is not a hamster who will do well with young kids: he can get startled very easily, and will bite. If you are patient and take things slowly he will warm up. We don't know much about his past, as he showed up one day outside the doors of Dakin with his freshly packed bags looking for a new home. Hamsters are nocturnal, which means that they love to sleep during the day and play at night. Their average lifespan is two to three years.

Interested in adopting? The hamster adoption fee is \$17. Come in during open adoption hours, Tuesdays through Saturdays from 12:30 to 3 p.m., or call the Dakin Humane Society at (413) 781-4000 or visit [www.dakinhumane.org](http://www.dakinhumane.org) for details. Want your own pet featured in *The Montague Reporter*? We accept reader submissions! Just email a high-resolution photo to [editor@montaguereporter.org](mailto:editor@montaguereporter.org) along with a paragraph or two about why your pet is simply the best.

**WEST ALONG** from page B1 poet, but also a teacher, an architect, a linguist, and an electrician all at once. He translated Mayan hieroglyphics, conversed with Bulgarian intellectuals, and even had time to be the editor of our *Montague Reporter*. Chris had known the giants of literature: George Whitman of Shakespeare and Company in Paris, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, and Paul Bowles. He drank a bottle of Irish whiskey with Seamus Heaney in a tiny village in Portugal, attended Kenneth Rexroth's poetry class in Santa Barbara, and met Allen Ginsberg at the City Lights bookstore in San Francisco. Many of these adventures are recorded in

his 2022 book *Remembrances of Luminaries Past*, reviewed in the *Reporter* by his good friend Richard Andersen. Given that he had spent time collaborating with Bowles in Tangier, where I had lived for a year, I asked Chris how to find a copy of his *Luminaries* book. He replied, "Check your mailbox!" Knowing our mutual connections with Tangier and Paris, Chris had driven over to Millers Falls around 6 a.m. and popped a copy on my doorstep without telling me! Chris felt at home in those cities, as well as Cambridge, Dublin, Mexico City – and Turners Falls. Our friend was he of the constant smile, dapper mustache, a knowing

chuckle in his voice, as if he had anticipated our excited observations of the obvious. He was at home with the literary greats, and was a literary great himself. And he was at home with those of us common folks who hardly knew how great he was. Now, if this were a W.H. Auden poem, we would put out the order to stop all the clocks, as was done in other cultures and other times past. We would prevent the dogs from barking, we would silence the piano and muffle the drum, and let the mourners come. It is said that when a great man like Chris dies, it is as if a library has burned. We will never see the likes of him again.



## Montague Villages Will Be in Service November 1!

By LEE WICKS

**MONTAGUE** – Is that lightbulb in the overhead fixture too hard to reach? Has that planter become too heavy to move? Do you need a ride to a medical appointment; would you like to connect with neighbors? Countless meetings, informational events, outreach, and generous support from individuals, the Council on Aging, and local businesses – including Common Good, Greenfield Savings Bank, Greenfield Cooperative Bank, Lauralyn Brown Veterinary Hospital, Windy Hollow Veterinary Services, and Turn it Up Music – have all paid off, and Montague Villages will be offering services to members starting November 1.

In an email to the board of directors, Montague Villages president Helen Gibson-Ugucioni wrote, "All members who wish to receive services will have an initial home visit by a Montague Villages representative to introduce membership benefits in more detail and discuss the types of assistance a member might need. Appointments will be scheduled at the member's convenience." She is requesting that each member of the Montague Villages email list call (413) 672-3095 and leave a message if they wish to receive services. Someone will then call or email back to set up a home welcome visit.

Helen has been tireless in her dedication to this organization. "She has served Montague Villages as Board President since its inception in the Spring of 2022," said another board member, Mary Kay Mattiace. "Her initiative, dedication, perseverance, steadfastness, and whole-hearted commitment have brought this organization to fruition, and she is most grateful for all the volunteers who have steadily worked alongside her, furnishing energy, time, support, and encouragement."

For those who may not have been following this process, Montague Villages is part of the National Neighbors Helping Neighbors network. It's an all-volunteer

organization linking people over 60 with volunteers willing to offer companionship and transportation, and help with small tasks around the house and yard. Volunteers from Montague Villages can help if you are over 60, a member, and live in any of the five villages that comprise the town of Montague. Membership is \$50 a year for an individual and \$75 for a couple, but no one will be turned away based on their ability to pay – if you want to join, just pay what you can.

Some people have been waiting for services to be available before joining. If you're ready now, visit the website at [www.montaguevillages.org](http://www.montaguevillages.org) and click on "New Member Signup." Those who could use some help with this, or don't have computers, can get technical help any Tuesday at the Gill-Montague senior center. Council on Aging director Roberta Potter has forms printed out for those requesting one. It's a good idea to call the senior center at (413) 863-9357 and make sure Roberta is available for assistance.

Potter, herself a member of the Montague Villages board of directors, is a staunch supporter of the initiative. "Montague Villages will have a huge impact on the ability of older adults to live independently at home," she said. "Members will be able to help each other in so many ways and build community connections throughout the five villages. I look forward to the launch of services and can't wait to refer people needing help to Montague Villages."

Members can be people who need services, people who need some services and also want to volunteer, or volunteers who don't need services. Volunteers do not need to be 60 years old, and do not need to pay a membership fee.

Early in Montague Villages' organizational phase, many younger people attended informational meetings and expressed an interest in helping. At that point the organization wasn't prepared to sign them up. Montague Villages is

ready now, and those who are still interested should leave a message at (413) 672-3095. (To ensure everyone's safety, each volunteer must agree to a criminal background check.)

As of this writing, Montague Villages has 64 members and 18 vetted volunteers, which means they have passed a CORI check. Seven of those volunteers have received training, and there will be more as trainings continue. Four drivers have also completed their training and are ready to respond to requests for rides.

Wondering how it will all work? People needing help will call the central number (413) 672-3095 and leave the details of their request. Volunteer call managers will check these messages and search the database for a volunteer who can meet the member's needs. They will then call the volunteer to confirm availability and circle back to the member. This means a little bit of planning will be necessary. (Montague Villages is not currently set up for spontaneous requests – in an emergency, people should always call 911 first.)

It's a good idea to visit the Montague Villages website often as community events are listed there.

Upcoming is Thankful Thursday at Element Brewing in Millers Falls this Thursday, October 10 from 6 to 9 p.m. The Brewery will donate a percentage of the profits to Montague Villages. Some people wonder why a non-profit organization needs to raise money. Funds are needed for ongoing expenses like website hosting, insurance, and printed materials, and every donation helps, so come to Elements and enjoy an evening out while knowing you are helping.

There's also a meet and greet at the Gill-Montague senior center this Saturday, October 12 from 10 a.m. to noon, and another on Friday, October 25 from 10 to 11 a.m. at the Montague Center Library. Come as a potential member or volunteer, meet some members of the board, ask questions, and learn about this new community resource.

## Senior Center Activities OCTOBER 14 THROUGH 19

### 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. Contact (413) 548-1022 x2 or [coa@leverett.ma.us](mailto:coa@leverett.ma.us).

### GILL and MONTAGUE

The Gill Montague Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Mondays through Fridays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information, please call 863-9357.

#### Monday 10/14

10:15 a.m. Aerobics  
11 a.m. Chair Exercise  
12 p.m. Pot Luck Lunch  
1 p.m. Council on Aging Meeting  
**Tuesday 10/15**  
9 a.m. Chair Yoga  
10 a.m. Grandparents Raising Teens  
12:30 p.m. Tech Tuesday: Drop-In Tech Help  
3 p.m. Tai Chi

#### Wednesday 10/16

9 a.m. Veterans' Agent  
10:15 a.m. Aerobics  
10:45 a.m. Outdoor Yoga (weather permitting)  
11 a.m. Chair Exercise  
11:45 a.m. Friends of the Senior Center Meeting  
12 p.m. Bring Your Lunch Bingo  
1 to 2:30 p.m. Food Pantry  
4 p.m. Mat Yoga

#### Thursday 10/17

10 a.m. Montague Villages Board of Directors Meeting

1 p.m. Pitch  
**Friday 10/18**  
10:15 a.m. Aerobics  
11 a.m. Chair Exercise  
2 p.m. Chair Dance  
**Saturday 10/19**  
12 p.m. Special Topics Computer Class

### ERVING

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

#### Monday 10/14

Closed  
**Tuesday 10/15**  
9 a.m. Interval  
10 a.m. Line Dancing  
11 a.m. Social Stringers  
11 a.m. Coffee & Snacks  
**Wednesday 10/16**  
9 a.m. Strength & Conditioning  
10 a.m. Chair Aerobics  
11:30 a.m. Bingo  
**Thursday 10/17**  
9 a.m. Barre Fusion  
10 a.m. Pilates Flow  
**Friday 10/18**  
8:45 a.m. Turkey Train Bus Departs  
9 a.m. Quilting & Open Sew

### 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 Nancy Spittle at (978) 544-6760.

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the  
poetry  
page

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

- William Carlos Williams

guest-edited by Janel Nockleby  
readers are invited to send poems to  
the *Montague Reporter* by email at:  
[poetry@montaguerreporter.org](mailto:poetry@montaguerreporter.org)  
(please note we are no longer  
accepting mailed submissions)

I know more about paths than about rivers  
but don't really know much about either.  
But I do think the Connecticut is a strong brown god  
though it probably isn't holy.  
This Mussoorie path is not godly either  
but it may be holy.

The path to my own river is just a path:

And then went down to the river  
with my little white dog  
who poked along the shore edge  
nose sniffing out a thousand scents.

She inventoried them all:  
dogs raccoons field mice  
muskrats skunks  
cats birds porcupines  
opossums squirrels.

I made my own inventory:  
blue water going to green  
seven white swans (really) swimming  
four mallards  
a red-tailed hawk circling overhead  
eight gulls  
one boat  
no eagle.

From *Mussoorie-Montague Miscellany*

Whether profitable or unprofitable  
the journey has been what it is,  
at times nothing more than a fragile dream  
of shiftless days veiled by propositions  
and anomalies of transcendence,  
that rarely equate with ascendance.

At other times, the onwardness  
has been somewhat more durable.  
Still, there doesn't seem to be much point  
in arriving at this rather barren place  
but no point in lagging behind either,  
assuming there was ever a choice.

Steps get directed in several directions  
at once, and though things haven't yet  
perfected themselves, there is a merging  
of undeniable tendencies, a way  
of finally taking this up and creating  
a set of tentative conclusions.

From *Night Suite*

We already know  
what we know.

This isn't a crossroads  
where trails beckon  
in three directions.

The struggle is to notice  
what is in the here  
and now,  
recognize the everydayness  
replete in the history  
of ourselves  
and the objects in the room.  
In the noticing  
we find us.

From *Remission*

It's not exactly golden fleece  
we've found  
in this place  
reeking of both agitated familiarity  
and tranquil strangeness  
but we pluck at the strands  
in hopes that this  
small acquisition  
will yield

a fragile sense of belonging  
that firm ground  
is only a shadow's-length away.

This isn't a set  
nor a set-piece  
but there is  
a distinct theatricality  
to this enterprise  
of parsing the darkness  
for light.

From *Remission*

Say it is a geranium in a black pot  
or a warbler on the shoulder  
That make the difference in how we do  
what we do when we do it.  
As if the clouds never existed.

I peel off the yellow cigar band  
attempt deftness, though it does not  
come naturally to my right hand.

These are the basic facts of everydayness:  
Nothing will ever be like something.  
Pumpkins will never fall from any tree.

And the sun stays aloft, at least for now,  
and the moon is far far away.

From *Mussoorie-Montague Miscellany*

Depth now  
In place of time  
surely depth

Not the harsh wind  
blowing the snow across the path  
but the sun melting  
the whirling flakes in mid flight.

We collect without collecting  
hold precious  
what some would think fool's gold.

We utter each other's words and thoughts,  
anticipate movement,  
uncover desire in a glance  
or your arm in mine.

We know that time does not make poems,  
that feeling truly is first  
and that struggle becomes a gift.

And we know at the last hour  
we will hop a rumbling freight train,  
share an orange,  
on a San Francisco hill.

From *Remission*

(An earlier version, titled *Valentine's Poem, for Patricia*, was read  
at an All Small Caps reading in Wendell, June 23, 2014.)

Memory infuses  
the present  
the way old blood rises  
to the surface  
and leaks  
through the skin  
to form  
a new bruise.

We are becoming  
accustomed to the marks  
of passing time,  
of the collision  
between  
what was  
and what is,  
of the how not  
to be  
any longer.

From *Remission*

Spindly thought tendrils wrapping  
around my ears and eyes generate  
notions of formless wholes  
without any moving parts.

We can't avoid wandering far  
from the track that isn't a trail,  
harmony within disharmony  
seems slightly lighter than air.

The path forward is illumined  
by a ghostly gibbous moon.  
Just say it is what it actually is,  
and be content with it.

From *Night Suite*

# October's Featured Poet: Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno

with two poems by Patricia Pruitt

Her footsteps have become  
more tentative  
on the stairs  
but determination  
does not languish in the heel  
that sets itself  
down  
firmly  
as if it knows  
where the toes  
are heading.

From *Remission*

## Pears

These April pears  
come from Argentina.

A geography of sorts.

We ate pears most mornings  
through the winter –  
mainly due to lack of mangoes.

In the fall it was Bartlett's and Boscos  
out of Washington State.  
Later they came from Georgia  
or maybe Florida.

Days settle into patterns.  
We save thinking  
for when things go wrong.

Daydreams are short  
and don't seem to capture  
either of us.

Fewer and fewer dreams.

The future need not rush.  
The past of course is gone.

Patricia Pruitt  
from *Insistence*

Just as the birds  
who alight  
on the bird feeder  
do not stay  
but peck a little  
and move on,  
Some inopportune afternoon  
the rays come streaming  
through the transoms,  
and the emptied space fills:  
a strange force shared.

From *Night Suite*

All leaves fall  
brackish as memory

Patricia Pruitt  
from *Full Moon at Sunset: Selected Poems*

It's late for mud season  
but the calendar has ceased to be  
compatible with geography.

The day requires  
showing up just to be able  
to say that presence is present.

Somewhere a *there* lurks.

Letting go  
and letting in  
and letting out

And waiting for blossoms  
to form on the twigs.

From *Night Suite*

## Contributors' Notes:

Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno edited the Poetry Page for the *Montague Reporter* for many years and was a steward of the page since its inception. His enthusiasm and commitment to poetry, in these pages and around the world, will be deeply missed. Among his most recent books of poetry are *Mussoorie-Montague Miscellany* (2014), *Remission* (2016), and *Night Suite* (2022), all from Talisman House.

Patricia Pruitt's chapbook *Insistence* (Alyscamps Press) was published in 2018 for her celebration-of-life gathering. Her book *Full Moon at Sunset: Selected Poems* was published in 2017 by Talisman House. Patricia edited the Poetry Page from 2012 to 2016. Chris and Patricia were collaborators in marriage and in poetry, leaving a legacy of love and words.

The *Montague Reporter* invites readers to submit poems in honor of Chris or Patricia or both poets for our next Poetry Page in November, and beyond. Please send submissions to [poetry@montaguerreporter.org](mailto:poetry@montaguerreporter.org).



WRITING THE LAND

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**LEVIATHAN** from page B1

The show has grown since its inception. This year features two nights during which audiences can experience the world created at the Shea, filled with actors they are invited to interact with. On Saturday afternoon the theater will also open for free, allowing audiences to see the set and enjoy a free performance by the local ten-piece band The Leafies You Gave Me.

Adler explained that although each of the 30 artists has created something new and different for the show this year, their work revolves around themes of memory and collective grief.

“Set within large-scale installations, traditional lines of performance blur as players weave in and out of multiple timelines and narratives,” reads the press release for the event.

One storyline that will unfold throughout the show features Lindel Hart, a member of Eggtooth Ensemble. His character, named The Collector, has lost his identity and will gather memories and objects scattered throughout the theater to forge a new identity inside the whale. Hart’s process in creating the

character involved building a human-sized Personal Oceanic Device (POD) to allow him to move inside the Leviathan.

Another character in the Leviathan, played by Adler, is a Werewolf that was on Noah’s Ark during the great flood. When the Werewolf found it didn’t fit in on the ark, it jumped overboard and was swallowed by the whale.

This Werewolf will emcee a three-hour show taking place in the theater itself, where actors will share stories and mythologies of the Leviathan world, including monologues from Shakespeare and Herman Melville’s *Moby-Dick*.

Audiences can choose to watch the show passively, sitting in the theater all night to experience one aspect of the event as it unfolds before them, or they can wander around the Shea, exploring all three floors of installations and performances as the space evolves and changes. The lobby in particular will be lively, featuring games and a pirate tavern, including side quests where audiences can play for treasure and more.

“What is fun about this is you get out of it what you put in,” Adler

said. They invite audiences to attend both nights, watching the theater show one night and exploring the theater the other.

“If you come to both nights, you will see different things. You cannot experience everything happening over the course of three hours,” Hart said. “The audience can experience the memory and identity that we are all creating for the festival.”

Doors open each night at 6:40 p.m., with the performance beginning at 7. Tickets are available on a sliding scale, with suggested prices of \$20 in advance, with tickets purchasable at [sheatheater.org](http://sheatheater.org), and \$25 at the door. No one will be turned away for lack of funds.

The free performance during the day Saturday will take place from noon to 4 p.m., with the performance from The Leafies You Gave Me at 3 p.m..

“This is a labor of love. Over 30 artists have been working on this piece for the past six months,” Adler said. “Audiences have the autonomy to wander and explore the entire building: every nook and cranny, unraveling a story happening around them.”



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The Montague Reporter Podcast

**Montague Community Television News**

**Ribbons and Reptiles**

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

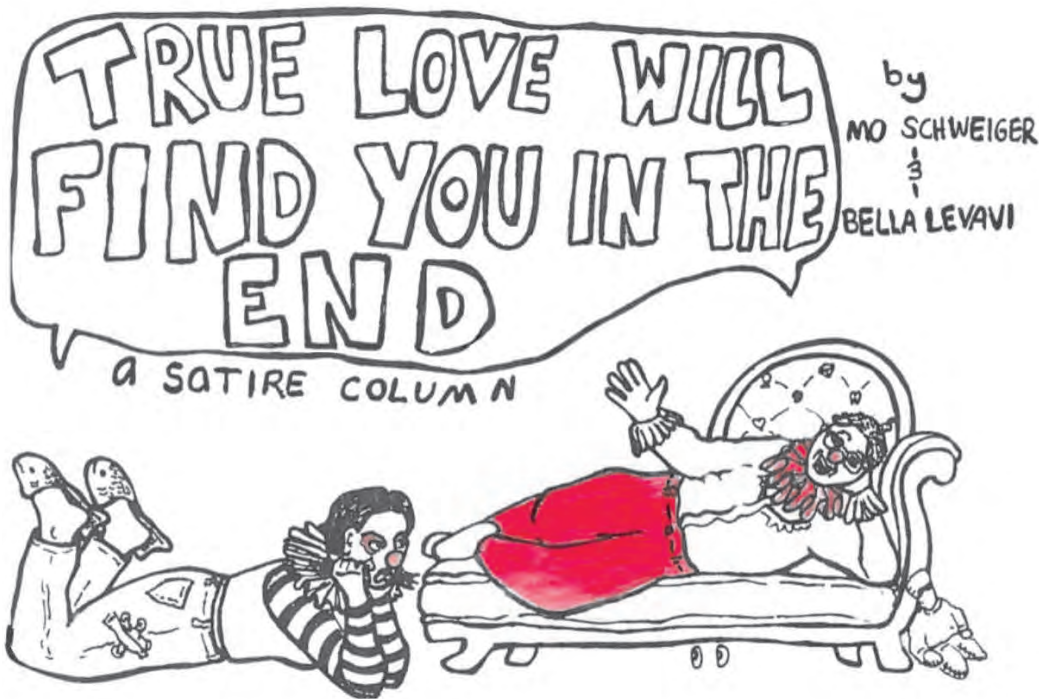
**TURNERS FALLS** – The Montague Community Fair, which took place over Labor Day weekend, offered residents access to information about many different local resources, and hosted many family-friendly activities as well, including a petting zoo with live reptiles and no-longer-alive mammal pelts. Find our footage of this event on our Vimeo Page!

MCTV has also added both the ribbon cutting, and the in-process time lapse video, of the new pride and joy of the Shea Theater, the new 3,200-square-foot mural by North Carolina Artist Darion Fleming.

MCTV’s coverage of local meetings this week includes videos from both the Gill selectboard and the Montague selectboard.

All MCTV videos are aired on Channel 9 as well as being featured on the MCTV Vimeo page. If there is a meeting, event, performance or happening in the Montague area that you think MCTV should capture, let us know! And if you also have an idea for a show, MCTV is always available to assist in local productions as well. Just reach out!

Contact us at (413) 863-9200 or [infomontaguetyv@gmail.com](mailto:infomontaguetyv@gmail.com), follow us on Facebook, or find us on Instagram @montaguecommunitytv. Find videos and more on our website, [montaguetyv.org](http://montaguetyv.org).



**Matzo Ball Soup for the Soul**

By MANDY MUDBLOWSKI

**FRANKLIN COUNTY** – It started out like any other Rosh Hashanah. I was washing my hands after the ritual slinging and slaughtering of two chickens from the farming co-op next to my house – the committee had voted that it was okay because it was for religious purposes – when I started to feel a tickle in my throat.

I took a test which confirmed that it wasn’t just a feather stuck in my gullet: I had COVID, in addition to having swallowed the handful of errant feathers. I sent a text to the 20 non-observant Jews whose only religious participation happens in my living room, and who were slated to come over that night. On every major holiday we gather at my home and take part in whatever vaguely Jewish traditions I dredge up from the back of the Talmud and inside of my clown nose.

Favorite rituals from past years include: spitting in my Birkenstock to symbolize divorce (Deuteronomy 25:5-10), painting a phallus on Poet’s Seat Tower as a nod to the Eruv, a spiritual wall that allows for the carrying of crossbody bags and woven baskets on holidays (Eruvin 35a:11), and bludgeoning each other with scallions in a politically dubious ritual sponsored by the Greenfield Munch, symbolizing the Jewish people’s enslavement in Egypt as well as our proclivity for BDSM (Dayenu).

After ignoring all 15 extremely concerned texts that contained variations on “Can I bring you soup?” and “No, I will not bring you a mixture of Dr. Pepper and Real Pickles pickle juice,” I decided I would celebrate the holiday by myself.

In homage to the meat smoker I had purchased to create the least Jewish version of brisket possible to serve my guests, which I no longer had use for, I rang in the new year

by dipping a cigarette in honey and reciting the clown’s prayer: “May there always be wine and always be smokes, may the jokers be kings and the kings be jokes!”

After dinner of a reuben made from the contents of a Zabar’s care package my mother sent me, I laid down in my bed, exhausted from the effort of chewing the authentic rye bread. In my feverish haze, it appeared that the mist of my humidifier was taking a human form. I shut my eyes tightly, but when I opened them again, I saw that the mist had become my great grandmother, Faygele Mudblowski.

“Mandeleh!” she hollered at me. “What are you doing with your life?”

“Bubbe? Haven’t you been dead since 1943? How did you get here? I thought they turned you away at Ellis Island?”

“I don’t follow the rules of man. I’ve been watching over you since they discovered our namesake, the Armored Mudballs, at the bridge between Gill and Montague. How do you think you got your last name? Anyway, I’m here to tell you that if you want your name inscribed in the Book of Life this Yom Kippur, you have to repent! I’ve been reading your columns. For shame, Mandeleh, for shame.”

“What do you mean? How can you even read them? Mom told me you never learned to read English.”

“You think they don’t have a Yiddish copy of the *Montague Reporter* where I am?”

“Where are you? Colrain?”

“No! Listen to me. You can’t keep carrying on like this. Lying to your boyfriends about each other, eating local grass-fed cattle boiled in raw milk, inhaling the fumes of the Demolition Derby, doing 48-hour long durational performance art pieces and, worse, making your friends watch them! Time theft, time theft, time theft! Mandela, you have got to stop!

“And most importantly, stop making up ridiculous Jewish rituals! Your great-uncle Joe the Lion Tamer escaped the Holocaust through joining the circus only out of extreme necessity

– he hated those freaks! Honor his legacy and stop spending all of your money on clowning classes. Please, if you know what’s good for you, throw your clown nose in the river!”

At that point, I did what I could never do on a phone call with my mother, and simply turned off the humidifier, banishing the nagging ancestor. But I knew she was right.

I strapped on my custom clown shoes, grabbed a loaf of challah, and made my way to the Beach of Bricks. I walked to the water, pulled my favorite clown nose out of my pocket, and looked into my reflection on its rubber surface.

I know that my great-grandmother Faygele Mudblowski was right: Western Massachusetts is not traditionally a homeland for the Jewish people. But the thing about Jews is that we have been wandering for centuries. And the thing about Franklin County is that we use, and create with, what we have. So how could the two be as incompatible as she makes them seem? Just as the Jews adapted their traditions to their location, I’ve committed to getting iced Dunks in the summer and hot Dunks in the winter. Besides, my lease is too good to give up.

Instead of sacrificing my clown nose, I ripped up the challah and threw it into the river, apologizing for my real sins with the tradition of *tashlich*. I apologized for discriminating against people who live in Hampshire County. I apologized for swimming in the river after a rainstorm. I apologized for taking advantage of NOTAFLOF when sometimes I can FLOF. I apologized for being elitist. I apologized for getting addicted to cigarettes on purpose, even though I was having a hard time.

Happy New Year! May you get a paid holiday for Yom Kippur. And may you be inscribed in the Book of Life.

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# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



## THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Will Wood, Shayfer James*. \$ 7 p.m.

Nova Arts, Keene: *Lori Goldston, Kath Bloom, Jake McKelvie*. \$ 7 p.m.

Belltower Records, North Adams: *Tom Carter, Julie Beth Napolin, Creative Writing*. \$ 7 p.m.

## FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11

Palladium, Worcester: *Sepultura, Obituary, Agnostic Front, Claustrophobia, Harvest*. \$ 6 p.m.

Cold Spring Hollow, Belchertown: *Baby Baby Explores, Magick Lantern, Kryssi B, It's Mandy*. \$ 7 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Oh He Dead*. \$ 7 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Lady Pop*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

Holyoke Media, Holyoke: *Peter DiStefano & Mike Baggetta, Vimana, The Eli Liguz Band*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Back in Black, AC/DC tribute*. \$ 8 p.m.

Shutesbury Athletic Club, Shutesbury: *Deep C Divers*. No cover. 8 p.m.

Academy of Music, Northampton: *Richard Thompson, Kacy & Clayton*. \$ 8 p.m.

Hutghi's, Westfield: *Tom Carter, Julie Napolin, Decimus*. \$ 8 p.m.

Daily Operation, Easthampton: *Angry Blackmen, Skech185*.

\$ 8:30 p.m.

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12

Franklin County Fairgrounds, Greenfield: *Montana Of 300, Ryan Montbleau, Bella's Bartok, Dizzy Dizasta, Goonie Jay, Can Collectors*, more. \$ 12 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *The Best of the '70s*. \$ 7 p.m.

Hutghi's, Westfield: *Hardcar, Half Dizzy, Linnea's Garden, The Mighty Suicide Squirrels, Sapien Joyride*. \$ 7 p.m.

No Fun, Troy NY: *Home Body, Troy Pohl, Over Outers*. \$ 7 p.m.

The Drake, Amherst: *DJ Lucas, Woody, 22BB, Target Scammers*. \$ 8 p.m.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *Chuck Johnson, Wednesday Knudsen*. \$ 8 p.m.

Mohegan Sun, Uncasville, CT: *Lil Wayne*. \$ 9 p.m.

## SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13

Greenfield Records, Greenfield: *Ananya Ganesh, Dave Scanlon, Robert Lundberg*. Free. 3 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Kate Bollinger, Sharp Pins*. \$ 6 p.m.

The Hoff, Holyoke: *Film & Gender, Anita Velveeta, Mibble, Bugslam*. \$ 6 p.m.

Belltower Records, North Adams: *The Spatulas, Jeanines, Lightheaded, Wednesday & Kryssi*. \$ 7 p.m.

Dream Away Lodge, Becket: *Little Wings*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Songs of Lucinda Williams*. \$ 8 p.m.

Cold Spring Hollow, Belchertown: *Death Spiral, Dicqbeats, Julipode, PandOravirus, So So Gutter*. \$ 8 p.m.

## MONDAY, OCTOBER 14

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Pentagram String Band, JD & Six Feet Deep*. \$ 7 p.m.

## TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Gong*. \$ 7 p.m.

## WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Liz Cooper/Dari Bay, Slark Moan*. \$ 7 p.m.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *Ben Cosgrove, Lyle de Vitry*. \$ 8 p.m.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Pod Blotz, Solid State Entity, Facility, Barbie.Ai*. \$ 8 p.m.

## THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Empress Of w/Casey MQ*. \$ 7 p.m.

Buoyant Heart, Brattleboro: *Slow Pony, Doctor Gasp, Norma Dream*. \$ 7 p.m.

## FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18

Belltower Records, North Adams: *Burnt Pink, Miriam Elhajji, Blackpool*. \$ 7 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Band of Brothers*. \$ 7 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Cinmastorm* double fea-

ture: *The Fly* (1986), *The Blob* (1988). Free. 7:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *2 Car Garage*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *The Feldons, Les Derailleurs, Basement Cats*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

Next Stage Arts, Putney: *Arun Ramamurthy Trio*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

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

Academy of Music, Northampton: *Nick Lowe & Los Straitjackets*. \$ 8 p.m.

Rat Trap, Holyoke: *APIE, Gay Mayor, Leaking Head, Target Scammers*. \$ 8 p.m.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Eric Gaffney, StepBirds, Owen Manure*. \$ 8:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Ian Campbell*. No cover. 9:30 p.m.

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19

Next Stage Arts, Putney: *Family Matters: A Tour of Vermont Short Films*. \$ 6 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Session Americana, Winterpills, Suitcase Junket, Caitlin Canty, Zak Trojano*, more. Kate Lorenz memorial. \$ 6 p.m.

Brick House, Turners Falls: *Juliet Salameh Olivier, beetsblog, Gelineau/Baldwin/Meginsky trio*. Gaza benefit. \$ 7 p.m.

MASS MoCA, North Adams: *Philip Glass Ensemble* performs *Koyaanisqatsi* live. \$\$ 8 p.m.

### looking forward...

## FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25

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

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26

Feeding Tube Records, Florence: *Deluxx, Andy Goulet*. \$ 4 p.m.

## SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27

Greenfield Records: *Christa Renee*. Free. 12 p.m.

## THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *The B-52.0s, DJ Cashman*. \$ 8 p.m.

## FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Thus Love, Robber Robber, Brunch*. \$ 8 p.m.

## SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9

CitySpace, Easthampton: *Arun Ramamurthy Trio*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

## SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10

Hutghi's, Westfield: *Carnivorous Bells, Editrix, Landowner, Target Scammers*. \$ 4 p.m.

## FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15

Dream Away Lodge, Becket: *Mariee Siou, Donnie Coco*. \$ 8 p.m.

## THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5

Nova Arts, Keene: *The Ladybug Transistor, Lightheaded, Kendra*. \$ 7 p.m.

## FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6

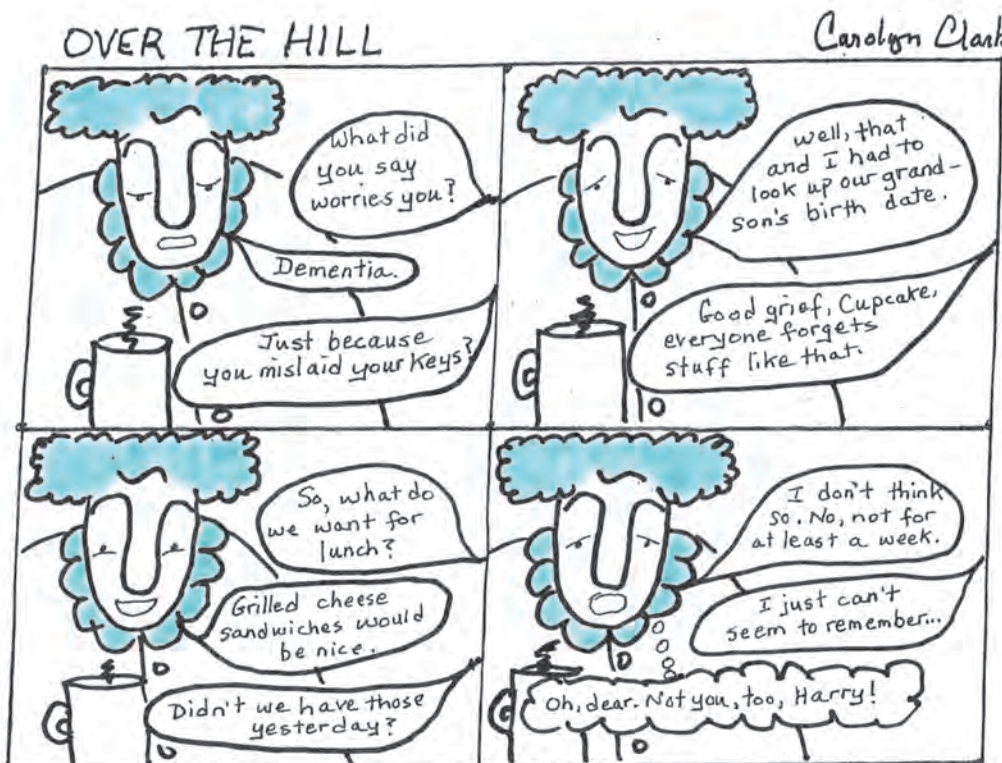
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *She Said*. \$ 7:30 p.m.



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**FURNITURE** from page B1

“It was such a wholesome experience!” exclaimed Danielle Marie Richard, who took the class with Ryerson. “I’ve made a ton of art, but I’ve never made a bookcase. This is my first bookcase!”

Now graduated with an MFA, Richard was an experienced woodworker, sculptor, and block-print maker who described this class as “a completely different creative challenge. It was so fun. I felt like I was in art kindergarten. I was like, ‘I have to learn about function now!’”

Erving’s Friends of the Library needed a bookcase which would sit under a window in the library’s entryway, giving Richard plenty of specific design requirements but leaving her creative freedom. The “boxy form” of a bookcase offered up perfect inspiration.

“I wanted it to feel like a cozy little house for books,” said Richard. “I grew up in Templeton, and I read all the time in my public library in Gardner, and I used to run straight to the *Magic Treehouse* books. I just loved the illustrations, and I was always just so fascinated by them.”

So Richard hit those books for inspiration: “I actually did go through and read a lot of the *Magic Treehouse* books again... That treehouse was organic, but it was geometric. I was just inspired by the illustrations and the feeling of whimsy in those books.”

In her design, Richard found ways to finish just enough of the boards to allow for solid joinery, while capturing that whimsy. “I left as much live wood as I could to make it feel like it’s organic,” she said. “I wanted it to look like you could put it together yourself, in a sense. We kept the head of the nails



Left to right: Mitch Ryerson, Anna Olivia Letourneau, Rabkwan Chaimattayompol, Danielle Marie Richard, Stacey Pekman Kan, Henry Mahoney, and Sean Mahoney, with Reid Moulis’s Three-Legged Stool, Letourneau’s Walnut and Oak Bench, and Sylvia Margareta Lagor’s Erving Freight Train before them.

showing. It is very finished, it looks elegant, but I wanted it to have a rugged, natural look to it.”

Not all of the wood in the students’ projects came from trees downed in the microburst. Because most of those trees were red oak, which needs to dry for many months – for thick boards, years – prior to being made into furniture, Mahoney also gave Ryerson a variety of other woods from trees which MassDCR had salvaged previously in the region, including the large sugar maple from the Quabbin and local ash trees.

“We wanted to memorialize them,” Mahoney said of the maple and ash, “and document their existence here, and put them into the beautiful work that we have in this building. I’m thrilled that we got everyone to enjoy the project so much.”

Ryerson noted that “when you work with a good sawyer on a small scale” – like collaborator Andreus Ridley of Winchendon – “you can really accentuate the individuality of each tree. It’s actually a real tree that you may have known, you may have walked under it. It’s exciting to make those connections for people, and people really appreciate it. And that shows in a lot of the work that’s come out of the class. A lot of the works that these students did really feature the tree itself.”

The variety of woods was also “a total game-changer for their designs and their excitement,” he added. “Usually, a wood shop at a school supplies poplar to students. Poplar, poplar, poplar – it’s a really good learning wood, but it’s pretty boring. This really inspired them to

push their design aesthetics. It was wonderful that way.”

Erving’s library received nine creations from the MassArt students, including an outdoor bench with stout red oak legs, a step-stool so toddlers can view the fish tank, and – following the trend towards mobile furniture in libraries, and a nod to Erving’s history – a train for carrying books around the children’s room. All of the pieces were donated.

“It’s sort of this crazy idea that you’re going to work really hard,” said Ryerson, “and then you’re going to give away this beautiful thing that you made at the end of the semester, and you probably won’t see it again for a while, if ever. It’s an incredible act of generosity from the students. It was inspiring to me to see them do it, and they didn’t spare any piece of their heart in the work – it was all really from the heart!”

Richard agreed. The class, she said, gave her newfound enthusiasm for aspects of furniture building like case design and finger joints – she is now working on a custom table, and “it’s been really cool, just diving into that world post-grad” – but it also offered a welcome opportunity to give of herself.

“If I had to give a piece away, I’m so glad it was to a library,” Richard said of her treehouse. “I spent my whole childhood in a library. I have a literature degree. I love books, and this was really special to create something that the community’s going to interact with and that’s going to hold books. A book is a whole universe, so I’m glad. It’s a little case for a bunch of little universes.”



The Three-Legged Stool was made by Reid Moulis from a Quabbin sugar maple, and highlights one of its tap boles.

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