

# The Montague Reporter

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editor@montaguereporter.org

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

montaguereporter.org

## WENDELL SELECTBOARD

### Town Will Fight AG Rejection Of Its Battery-Storage Bylaw

By JOSH HEINEMANN

At their December 18 meeting, the Wendell selectboard authorized up to \$5,000 from the town's legal expense account to appeal the state attorney general's rejection of a town bylaw that would put restrictions and conditions on any new battery energy storage system built in Wendell.

The board went through their regular business and then went into executive session, for the seventh time since July, "to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or

litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares." The authorization vote was taken upon their return to open meeting.

Members of No Assault & Batteries (NAB), a private citizen group formed last year to oppose the construction of a 100-megawatt battery energy storage system (BESS) on clearcut forest land in Wendell, attended the executive session, as they had previously.

The bylaw in question was drafted and see **WENDELL** page A4

### Area Farmers, Birders On Alert As Avian Flu Outbreak Worsens



New arrivals to Duckworld, a fowl sanctuary on Montague's Ripley Farm, are quarantined for 48 hours. Owner Janice Doyle worries that this does not prevent them from contact with sick wild birds.

By SARAH ROBERTSON

VERMONT – A flock of backyard chickens in northern Vermont is among the most recent victims of a global outbreak of avian influenza that has killed nearly 129 million birds in the United States since 2022, and is now increasingly infecting mammals.

The domestic flock suffered its first fatality on December 18, according to Vermont officials, and the family's remaining birds were euthanized three days later to prevent further spread.

"I'm terrified, because it's getting closer and closer," Janice Doyle, owner of Duckworld Rescue and Sanctuary at Ripley Farm in Montague, said on Tuesday. "There's really not a lot we can do to prevent it, because it comes from wild birds."

Avian influenza viruses occur naturally in wild birds including waterfowl, but tend to mutate as they spread, particularly under conditions of close, prolonged contact between different species. The disease is of growing concern to public health experts as industrial agriculture has made outbreaks more frequent. The latest "highly pathogenic" strain, known as H5N1, can cross over to mammals.

At least 66 people in the United States have been infected with bird flu in the last eight months, according to the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Most of these patients experienced moderate symptoms and received successful treatment, but the first case severe enough to require hospitalization was reported two weeks ago in Louisiana.

Other strains have killed people in China see **BIRDS** page A7

## TRAVELOGUE

### Into the Nearest Marble Cavern



The abandoned Freedley marble quarry in Dorset, Vermont floods and freezes in the winter.

By MIKE JACKSON

TURNERS FALLS – With our newspaper closed for the holiday week, no big deadline, nowhere else to be, and a working car, I decided to spend last Thursday exploring a little ways out of town. Where could a 90-minute drive get me and show me some-

thing new? Research turned up options in every direction.

A living history museum at a former Shaker commune? Closed for winter. A Connecticut park with a ziplines and aerial ropes course? Pricey, closed for winter, and probably more fun with friends. The Natick Mall?

see **CAVERN** page A5

## GILL SELECTBOARD

### Pot Pact Altered; Church Available

By KATE SAVAGE

In another lightning-fast meeting Monday evening, the Gill selectboard altered cannabis dispensary agreements, discussed plans for improving digital equity among the town's residents, and puzzled over the future of mystery models of town buildings.

The town updated its host community agreement (HCA) with the store Leaf Joy, seeking to comply with new state laws limiting what towns can demand from recreational cannabis distributors. Town administrator Ray Purington called the new agreement "a blend of the [state] Cannabis Control Commission's model HCA and the existing HCA between Leaf Joy and the town." He noted that Leaf Joy's attorney had approved of the new agreement.

"In 2023, the Cannabis Control Commission was flexing its muscles," Purington explained. "It got the legislature to change the laws governing recreational marijuana," including outlawing automatic "community impact" fees that are based on a percentage of sales. Purington estimated that Leaf Joy

see **GILL** page A3

### Quarterly Bills For Montague Property Tax On the Horizon

By JEFF SINGLETON

The Montague treasurer's office has informed all property taxpayers in town that as of the beginning of the next fiscal year on July 1, tax bills will be due four times a year rather than two. A letter from treasurer and tax collector Eileen Seymour states that the new payment schedule, which was endorsed at last spring's annual town meeting, will save the town money by "spreading out its tax flow" and thereby reducing the amount of borrowing required to cover expenses.

Seymour's letter justifies the change as bringing Montague in line with the practice of other municipalities. "The town of Montague is one of only 66 communities out of 351 in Massachusetts that are still on a semi-annual basis," she writes. The new schedule, she wrote, will also "benefit the taxpayers," as "the payments will be divided over four payments as opposed to two."

However, the plan is to still send the bills see **BILLS** page A8

## FROM THE MANAGING EDITOR

### Price Will Rise to Two Bucks

By MIKE JACKSON

TURNERS FALLS – Though the ranks of our digital-only subscribers are gradually growing, the *Montague Reporter* is a print newspaper first and foremost, and we intend to stay in print for as long as we can manage.

There are downsides: The arcane work of layout. The exhausting task of distribution. The perpetual insanity of a single gigantic weekly deadline.

But in the last few years, the biggest downside has simply been the rising cost. Between

2015 and 2019 the amount we spent each year on printing was remarkably stable, hovering between \$21,000 and \$22,000. But it has climbed for each of the five years since then, clocking in at \$29,871 in 2024.

We are living in an inflationary era, and we don't fault the printer at all for these circumstances – they're a great and vital partner! – but, even as they are passing their own rising costs on to us, we can't stand by and watch this single factor chew away at the resources we have for all other parts of the operation.

see **BUCKS** page A2

## A VOICE AS BIG AS THE SEA



Montague Center carolers sing local historian Bruce Watson's request, "Do You Hear What I Hear," a carol written in 1962 as a plea for peace at the height of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Thanks to Will Quale for sharing this video still from the December 20 session.

### Should Have Done A 14-Pager But Here You Go!

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# The Montague Reporter

"The Voice of the Villages"

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## Founded by

Arthur Evans Harry Brandt David Detmold  
 August 2002

## Happy New Year!

"It is still colossal. Slowly it floats more and more away, the water round it torn and splashed by the insatiate sharks, and the air above vexed with rapacious flights of screaming fowls, whose beaks are like so many insulting poniards in the whale. The vast white headless phantom floats further and further from the ship, and every rod that it so floats, what seem square roods of sharks and cubic roods of fowls, augment the murderous din. For hours and hours from the almost stationary ship that hideous sight is seen. Beneath the unclouded and mild azure sky, upon the fair face of the pleasant sea, waft-

ed by the joyous breezes, that great mass of death floats on and on, till lost in infinite perspectives.

"There's a most doleful and most mocking funeral! The sea-vultures all in pious mourning, the air-sharks all punctiliously in black or speckled. In life but few of them would have helped the whale, I ween, if peradventure he had needed it; but upon the banquet of his funeral they most piously do pounce. Oh, horrible vultureism of earth! from which not the mightiest whale is free."

— Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick* (1851)

## BUCKS from page A1

Our Board of Directors has shifted its primary fundraising focus to an annual Writers' Fund appeal, with the idea that all donations to the campaign will be earmarked only for reporting, writing, photographing, and editing – an effort to safeguard a focus on the work of producing content, in other words, rather than that of maintaining a platform. It's the right idea, but it forces us to think through our operational expenses more carefully.

In August 2022 we increased the newsstand price from \$1 to \$1.50, reluctantly. As a non-profit that exists to serve our local communities as inclusively as possible, we have always tried to keep the barriers to access minimal, figuring that our readers who can afford to do so will happily donate to keep us afloat.

A recent review showed that the 2022 price hike was nearly perfectly elastic: newsstand revenue, a tiny part of our overall business model, basically increased by 50%.

We don't wish to press our luck, but our costs jumped again this fall,

and people do often scold us for selling ourselves too cheaply. And we are nervous about all the talk of tariffs on Canadian imports, which will hit the US newsprint market hard, as much of the stuff comes from our northern neighbors.

So, the decision has been made: we're going to make the jump to \$2 this month.

The good news is that our subscription prices – \$50 for delivery, \$40 in downtown Turners and Montague Center, and \$75 for mailing – will remain the same, even while the annual cost of picking up every issue at newsstands will climb from \$67.50 to \$90. If you've been considering taking out a subscription, now's a great time.

It's possible that our days as a fun little anachronism are numbered. If that's the case and we're fated to be pushed online, we'll kick and scream – and do our best to document the experience transparently. It's the community's newspaper, after all, and many of our readers tell us they love to hold and fold their weekly copy.

So for now, we'll keep it coming, though we'll need just a cou-



NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION

*LifePath staff member Bry Nadeau packs up omelettes at the Meals on Wheels kitchen in Erving. Meals on Wheels drivers provide over 175,000 meals and wellness checks locally to more than 1,080 individuals each year, along with social interaction and a reminder that they are not alone. There are currently 11 LifePath kitchen staff and 61 volunteers covering 32 routes in Franklin County and the North Quabbin area.*

## Letter to the Editors

### Public Blow-Up Came After Warnings

This letter is prompted by Mike Jackson's report in the December 19 *Montague Reporter* on the December 17, 2024 Gill-Montague (GM) School Committee meeting.

According to Mike's report, at that December 17 School Committee meeting, GM Education Alliance (GMEA) President Heidi Schmidt spoke during public comment on the results of a "no confidence" vote by the members of GMEA on the tenure of Superintendent Brian Beck. The GMEA President also announced a similar "no confidence" vote by GMEA regarding the Facilities Director.

District policy allows comments and complaints during public comment about the Superinten-

dent – but not other employees. At the point in public comment that GMEA President Schmidt brought up the Facilities Director's no-confidence vote, School Committee chair Jane Oakes cut her off, saying this information should be brought to Superintendent Beck as a matter of the "chain of command."

I was a member of the Gill-Montague School Committee from March 2022 to September 2024. During that time, the GMEA President and other bargaining unit members repeatedly requested to meet with School Committee members – and were repeatedly met with a non-response or rebuff by the School Committee.

As a retired teacher, I was interested in learning the views of the certificated and classified staff – because their views are essential to informed and optimal policy and decision-making. But in GM Policy BHC, the subsection *School Committee Members Communications to Staff* consists of this language:

"All official communications, policies, and directives of staff interest and concern will be communicated to staff members through the Superintendent. The Superintendent will develop appropriate methods to keep staff fully informed of the Committee's problems, concerns and actions."

This language discourages or prevents School Committee speaking with staff, except through the Superintendent. This policy model for communication, generated by the MA Association of School Committees, structurally dampens frank opinions from District employees to School Committee members.

Provisions for the establishment of Joint Labor-Management Committees (JLMCs) that include School Committee members are found in the Certificated Unit A and Classified Unit C contracts. The Unit A JLMC states that issues the JLMC may address include "problems raised by the bargaining unit" and "any matter the parties agree to discuss." This is a broad purview – the JLMC seems an appropriate venue to discuss the range of issues that concern GMEA.

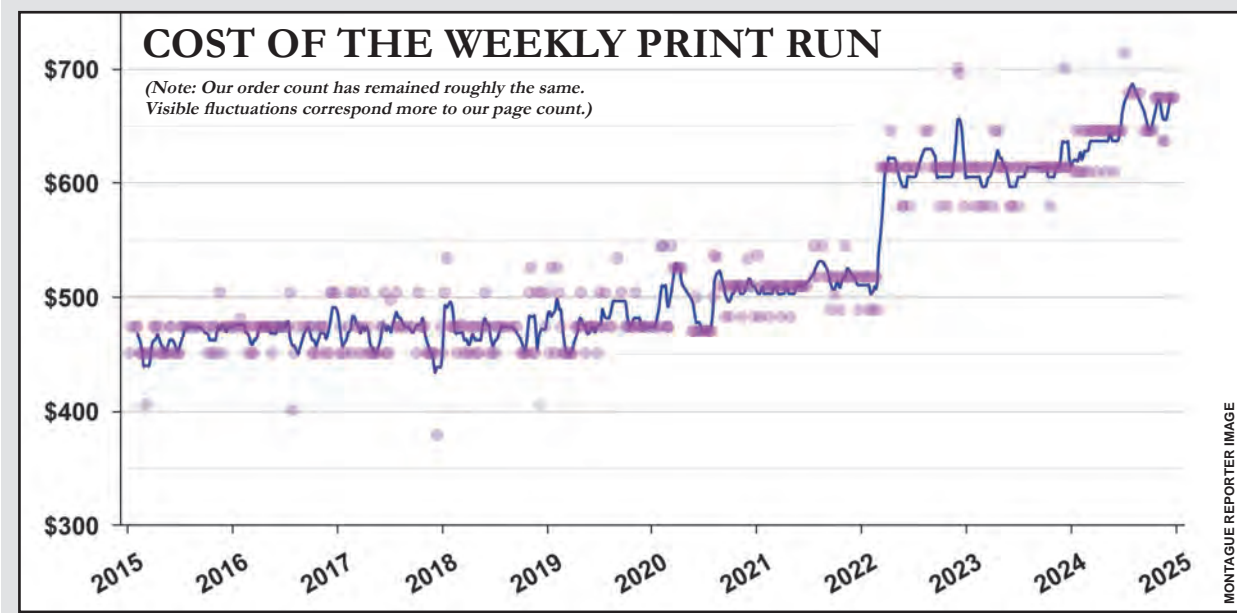
Tentative steps were taken in Spring 2024 to re-establish the dormant JLMCs for Units A and C. But – according to the GMEA President – GM administration canceled JLMC meetings scheduled for the fall of 2024.

I don't believe that the School Committee has yet heard the issues the employees are so concerned about.

It was an error for the GMEA President to include the "no confidence" vote on the Facilities Director during public comment – but the GMEA's irritation is understandable. The School Committee chair was surprised and disappointed that GMEA discussed these no-confidence votes in a public meeting – but the School Committee refused to listen to the employees in almost any setting, leaving GMEA no outlet but public comment to address the School Committee with what are possibly, or probably, legitimate concerns that need School Committee attention.

**John Irminger, Turners Falls**  
*Former Montague member, GMRSD School Committee*

ple more quarters in the slot. And we thank you for all of your support, and for all of your understanding!



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**Compiled by NINA ROSSI**

This Friday, January 3 is another **First Friday event**, and Turners Falls businesses and organizations will stay open late. At the Discovery Center they are offering “tin-can papermaking” for ages eight and up in the Great Hall, from 4 to 6 p.m.

And between 5 and 8 p.m., you can bring your quarters to Sadie’s Bikes at 83 Canal Street for the 18th Gumball Takeover, featuring prizes created by Kat Adler and MR writer Bella Levavi’s “talent show of stuff.”

The Montague Common Hall in Montague Center announces “**Movies that make you cooler!**” a locally curated film series. Get cool this Friday with *Down By Law* by director Jim Jarmusch, and starring Tom Waits, John Lurie, and Roberto Benigni. Enjoy shorts and music before the film at 6 p.m. and the featured movie begins at 6:30 p.m.

There’s a suggested donation of \$10 to \$20, with all proceeds going towards building an accessible ramp for the building.

This Sunday, to celebrate Three Kings Day, there’s a **French-Breton music and dance party** at the Polish American Club in South Deerfield. Dance instruction is provided and no partner is necessary. There’s a jam session from 2:45 to 3:45 p.m., and

the dance is from 4 to 6 p.m. Enjoy an *hors d’oeuvres* potluck. A \$15 donation is suggested at the door.

**Senior Tech Time Tuesdays** at the Gill-Montague senior center will resume for the new year next Tuesday, January 7 from 12:30 to 2 p.m. Go in with questions about your cell phone, laptop, or tablet, and get help. No appointment is needed for this free service.

The Brick House Community Resource Center in Turners Falls (see our Spanish-language coverage on Page A6!) and the Salasin Project in Greenfield have come together to offer an eight-week program called **Beyond Trauma: A Healing Journey**, Friday mornings from 9:30 to 11 a.m., from January 10 to February 28.

This is a confidential support and discussion group, which explores the impact of interpersonal violence and trauma on individuals, and is open to people age 18 or older who identify as female. The group will explore ideas for creating safety, developing healthy relationships, and sharing healing activities. Free childcare is available for in-person attendees; the program is also available on Zoom.

Contact Stacey at [slangknecht@brickhousecommunity.org](mailto:slangknecht@brickhousecommunity.org) or (413) 800-2496 to register.

Compress your impressions of the river habitat into a small booklet – a “**habitat zine**” – from a single piece of paper during a drop-in program at the Discovery Center in Turners Falls next Sunday, January 12 from 2 to 4 p.m.

Cut and draw your nature observations to fit the format. If you made your own paper at the tin-can papermaking event on January 3, you can use it for this program. The event is for all ages.

The Brick House is hosting a two-part **Money Management Workshop**. The first part, on Wednesday, January 15 from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m., focuses on household budgeting, and the session at the same time on Wednesday, January 22 is on financial planning.

All are welcome to attend one or both. Register with Stacey at [slangknecht@brickhousecommunity.org](mailto:slangknecht@brickhousecommunity.org) or (413) 800-2496.

Greenfield has installed a dozen brightly painted bees around the downtown, each decorated by a different artist. The Massachusetts Department of Agriculture and Studio Seven are sponsoring a new bee sculpture for the city, and all artists are invited to submit **design proposals for decorating “Beatrice the Bee.”**

The finished sculpture will be revealed during next May’s Bee Fest in Greenfield, and installed at the Big E in Springfield next June 2025. Find out project details and how to apply at [tinyurl.com/yk-jfkyn8](http://tinyurl.com/yk-jfkyn8). The deadline for proposals is February 15, and a stipend of \$2,000 is in the offing.

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

**GILL** from page A1

had paid the town \$11,000 in impact fees since it opened in August 2023.

“With this update, I also got rid of any other provision from our old agreement that called upon Leaf Joy to do any actions that we didn’t require of any other business in town,” said Purington. This had included requirements to submit an annual report and to meet each year with school officials and other community groups.

“If we’re not doing that to a liquor store, I’m not sure why we’d do it to a cannabis store,” select-board chair Greg Snedeker agreed.

**Introducing... Cyberspace**

The Franklin Regional Council on Governments (FRCOG) recently studied the stubborn “digital divide” in Gill, where some residents still don’t have the ability to access the internet as needed for study, work, and other uses. Purington presented the board with a draft of the researchers’ findings and recommendations, which he said would be discussed and approved in a future meeting.

Suggested plans include expanding public Wifi, lending public “hotspot” devices through the library, and expanding existing programs that offer free laptops and training to seniors.

“I think it’s a reasonable list of things we can do or can explore that would bring about greater access, greater use, and greater understanding of digital technology,” said Purington.

**Bid Buddies**

The board once again approved Gill’s participation in FRCOG’s

collective highway bid program for FY’26. For a \$2,995 fee, the program helps the town with the bidding process for road work, including advertising needs and renewing bidder specifications.

“I would guess there’s 20 to 25 different materials and services that they do within this program,” said Purington. “It saves [highway department superintendent] John Miner and myself a lot of time.”

**Other Business**

The board declared models of the Gill Church and the Riverside municipal building to be “surplus,” after the historical commission said it had no use for them. “I’m sure there’s a story behind them,” said Purington. “I’m hoping that by declaring them surplus, that will help bring the story to my ears or to others’.”

Purington said the models could be offered to other departments or institutions, or sold in a tag sale. He estimated that the church model was around three feet wide and four feet tall.

The board awarded two agricultural field leases for the year ahead. Dan Flagg was granted use of the Boyle lot for \$200, and Brian Peila paid \$175 to use the Mariamante field.

Flagg expressed his appreciation that the town was giving out these leases a few months earlier than it usually does. “Today would have been a good day to be out there, plowing the field,” said Purington, noting the unseasonably warm weather.

The next selectboard meeting will be held Monday, January 13, at 5:30 p.m. at the town hall.



**OBITUARY**

**Michael Magrath**

11/15/1957 – 12/8/2024

Michael Magrath, a man with a thousand friends, passed away in his home in Turners Falls on December 8, 2024, after a very brief battle with a rare tumor. He will be remembered for his generosity, sense of humor, kindness, and devotion to many communities, including the Montague Fire Department, Restorative Justice, Polyphemus, and the LGBT community as it has evolved from basic rights to celebrating diversity.

He was seen frequently at the Rendezvous where he often participated in Trivia nights. He loved wine tasting events and had a robust wine cellar which he enjoyed sharing with his many friends. He took pride in his work and especially loved his coworkers at the UMass Library and his student workers, to whom he offered mentoring, treats, and unconditional acceptance and support.

At his core, Michael was a storyteller who carried the memories of all he knew with him always.

His lifelong passion for spending time in the New York State Adirondacks and climbing fire towers was greatly enhanced when he was able to share his adventures with his partner Dae Thacher, who brought such joy to his life.

Michael was born November 15, 1957 in New Providence, New



Jersey. His jobs included forestry in North Carolina, deliveries for Squash Trucking in Belchertown, farm manager in Deerfield, and Stacks Collection Specialist at the UMass library. He earned a degree in Multicultural Management at UMass’s University Without Walls.

Michael was predeceased by two siblings, Joe and Tom. In addition to his partner Dae, he leaves behind two siblings Kate and Matthew, his ex-wife M L, his beloved stepchildren Gabriel and Abigail McGuigan, his adored step-grands Ben and Claire McGuigan, his cherished friends, and many cousins, nieces, and nephews.

A celebration of Michael’s life will be held in the spring.

In Michael’s memory, please perform an act of kindness.

**OBITUARY**

**William (Bill) Kostecki**

8/13/1938 – 12/27/2024

William (Bill) Kostecki passed away on December 27, 2024. He was born August 13, 1938 at home in East Deerfield and moved about Franklin County before his father, Julius Kostecki, and mother, Irene Piotrowicz Kostecki, eventually settled with Bill and his siblings in Montague Center.

Bill worked on the family farm while attending the Montague Center school from the sixth through eighth grade, and continued until he graduated from Turners Falls High School in 1957. Bill and his family raised tobacco on their farm, eventually switching to cucumbers. They also raised pigs, cows, and chickens.

He joined the Army Reserve in 1956 on a delayed entry program and was sent to basic training two weeks after finishing high school. He achieved the rank of Army Staff Sergeant E6, also serving as the Weapons Platoon Sergeant.

During his time as an Inactive Reserve, Bill became a master electronics technician and worked as an electronics repair technician for Sears and Roebuck in Greenfield, where he remained employed for over 30 years.

Bill also continued growing a vegetable garden, especially garlic and asparagus, and bemoaned the constant battle against weeds, his biggest crop. He and his wife,



Carol, also grew various fruit trees, as well as their prized blueberries which Bill inherited from his mother and maintained for over 45 years. They continue growing to this day.

Bill enjoyed painting and reading, and was a *Montague Reporter* subscriber since the paper’s inception. He could fix almost anything, and kept his father’s 1942 Ford 2N tractor running throughout his life.

When his sons were growing up he especially enjoyed fishing with them, participating in their Boy Scout adventures, bringing them to their music lessons, and watching their Little League games – often fast-changing out of his work clothes to jump in the family car and eating a quick dinner while Carol drove them to their children’s various sports or Scouting activities.

Many happy summers were also spent camping all throughout New England and New York with Carol, their children, and extended family. Along with being an attentive, loving father and husband, he was a proud and happy grandparent.

Parishioners of Our Lady of Czestochowa Parish in Turners Falls since 1971, Bill and Carol sang in the choir for thirty years. Bill also began singing at weddings and funerals which he continued to do for forty years.

Bill leaves his wife of 58 years, Carol (Wissmann) Kostecki; his son Andrew Kostecki and his partner Jerri Higgins, of Montague Center; and his son David Kostecki and his wife, Jennifer (Wright) Kostecki, and their son Jacob Kostecki, of Westfield. Bill also leaves sisters Marcella Scadova and Patricia Hood. He was predeceased by his brother Philip Kostecki.

Bill was a thoughtful, kind, gentle, and talented soul. He had a great sense of humor, ever playing the straight man. His laugh will continue to echo through the hearts of those who knew him.

A Memorial Mass will be held Wednesday, January 8, at 10 a.m. at Our Lady of Czestochowa, with interment in the parish cemetery to follow. In lieu of flowers, please donate to Our Lady of Czestochowa.

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## OP ED

## Classic Town Bullying at 'The Bee'

By ERIC POIRIER

**GREENFIELD** – Last month in a local newspaper, *The Recorder* to be exact, I saw that the mayor of Greenfield, Ginny Desorgher, made the decision to remove the table and benches at the pocket park on the corner of Main and Miles Street. They call this place The Bee. The town gets grants from the state to put these pocket parks in different areas. This is a really great idea, I think: A place for “all of the public” to meet, play, rest, talk, or just to get together at.

The problem is that *all of the public* is not welcome there: hence the reason for putting an end to the parks. When I see the benches being removed it hits home for me. This has been going on for over 40 years. In the '80s it was the benches in front of Barrett & Baker. Then, we had them all up and down Main Street. Again, in front of the Mohawk Mall. Then, the homeless camps in town.

I remember, a few years back, when the town changed the park laws on the common to keep us, the unwanted, away. The Bee is just the latest in this bullying bullshit. This is an example of the widespread lack of concern for others here in town.

Back in the '80s, when I was 13 or 14 years old, there used to be benches in front of Barrett & Baker on Main Street. My friends and I would meet there all the time on our bikes just to connect with each other. It didn't matter if it was raining, snowing, or sunny outside. It was a safe place on Main Street in the open public to go bowling, skating, to the movies, to get ice cream, to go swimming, or just to raise some hell.

Everybody knew if you were having some trouble with your family, or just wanting some-

thing to do, that you could go to the benches for friendship, support, or even guidance. We could get everything there, regardless of being rich or poor. Sometimes just being a part of something, like a community, goes a very long way.

The town's reason for removing the benches, as reported in the *Recorder*, is because of the “growth in the city's homeless population,” which has led to “an uptick in drug overdoses, illegal activity, and arrests in that area.” Let's think about how upfront, public, and bold we/they are being here. The Bee is not the ideal place to use or to get high at. The reason most people do get high there is because they/we are calling out for help.

Has anyone counted the lives saved at The Bee? Let's think here. There are always three sides to any story: there's yours, there's the truth, and then there's mine. This is what I believe. Let's help everyone as a community, as a whole community. Nobody should be left out, left alone, or made to feel less than others.

I think that by removing the benches we lose an open public place where we can connect, or feel a part of something. Who are we to judge what others can have or not have? Shame on those who do. I have seen a lot of good things and learning experiences happen here at the benches by Greenfield locals, the homeless, and the young and old shoppers.

In my opinion, I think Greenfield should give them/us a place where we don't feel so alone. A place to connect with others in public and without structure. I *Beelieve* we/people would use less drugs and alcohol because of the connections we made or will make. I say put the benches back, Mayor! People use drugs because of being hurt, abused, and having a lack of resources or con-

nections. Let's get this together. We can't keep taking away places like this. It's just sweeping the problem under the rug – sweeping us/people under the rug. We are people too.

Hear me roar, selfish city people. It's all good until they see or hear things that they don't agree with. How does this make any sense? It doesn't. It's called bullying – “town bullying,” or catering to the upper class of people: the mayor, city councils, and some business owners trying to bully others out.

You people want our business, but not us. Was there a town or public meeting about this where we – the people who use The Bee – could all have a voice? I don't think so. They did what they wanted to do, regardless of who it hurt.

It's called *bullshit*. Who are they to do this to us/them? We all live and pay taxes here in Greenfield, and pay money at your stores. They put these here for all of us to use these things, regardless of income or housing. Shame on you. So get into the world to feel, touch, and see, not just hear the one-sided approach. This is not a community. It's called town *bullying bullshit at The Bee*.

I will *Bee* voting. This is *E on The Bee*.

*This article first appeared in The Light, a newsletter by Franklin County Jail and House of Correction (FCSO) residents.*

*Some of the writers join The Light already devoted to writing, while others discover love for writing through their participation.*

*The students engage in process-oriented work to create stories and art, including personal essays, op-eds, recipes, poems, research articles, and other explorations of interest to them and their peers, coalescing into a new issue every eight to 10 weeks.*

**WENDELL** from page A1

petitioned by NAB, and passed with one dissenting vote at a single-article special town meeting last May.

Town counsel Kopelman and Paige had warned that the attorney general's office would reject the measure on the grounds that it was in effect a zoning bylaw, and on request drafted an alternate version, but at NAB's urging the selectboard opted not to send that version to town meeting. It was officially rejected in November.

After authorizing the legal expense at the December 18 meeting, the board accepted a proposal by the law firm Doherty Wallace Pillsbury & Murphy to represent the town in the appeal.

“The people of Wendell have been clear that the risks associated with lithium-ion battery storage systems demand stronger protec-

tions,” selectboard chair Laurie DiDonato stated in a press release issued after the meeting. “We're confident this bylaw reflects the will of our residents and their strong desire to ensure the safety of our town and its environment.”

#### Infrastructure Work

Project manager Phil Delorey said he expected the contractor who would remove the dam that creates Bowens Pond to come to an upcoming conservation commission meeting and answer concerns about how its removal would affect Wendell Depot Road and Osgood Brook, including silting and potential road damage where the Brook flows close to the road.

The dam is entirely on private land, and the property owner has the backing of the state Department of Environmental Protection (Mass-DEP) in wanting it removed, but the conservation commission has not yet seen a plan. Before starting work, the contractor must provide a study of the impacts to the con com, and then hold a public hearing.

Delorey said the con com did approve the use of a site around the back of WRATS for a town wood bank, seeing no interference with a wetland. The area was cleared of trees by a different contractor, who accepted the value of the wood as payment. Only a small section will need stump removal for it to serve as the wood bank site, making the estimate for that work lower than anticipated. The highway department can use the rest of the cleared area to hold roadside debris.

Moving the open-top containers at WRATS, Delorey reported, has been hampered by wires that supply electricity and internet connection to the office. National Grid moved the wires, and the next time contain-

ers are changed they will be put in their new location, which will allow residents to make deposits without climbing a rickety staircase.

Delorey said he planned to meet with a Gill Engineering representative on January 9 about repair of the Farley bridge, and he believed work can start in late summer.

#### Town Buildings

The selectboard hired Amanda Detloff of New Salem for hand- and machine-removal of snow from the walks and approaches around town buildings. Detloff missed the season's first snowfall, which has now melted, thanks to patience.

Selectboard member Gillian Budine, who shoveled around town buildings the morning after the first snowfall, noticed in the course of her shoveling that a town hall kitchen window was falling apart. Delorey checked and found some siding and a cellar casement window also needing replacement.

**The highway commission has agreed to postpone the planned auction of town surplus property until Saturday, April 26.**

Delorey said he had asked three contractors for estimates for this work, and did not expect the cost to be extravagant. Budine said the town property maintenance account should have enough money to cover the expense.

DiDonato recommended the kitchen committee be informed that these repairs are in the works.

DiDonato said she had sent a waiver of liability form to the web-

site committee to include with the application for use of the town hall and its kitchen. Budine said paper copies of that application should also be available.

The board reduced town hall rental fees from five to three categories – \$20, \$50, or \$100 depending on the number of people invited, with use of the chairs and tables inside the building included.

The board also decided to eliminate the cleaning deposit, which was a check renters left with the town to be used to pay for cleaning if it needed after they rented the building. The deposits have never been used. Instead, board members agreed that a cleaning assessment will be attached if post-use cleaning is needed, and that a renter who does not pay for it may not be allowed another rental.

#### Other Business

The selectboard made official the appointment of Tom Siefert as board of health clerk.

The board granted a Class III automobile salvage license to Mormon Hollow Auto – still sometimes known as Scott's Garage – and a liquor license each to Deja Brew and to the Wendell Country Store. DiDonato said she had sent a draft of a revised one-day liquor license application to town counsel for review.

Considering the weather likely in January, the highway commission has agreed to postpone the planned auction of town surplus property until Saturday, April 26, at 10 a.m. at the highway garage. Viewing will start at 9 a.m.

The old town hall chairs will be sold in groups of five, and will be moved to the site for the auction. Former selectboard chair Dan Keller has agreed to be auctioneer.

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JACKSON PHOTOS

*It was cold, it was dark, and it sounded amazing.*

**CAVERN** from page A1

The website *Atlas Obscura* offered some sharper prompts, and one popped right out: a long-abandoned marble quarry carved into a Vermont mountainside, flooded with water that, in the winter, freezes solid.

I looked outside. It was very cold out. I started to pack a bag.

“It is not known when the first settlers of Dorset discovered the mineral wealth of their township,” local historian Frederick Field hedged expertly in his 1868 article “Marble Quarries (In Dorset).” “[C]ertain it is, however, that beds of marble were known to exist long before their value was understood.”

It turned out that Mount Aeolus, a minor Taconic and only the state’s 53rd-highest peak, was very marbly, and East Dorset would be a major marble-mining hub all through the 19th century. According to the Dorset Chamber of Commerce there “may have been as many as 14” distinct quarries clustered at Aeolus.

Some of these were bigger and some smaller, but the one Elijah Sykes started in 1808 was unique in several respects: it was high up the hill, tunneled straight into it instead of chipping away at the surface, and produced huge quantities of primo slab. This kicked off a regional vogue for marble headstones, but carving chunks of rock from a

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mountain cave and dragging them off to market was brutal work. Over several decades a number of marble sawmills were built in the vicinity.

“By 1841, workers – often a hundred at a time – were using iron bars tipped at each end with steel chisels to strike into the marble to crack the rock into larger chunks and move them out of the ground with pulleys,” the Chamber’s website says of the Sykes quarry. “They were laboriously transported by teams of oxen pulling sledges to be milled... and sent via the Rutland Railroad to points throughout our young republic...”

And then the railroad came to Mount Aeolus.

In 1856 William and John Freedley, marble barons from Philadelphia who already ran an established quarry at Stockbridge, Massachusetts – the village there was called Freedleyville – bought Sykes out. Their most notable innovation at Dorset was to build a funicular railway straight up the hill’s steep slope.

By the time of Field’s article, “over 300 quarrymen and sawyers, mostly Irish and Canadian French – the former largely predominating” were living and working in the village that would become known, just like its predecessor further south in the Taconics, as Freedleyville.

The boom time would last until the early 20th century, when the rise of Portland cement meant the fall of big marble. The Freedley company’s sawmill burned down in 1923, never to be rebuilt, and the quarry was auctioned off in 1938. Eventually, it ended up under public ownership.

In modern times, Aeolus’s overgrown railbed and various marble-slab-dragging spur roads became a haven for Jeep and four-wheeler enthusiasts – and enthusiasts, more generally speaking – and the town of Dorset, the eighth- or ninth-wealthiest municipality in Vermont, has fought to strike a balance between public access, preservation, and rewilding.

It seems to be going well. Clicking “Hike” on the town website, [www.dorsetvt.org](http://www.dorsetvt.org), provides the visitor with trail maps as well as the coordinates of the preferred parking spot for hikers – down to seven decimal points, in fact, a level of specificity within a half-inch.

“There is a small parking area, but beware during the winter,” this website cautions.

I was not really sure what this meant, and the words replayed in

my head on the way up. Dorset, Vermont is a 72-mile drive from Turners Falls, and 41 of those miles are spent on the exceedingly scenic Vermont Route 30.

If there was no parking at the trailhead, I decided, I would find a good spot for lunch and head home having had an enjoyable drive.

I felt invigorated by the bright sun, a suitably loud car stereo, and a guy in a gleaming late-model Ford Explorer tailgating me for the first 38 miles out of Bratt. I wasn’t even going slow. He finally peeled off toward the Bromley Mountain Ski Resort – late for the slopes, I concluded, and continued on toward Dorset in peace.


The final approach up Mount Aeolus was a well-kept residential dirt road, with gravel thoughtfully scattered on top of recent snow pack. I reached the designated parking spot just as the only party parked there was leaving.


It looked like I might have the Freedley Quarry to myself, which was an exciting prospect, because what I was really most interested in on this adventure was what a gigantic rectilinear cavern of marble and ice might sound like, but I also didn’t want to annoy people.

The main stretch of trail is currently and “indefinitely” gated off, though the recreational vehicle lobby has been wooing public opinion in Dorset with the goal of reinstating motorized access, and signs installed by their volunteers encouraged me to Tread Lightly.


The late December sun gleamed. The 1.2-mile climb was powdery, straight, and steep, and every thousand feet or so I had to stop to remove another sweater. While I didn’t venture up any spur roads, Aeolus is apparently dotted with Freedleyville’s ruins, and a few collapsed structures and cellarholes were visible.

Eventually the road leveled off. In front of me was a sign prohibiting trespass onto private land, and beyond that, the distinctive tread-mark patterns left by snowmobiles turning around. To my right, a clearing and vista provided a sweeping view of the valley below.

And to my left was...  something else entirely.

 *Reader: Do you have another great day-trip destination, one to two hours’ travel from these parts? Write it up! Let’s make it a series. Send yours to editor@montaguereporter.org.*

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# Aquí se habla español



Esta es la página mensual en español del *Montague Reporter*. Aquí podrá encontrar cuestiones acerca de la comunidad hispana en el área, eventos de interés, curiosidades, y noticias mundiales en español. Si quiere participar o compartir alguna sugerencia, envíenos un correo electrónico a [spanish@montaguereporter.org](mailto:spanish@montaguereporter.org).

## Creando comunidad: The Brick House

Por VICTORIA MAÍLLO DE AGUILERA

**TURNERS FALLS** – En la calle tercera hay un edificio de ladrillo bastante singular, con una gran entrada con puertas de cristal y unas camas para vegetales y plantas delante. El edificio tiene una falsa altura en el tejado, típico de las construcciones de la época, coronada por una enorme águila con las alas extendidas. Un letrero sobre la puerta principal dice: The Brick House Community Resource Center.

Según consta en la página web ([www.brickhousecommunity.org](http://www.brickhousecommunity.org)), del mismo su misión consiste en apoyar el bienestar de la juventud y de las familias en un lugar que permita la creatividad y el aprendizaje, el crecimiento y el liderazgo, así como fortalecer las conexiones con la comunidad. El centro comunitario se encuentra en el centro de Turners, pero sirve a los cinco pueblitos: Lake Pleasant, Millers Falls, Montague Center, Montague City, y también Gill al pertenecer al mismo distrito escolar.

Se creó en 1989 como respuesta a la muerte de cuatro mujeres asesinadas en crímenes de violencia doméstica por lo que un grupo de ciudadanos, cargos públicos, y proveedores de servicios decidieron crear una organización que atendiese las necesidades de la comunidad. Abrió sus puertas en 1990 y desde entonces ha servido a más de 3.500 residentes con programas de educación, de empleo, de acompañamiento y consejo y con diversas oportunidades para construir lazos comunitarios.

Los objetivos se centran desde hace años en apuntalar la desigualdad social ayudando tanto a individuos como a la comunidad a través del desarrollo económico, el desarrollo de la juventud y la educación.

Me presentó en el lugar una tarde de primeros de diciembre y entró en un espacio que he visitado otras veces, aún así lo aprecio cambiado. La primera sala es un espacio multiusos que la comunidad puede usar para charlas, exhibiciones de arte, películas y otras actividades. Un poco más adentro, debido a la insonorización está el estudio de música con controles de sonido y diversos instrumentos para practicar y desarrollar la creatividad y el talento.

En el centro podrá encontrar espacio con una sala de arte con materiales de todo tipo, el sueño de cualquier joven artista para desarrollar sus inquietudes. También en la segunda planta está el estudio de danza.

Paso a una sala en la planta superior donde hay una gran mesa y nos sentamos alrededor. Están todas las personas que trabajan en diferentes posiciones dentro de la Brick House y a los que presentaré a continuación.

**José Olvera-Aguilera** es el encargado de todos los programas que se realizan en español. Antes de trabajar en la Brick House como Coordi-

nador de los Programas de Padres y Familias, trabajó en la industria de la vivienda, y en trabajos en el jardín.

José emigró desde Guanajuato, México con su familia cuando era pequeño y ha vivido casi toda su vida en Franklin County por lo que conoce bien las necesidades de la comunidad latina e inmigrante en esta área. Conoce bien los recursos que las familias inmigrantes necesitan cuando llegan a este país.

Organiza también la despensa del centro que no dispone solamente de alimentos, sino también de objetos de aseo. No se hacen preguntas más que nombre y número de personas en la familia.

Al ser hablante nativo de español dedica tiempo a hacer charlas para la comunidad en español, como por ejemplo acerca de cómo prevenir la diabetes en adultos latinos. Otros programas que organiza están dedicados a completar papeles burocráticos con diferentes fines como ejemplo presentación de impuestos.

A José le interesa organizar un programa de lucha para los jóvenes en el que se les inculque disciplina, humildad y fuerza mental. Hay también otros programas lúdicos como la celebración del Mes de la Hispanidad.

**Thomas Taaffe** es el Director Ejecutivo que me cuenta que fue la Junta Directiva la que se aproximó a él cuando estaban buscando alguien para esa posición el año pasado. Taaffe es artista en diversas artes como teatro, música y arte gráfico y posee un doctorado en antropología. Vive en Northampton y es originario de Nueva York. Ha trabajado mucho con todo lo relacionado con justicia social y es el primer director a tiempo completo en 20 años en la Brick House.

Nada más ver la página web del centro comunitario, se enamoró porque pensó que todo lo que siem-



*The Brick House, el centro comunitario en Turners Falls.*

pre había querido hacer, se podía hacer en la Brick House o había una posibilidad de llevarlo a cabo en el futuro. Lleva a sus espaldas más de 30 años de experiencia en recaudación de fondos, desarrollo de programas, y en gestión de asociaciones sin ánimo de lucro.

Me explica que tienen programas de arte para los niños y adolescentes, programas de apoyo para padres, despensa para las familias y que se encuentran abiertos a cualquier otro tipo de apoyo, programa o ayuda que la comunidad necesite, están dispuestos a recibir ideas y hacerlo posible.

Thomas añade que este siempre ha sido el espíritu que ha imperado en la Brick House. El centro se distingue por su naturaleza flexible, atenta a las necesidades que la comunidad tuviera en ese momento y dispuesta a facilitarlas en la medida

de lo posible. Responder a estas necesidades comunitarias es lo que hace que la Junta Directiva tome iniciativas respecto a los programas que se van a llevar a cabo.

Me cuenta que él mismo proviene de una familia de inmigrantes, que hablaban gaélico en casa y creció en un barrio en Nueva York donde se escuchaban diferentes lenguas. El arte formó parte de su crecimiento y desarrollo en su juventud y le ayudó a ser el adulto que es hoy.

Como director quiere que la Brick House vuelva a recuperar muchas de las actividades que se hacían antes de la pandemia. Me comenta que cualquier idea que la comunidad quiera llevar a cabo, harán lo posible para lograrlo.

**Hannah Bertrand** es la Directora de los Programas de la Juventud, tiene experiencia en salud mental, así como en construir comunidad y en grupos de intervención. Su pasión es crear espacios para la juventud donde puedan usar sus habilidades para empoderarse y tomar las mejores decisiones por sí mismos.

La primera vez que visitó la Brick House y empezó una conversación con los jóvenes que estaban allí, se dio cuenta de que eso es lo que quería hacer. Me dice que unos 30 adolescentes y jóvenes visitan la Brick House cada día. Su pasión es realmente trabajar con ellos.

Hannah me señala que hay muchos chicos que hablan español que visitan el centro, y quiere que se sientan bienvenidos cualquiera que sea la lengua que hablen. Proviene de esta parte del estado, así que conoce muy bien la comunidad y está intentando que la joven comunidad latina participe cada vez más en sus programas.

**Stacey Langknecht** es la Directora de los Servicios de Padres y Familias. Cree firmemente que la

comunidad es importante para la sanación y para mantener una buena salud en general, ya sea física, emocional o mental.

Stacey también trabaja como Coordinadora de Participación Familiar en el distrito escolar de Gill-Montague. Fue invitada por primera vez a la Brick House para elaborar un plan estratégico que sirviera para el futuro. Gracias a ello empezó a trabajar como interina, y después le ofrecieron la oportunidad de encargarse de la posición.

Programa las noches de juego con familias y padres, actividades divertidas y también educativas. Stacey está bien conectada con otras agencias para conseguir lo que la comunidad necesita.

La ayuda a las familias vienen y forman comunidad, comparten experiencias frente a una taza de café, así como ofrecer servicios como puede ser salud mental, vivienda, salud y ejercicio, sanación de trauma, ayuda financiera y con presupuestos, es decir, programas muy diversos que buscan mostrar apoyo en diferentes áreas. La idea es conectar diferentes personas con diferentes organizaciones y formar una red de contactos que puedan apoyar a la comunidad.

Incluso tienen un programa de intercambio de conversación en inglés y español que quiere impulsar que la comunidad latina se sienta cómoda en la Brick House.

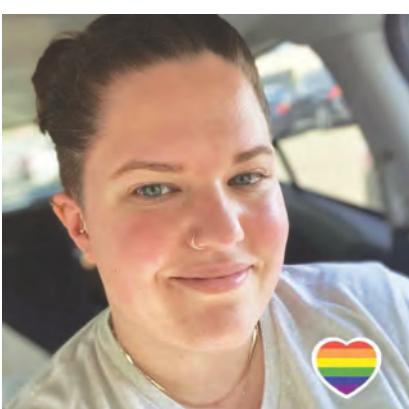
**Kaia Jackson** coordina el Departamento de Arte y Participación. Trabaja con niños, jóvenes adultos y familias para navegar a través de experiencias de trauma, marginalización y discapacidad. Quiere usar el espacio para ayudar a sanar experiencias que han sido históricamente silenciadas en espacios comunitarios intergeneracionales.

Proviene de Ohio y ahora vive en el Patch. Empezó enseñando una clase sobre movimiento y drama y sintió que se estaba integrando en la organización. Se dedica también a la improvisación.

Su trabajo incluye integrar diferentes artes y colaborar con diferentes personas. Quiere integrar el arte y que todos puedan expresarse en el espacio de la Brick House.

**Crystal Garrity** es la Coordinadora de Proyectos. Posee experiencia en programación de educación fuera de las horas de clase, campamentos de arte, y escuelas. Crystal cree firmemente que la juventud merece explorar sus propios intereses e identidades con adultos con los se encuentren seguros y que cuiden de ellos.

**Rowan Lupinwood** es especialista en Programas de Juventud. Se ha graduado recientemente de GCC en Servicios Humanos y espera poder trabajar en gestión de casos relacionados con la comunidad LGTB+ y los jóvenes.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE BRICK HOUSE

En sentido horario desde arriba a la izquierda: José Olvera-Aguilera, Hannah Bertrand, Thomas Taaffe, y Stacey Langknecht.

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**THE SPIRIT SHOPPE**

**BIRDS** from page A1

and humans have become infected in Russia, Senegal, Laos, and elsewhere. There have been no documented cases of human-to-human transmission, but as case numbers increase, the potential for a new pandemic grows.

“We don’t know enough yet, but it is a concern,” UMass Amherst microbiology professor Matthew Moore told the *Reporter* this week. “The silver lining is that after the [COVID-19] pandemic, our institutions are more primed to monitor things like this.”

Moore said that instances of animal-to-human transmission of H5N1 are still relatively rare. The CDC currently considers the disease to be a “low risk” to public health.

“In general, when you see these jumps, they’re seeing it in people in very, very close contact with animals, where they are constantly being exposed to high levels of the virus,” Moore said. “The more it circulates – especially among mammals – the more you need to be concerned about it.”

In the United States, H5N1 was first detected in a herd of Texas dairy cows last March. Since then, avian influenza has been confirmed in at least 866 cattle herds in 16 states, according to the US Department of Agriculture.

Federal agencies have also been working together to sample commercial milk supplies for traces of H5N1. Last April they found traces of the virus in about 20% of the samples tested, suggesting it is more widespread in dairy cows than reported numbers suggest.

The majority of human cases in the US have been detected in California, the epicenter of the current outbreak – and the largest producer of commercial dairy products in the country. Governor Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency over widespread contagion in dairy cattle on December 18, the same day that the infected chicken was reported in Vermont.

“We still don’t really know how serious it’s going to be,” Moore said of the current outbreak. “This is one to keep an eye on.”

Standard pasteurization processes, he added, render the virus inactive in milk.

**Farmers Worry**

The last major bird flu outbreak in the United States, in 2014 and 2015, resulted in the loss of over 50 million poultry birds across 21 states. It decreased the country’s total egg-laying chicken population by about 12%.

As the current outbreak worsens, farmers in western Massachusetts say they are worried, and doing their best to keep their animals safe. When one bird in a flock is stricken with avian influenza, it is a typical procedure for the entire flock to be “depopulated.”

The state Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) tracks the outbreaks, and monitors their risk to commercial farmers. Wild birds in four Massachusetts counties – Berkshire, Essex, Bristol, and Barnstable – have tested positive since 2022, as have poultry in Essex and Barnstable counties.

“In Massachusetts, nothing has changed in terms of risk,” MDAR communications director Phu Mai told the *Reporter*. “In addition to testing and health certification requirements for imported poultry,



*Despite its dramatic public death a day earlier, the remains of this Canada goose still lay on the bank of the Turners Falls power canal Wednesday, uncollected and untested.*

MDAR conducts routine [Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza] surveillance testing for hundreds of Massachusetts flock owners that sell birds or participate in shows at agricultural fairs and other events.”

At Diemand Farm in Wendell, all staff are required to scrub the bottom of their shoes with a diluted bleach solution before entering a chicken or turkey coop. Owner Annie Diemand Bucci said that recent news has encouraged workers to further “tighten up” biosecurity at the farm, which will include disinfecting the tires of any delivery vehicles that must drive through.

“It’s easy to do this time of the year because we don’t have a bunch of turkeys outside,” Diemand Bucci said. “But we do have beef cattle outside.”

At Reed Farm in Sunderland, owners Kat Haewon Chang and Peter Reed Laznicka raise Cornish Cross chickens and Pekin ducks for meat. They use sanitizing mats to clean their boots outside every enclosure, and have designed the farm’s processing facility in a way that minimizes cross-contamination.

“The health and wellbeing of our birds is a high priority for us,” Chang and Laznicka wrote to the *Reporter*. “We monitor them closely every day, which allows us to quickly pivot as necessary when adjustments are needed to their living spaces and our production methods.”

Both farms follow guidance from state agencies, advocacy organizations such as Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA), and professional networks to gauge evolving risk levels.

“[W]e regularly communicate with our poultry processing clients about their production methods and farms,” Chang and Laznicka wrote. “Fortunately, none of the poultry farmers we work with have had any issues.”

Pet owners should make sure their dogs or cats avoid any contact with deceased wild birds, Moore said, as cats have recently begun testing positive for the virus.

On Christmas Eve, producer Northwest Naturals announced a voluntary recall of a batch of turkey-based raw pet food, following the death of a house cat in Oregon. On the same day, 20 exotic cats were reported to have died at a sanctuary in Washington state following bird flu infection.

To keep her flock of orphaned or injured waterfowl safe at Duckworld Rescue and Sanctuary, Janice Doyle said she is watching them carefully for signs of illness, trying to keep wild birds away, reading the news, and checking so-

cial media networks to gauge the risk. As a rule, every new Duckworld adoptee is quarantined for 48 hours before joining the rest of the flock, she said.

**Birders Fret**

As news of the worsening outbreak spreads, the public is becoming more vigilant to the threat. As of press time, it is unclear whether sick and dying geese observed on the Turners Falls power canal this week were infected with influenza.

Avid local birder Ken Washburn first reported the geese on the Hampshire Bird Club Facebook page on Tuesday evening. Walking on Migratory Way that afternoon, they told the *Reporter*, they had found a lethargic Canada goose sitting on the pavement, breathing heavily. Washburn reported the sickly animal to Montague police, but it died before an officer arrived.

The pair then saw another goose on the water’s edge that seemed sick, unmoving, and initially unresponsive to the approaching humans.

“I love geese,” Washburn said. “It shouldn’t be sitting there like that, it should be out in the water swimming with its friends.” The second goose reportedly managed to access the canal and swam wobbly away.

The officer said he had tried calling “multiple agencies” about the bird, according to Washburn, but none were willing or able to respond. When the officer arrived, Washburn said, he put on gloves and moved the goose’s corpse from the pavement over the guardrail to the grassy edge of the canal reservoir, where it remained Wednesday evening, the *Reporter* confirmed.

Washburn said fellow birders have reported seeing a different dead goose on the power canal, as well as another behaving oddly.

Asked to comment on these incidents, Moore said it “wouldn’t be a surprise” if wild Canada geese infected with bird flu show up at the canal, given the disease’s prevalence in waterfowl. At least 70 geese and several dozen ducks were observed on the lower reservoir on Wednesday afternoon.

Neither the state Division of Fisheries and Wildlife nor the Environmental Police returned requests for comment on Wednesday, a state and federal holiday.

Domestic and commercial poultry exhibiting symptoms of bird flu can be reported to the state Division of Animal Health by calling (617) 626-1795, while wild animals suspected of infection can be reported to MassWildlife at (508) 389-6300.



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

*Here’s the way it was on January 2, 2020: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.*

**New Hampshire Developer Closes Southworth Deal**

The building known locally as “Southworth,” a large 19th-century Turners Falls paper mill on the Connecticut River that closed abruptly in the summer of 2017, has a new owner. New Hampshire developer Tom Cusano officially closed on the property two days after Christmas, according to documents at the Franklin County Registry of Deeds.

Reached by telephone, Cusano said that the building was still being called Southworth, despite the fact that that the company with that name is virtually defunct. “That’s what we’re going to call it until we find a tenant,” he told the *Reporter*.

According to registry documents, Cusano signed a deed for

\$679,087.24 reflecting a transfer of the property from Southworth, whose application for Chapter 11 bankruptcy was rejected by a federal court in 2018, to Cusano’s company, Milton Hilton LLC.

**Hopes, Predictions for 2020**

Montague town administrator Steve Ellis said that, looking forward to 2020, he expects the new department of public works garage to be completed this summer.

Leverett town administrator Marjorie McGinnis, with a big sigh of relief, predicted the Coke Kiln Bridge “will finally get done.”

Erving town administrator Bryan Smith looks forward to the grand opening of the new library on March 29 and noted that the tax case involving FirstLight power company may be resolved by the state Appellate Tax Board in the coming year.

**15 YEARS AGO**

*Here’s the way it was on December 23, 2009: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.*

**217 Feet Per Hour Each**

Claire Chang and Mitchell Waldron, from Gill, spent about four hours shoveling the sidewalk on the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge after the December 9 snowstorm. It was a whole lot of work, but now pedestrians can cross the bridge without walking in the traveling lane. The state has not cleared the bridge sidewalk for many years.

**A Tough Blaze**

“We don’t think we will ever accurately determine the cause,” said Turners Falls fire chief Ray Godin, speaking of the fire that destroyed 24 Grand Avenue in Millers Falls on Sunday night.

He added that although the firefighters worked really hard, the building was a total loss, partly due to the complicated layout of the water system in the area. All nine residents of the two families living there escaped without harm, including four young children.

**130 YEARS AGO**

*Here’s the way it was on January 2, 1895: News from the Turners Falls Reporter’s archive.*

**Turners Falls and Vicinity**

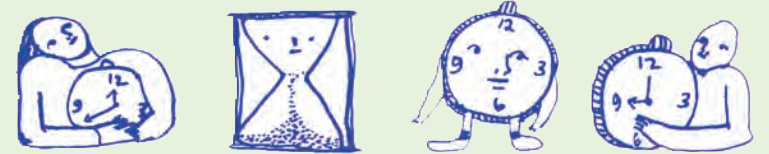
The sleighing is now pretty good through the country, and the farmers are busy hauling wood and timber.

The icemen are getting ready to cut ice, as the ice on the river is of good thickness.

Mr. Cady’s dancing school for children will begin at two o’clock tomorrow, instead of at four o’clock as usual.

Photographer A. W. Howes will leave town at once, so anyone wishing to get more pictures from their negatives, or to buy the negatives, should place their orders this week.

A “Christmas tree” party was held at the home of Mrs. L. L. Bartlett at Montague City, Christmas evening, and a number of little ones were invited. All the guests were generously remembered, and returned to their homes with thankful hearts to their hostess for causing a “merry Christmas” to drift into the past so joyously.



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# Sawmill River 10K Results

**MONTAGUE CENTER** – One hundred and nineteen runners crossed the finish line at the Annual Sawmill River 10K Run that was held in Montague Center on New Year’s Day. Frances Duncan of Somerville, Massachusetts and Owen Wright of Lakewood, Colorado were the overall winners. Duncan finished with a final time of 40:20, with Wright bringing in a time of 32:34.

Results per division are as follows:  
**Youth**, 17 and under: Cairo Harrell of Northampton (60:12); Philipp Tischloder (64:08).  
**Open Division**, ages 18 to 39:

Duncan and Wright.

**Master Division**, ages 40 to 49: Marcy Cabanas of Greenfield (41:31); Toby Briggs of Gill (43:27).

**Senior Division**, ages 50 to 59: Jennifer Schimmel of Deerfield (47:49); Christopher Gould of Amherst (39:36).

**Senior+ Division**, ages 60 and up: Debra Hevey of Chicopee (51:40); Steve Power of Bernardston (42:16).

Proceeds from the event benefit the Montague Parks and Rec Department’s Sponsor-A-Child Scholarship Program.

## BILLS from page A1

out only twice a year – in July and January – but to include two due dates for payment on each bill.

The town meeting vote to approve the quarterly system was unanimous, with virtually no debate – possibly because an article on repaving the entrance to the Hillcrest Elementary School playground had just been debated for the better part of an hour.

At that meeting, Seymour emphasized the value of not having to rely as much on temporary borrowing to pay for line items in the town’s operating budget. In one recent year, she said, Montague had to pay over \$22,000 in interest on this form of short-term borrowing.

Other speakers who supported the measure said they were concerned with the idea of owners being required to pay four times a year, but only receiving two notifications from the treasurer. “Is there going to be any kind of reminder?” town meeting member Laurie Callahan asked.

Initially, Seymour said there would be only two mailings due to the cost – with coupons for the two due dates attached to each – but then added that it might be possible to “send out some sort of reminder, or blast it out there for people.”

Reached this week for comment, Seymour stressed several points she had made at the May meeting and in the letter sent this week to property owners:

- The new policy will be in effect on July 1, 2025, with a bill that includes “coupons” for payments on August 1 and November 1. The bill for the second half of FY’26 will then be issued in January 2026, with payments due the following February 1 and May 1.

Seymour has indicated her office will issue a reminder before the second due date, but it is not yet clear what form this will take.

- The billing for the first half of FY’26 will be based on property assessments and tax rates from the previous fiscal year – specifically, this coming spring – while the second-half billing will reflect any updates to the assessments or rates made after July 1. Seymour pointed out that this is the same as current practice, except that each bill will now be split into two due dates.

- Water bills, which are sent to property owners from the Turners Falls fire district and Montague Center water district – separate entities from the town – will also move to the new four-date payment

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 Please contact: Sarah Pruitt at sarahpruitt58@gmail.com or Jessica Pruitt at jesprui@gmail.com.

# MONTAGUE REPORTER



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Greenfield residents Bella Levani (left) and Mo Schweiger (right) carried the most recent edition of the Reporter around with them all over New Orleans – but forgot to take a photo with it their entire trip! They finally remembered to snag a shot at the airport while TSA confiscated their shoes for an extra security check.

# ON THE ROAD?

Going somewhere this winter?  
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[editor@montaguereporter.org](mailto:editor@montaguereporter.org).

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system. But sewer bills, which are assessed by the town, will still be due semi-annually, and auto excise taxes will still be due once a year.

- Property owners whose tax payments are held in escrow by a bank or mortgage company are urged to notify those institutions directly of the new payment policy. According to the letter, “[t]he tax collector’s office will do what we can to notify the companies that do tax services for multitudes of banks...”

- Finally, each half-year bill can still be paid all at once, on its first due date – though this will now be

two months earlier, as under the current system taxes have been due April 1 and October 1. The office will also accept partial payments until the end of the fiscal year in June, though property taxes cannot be prepaid for a future fiscal year.

The letter includes contact information for Seymour and assistant treasurer/collector Charlene Langenback.

“We understand that this is all new and disconcerting,” it reads. “However, please know that we are here to help in any way that we can.”

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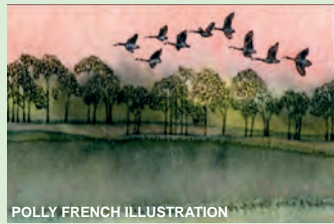


MAGGIE SADOWAY PHOTO

features@montaguereporter.org

OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER

JANUARY 2, 2025



WEST ALONG THE RIVER

WINTER QUARTERS

By DAVID BRULE

**THE FLAT, ERVINGSIDE** – These confusing and unforgiving winter mornings, I’ve forsaken my writer’s workshop out among the firewood stacks in the woodshed for a few days. The zero-degree weather, and then the damp rainy mornings of the last week of December and the first days of January, have sent me indoors.

The weather, sometimes foggy, sometimes with the rare sun trying to peek between the trunks of the sentinel pines on the high valley rim, will have to go unreported for a bit. I know what’s going on out there, but I’m not witnessing it firsthand just now.

I’ve taken up early January winter quarters in the south-facing sunroom, comfortably installed in the soft-pillowed easy chair, the fire crackling in the fireplace as it should be. The nostalgia evoked by the still-present Christmas tree keeps me company, as does the dog asleep on the deep wool carpet, his head under the fragrant hemlock bough that almost touches the floor.

We always resist cutting off the lowest branches of the tree if we can. The pine scent wafts through his winter dreams, his legs twitching as though he is chasing a rabbit across the snow.

But the only snow around is in the snow globe that I shake wistfully from time to time. In the winter scene inside that globe, the snowflakes swirl through black and white birch trunks, while I whisper in one of the dog’s ears, then the other: “Snow, Nikolai, Snow.”

*The scene within the paperweight is calm...*

*Deep snow. I turn it over in my palm,*

*And watch it snowing in another life...*

*Our isolated little world of light, Covered with snow, and snow in clouds above it, And drifts and swirls too deep to understand.*

*Still, I must try to think a little of it, With so much winter in my head and hand.*

(From a poem by Gjertrud Schnackenberg.)

Nicky and I are partners in our love and sense of snow. But we have to be patient – this is New England, after all.

I shan’t give up on my outdoor writing chair for long, but it makes

sense these days to hang out here in the winter mornings, in the company of all this greenery. For this is the room where the house plants spend the winter.

There are the twin Norfolk Island Pines, not really pines at all, but nevertheless evergreen. They spent this past summer together out in the sheltering shade of the maples, enjoying and profiting from the days of sunshine and then summer showers. They stay outside from June to October. With each of them having grown to five feet or more, I have to wrestle them into the sunroom through the wide-open French doors, just ahead of the first frost.

One is always placed near my computer desk where I can work in almost splendid isolation from the bustle of the household. I’m one room over from the busy kitchen and the parlor. I’m hidden behind the draping boughs while I bang away on the silently clicking keyboard, a little frown of writer’s concentration making creases between my eyebrows, furrows on my forehead.

The other household plants are less conspicuous, more modest. The cyclamen’s flowers show scarlet red in the winter, like the seven cardinals outside. It, too, spends the summer in dormancy under the dogwood, in the company of the bee-laden Joe Pye weed. Hardly any leaves and certainly no flowers then, but it comes to life in the winter window of the sunroom.

The cyclamen began its career in a small pot as a bedside companion to my mother in the rest home, more than 10 years ago, until its vigilance was no longer needed there to keep her company. Now it brightens a table here in front of the windows, holding its place among the pile of books, reminding us daily of its first owner.

The 100-year-old Christmas cactus isn’t really a cactus, like the Norfolk Island Pine not really being a pine, but it is punctual, I can say that much for it. I can bet it has been flowering exactly on time for its annual show at Christmas since an old Polish grandmother first treasured it in its youth at the beginning of the last century.

This plant has been in our care for the past five years. A best friend inherited it from his mother, who had inherited it from her mother, but life in a sunless apartment in New York City was not to see **WEST ALONG** page B8

Above: Different species build different structures, including in Wendell, as is evident in this photo taken from Farley Road.

FROM A TEEN'S POV...

## AN EGG-CELLENT ADVENTURE BEGINS

By FINTAN ANDREW JONES

**MONTAGUE** – My family decided to get chickens a couple of months ago, and it has been a very unique experience in many different ways. From caring for them in the beginning, to building a chicken run for them, all the way to collecting eggs today. I have enjoyed this journey more than I initially imagined, and I think it will only get better in the future.

I will arrange this column in chronological order, starting with the first few weeks with them.

We ordered chickens online, and picked them up a couple days later. We ordered three Buff Orpingtons and three Australorps. The Buff Orpingtons are the white-colored ones, and the Australorps are black.

I was at school when my mom initially picked them up, but the second I walked in the door after school I was hit with a wave of little chirps. They were only three days old, and they were each only slightly bigger than a golf ball.

In those early days, it was critical that we kept them warm at all times, so we installed a heat lamp. We started by keeping them in a two-foot-by-four-foot storage bin with bedding on the bottom and all of their other necessities.

They were so funny to watch, because they had a little circuit that they ran around their home. They would first drink, then eat, then run over to the stop where the heat lamp was the strongest and fall asleep

see **TEEN POV** page B5



JONES PHOTO

The author’s family’s first half-dozen chickens, in their hopefully predator-safe homemade mountainside coop. The lighter-colored ones are Buff Orpingtons.

## MONTV / MUSIK / MOUNTAIN

Interview by J. BURKETT and TROY CURRY

**TURNERS FALLS** – It was so cool to talk with Sky Furrows this week! They are another amazing and unique currently active band, and come from the Albany area, where their roots are old and deep. Sky Furrows are connected to the Flipped Out Records / Burnt Hills scene – check out Burnt Hills if you haven’t yet – and this project is

unique even for that crazy scene.

Picture a combination of Am-Rep/Fugazi-style rock/metal, circa ’80s or early ’90s, but with some intense, deep Patti Smith-style poetry on top, and a touch of Sabbath... but sounding better than that, or anything you can think up, and you may be in the right ballpark.

Catch them at places like the Media Center in Holyoke, Belltower Records in North Adams, or the Rendezvous, all venues where they have

played some killer sets recently.

We interviewed their guitarist Mike Griffin, drummer Phil Donnelly, and poet/vocalist Karen Schoemer.

**MMM:** Hi guys! What are the origins of SF – what were your early influences? Most members were in Burnt Hills, right?

**MG:** The band started in 2016 when Karen reached out to Eric [Hardiman] about playing a couple of shows, not long after she had sat in on a Burnt Hills Monday night jam at the Helderberg House. Eric asked Griff and Phil, and things went from there.

The band started slowly, but began playing out more frequently in 2018. Eric, Griff, and Phil are all longtime members of Burnt Hills.

**PD:** Jack [Wingate] from Flipped Out invited Karen to sit in with Burnt Hills after meeting her at a bookstore. Then it played out like Mike said.

I’ve known Jack since I was in high school, visiting ERL Records, and then Flipped Out. I joined the Burnt Hills crew only after they had existed for a while, and seeing

see **MUSIK** page B8

## No. LXXV: Sky Furrows



SUBMITTED PHOTO

# Pet of the Week



CARMODY COLLAGE

## 'CAPPUCCINO'

Meet Cappuccino, an American guinea pig just short of three years old. This lovely lady can be a little nervous at first, but once comfortable she will let you hold her. Cappuccino does well with children as young as two years old.

Cappuccino would prefer to be your one and only guinea pig, as long as you spoil her. She has lived with two other guinea pigs, but can be pretty moody, which makes for slow introductions. She seems unfazed by other animals in her home.

Guinea pigs are incredibly social animals, and need a lot of space to run around, as well as toys to keep them active and enriched. Cappuccino

will need time outside her cage every day, which is a great time for bonding. Many pet store cages are too small for guinea pigs. We can suggest better options.

For their diet guinea pigs require hay available at all times, a small amount of timothy pellets, and daily vitamin C from veggies like red pepper, kale, mustard greens, dandelion greens, and other leafy greens.

Cappuccino's adoption fee is \$35. Come to the Dakin Humane Society in Springfield during our open adoption hours, Tuesdays through Saturdays from 12:30 to 3 p.m., call us at (413) 781-4000, or visit [www.dakinhumane.org](http://www.dakinhumane.org).

# JANUARY LIBRARY LISTING

### Montague Public Libraries

*Turners Falls: Carnegie* (413) 863-3214  
*Montague Center* (413) 367-2852  
*Millers Falls* (413) 659-3801

*Erving Public Library* (413) 423-3348  
*Gill: Slate Library* (413) 863-2591  
*Leverett Public Library* (413) 548-9220  
*Northfield: Dickinson Library* (413) 498-2455  
*Wendell Free Library* (978) 544-3559

## MONTAGUE

**All month: Grab & Go Craft.** Winter scene. At all branches while supplies last.

**Every Thursday: Bilingual Music and Movement.** Carnegie, 10 a.m.

**Every Saturday: Drop-in Community Puzzle.** Carnegie 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Monday, January 13: Friends of MPL Meeting.** Email [kristopherlangston@gmail.com](mailto:kristopherlangston@gmail.com). Carnegie, 5:30 p.m.

**Every Tuesday: Imagination Station.** Drop-in craft for ages 6 to 12. Millers Falls, 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

**Every Wednesday: LEGO.** Carnegie, 3 to 4:30 p.m.

**Wednesday, January 8: Knitting Club.** Montague Center, 4:30 p.m.

**Wednesday, January 8: Local Young Artists Reception.** Montague Center, 6 p.m.

**Thursday, January 9: Book Club: Percival Everett, James, and Mark Twain, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.** Millers Falls, 5:30 p.m.

**Thursday, January 16: Oral History Training.** Montague Center, 6 p.m.

**Saturday, January 18: Bluey Party.** For children and their caregivers. Discovery Center, 1 to 3 p.m.

**Sunday, January 19: The Grand Trunk Hotel.** Piece together the story of the grand old days in Turners Falls. Discovery Center, 2 p.m.

**Friday, January 24: Meet and Greet with Montague Villages.** Montague Center, 10 to 11 a.m.

**Monday, January 27: Craft Club.** All ages. Montague Center, 4 p.m.

**Thursday, January 30: Book Club.** Ben Shattuck, *The History of Sound*. Montague Center, 7 p.m.

## ERVING

**Thursday, January 2: Friends of the Library.** Monthly meeting, open to all. 1 p.m.

**Every Wednesday: After School Activities.** Makerspace staffed. Snacks. 1:30 to 3 p.m.

**Sunday, January 12: Puzzle Swap.** All ages, no puzzle required. 1 to 3 p.m.

**Sunday, January 12: Genealogy Drop-In Help.** 1 to 3 p.m.

**Wednesday, January 15: Board of Library Trustees.** Monthly meeting, open to all. 4:30 p.m.

**Sunday, January 19: Bigfoot and UFOs.** 11 a.m.

**Sunday, January 19: Craft**

*Day.* Sign-up required. 1 p.m.

**Sunday, January 26: Book Club.** Laura Esquivel, *Like Water for Chocolate*. 2 p.m.

**Tuesday, January 28: All-Abilities Social.** All are welcome; sign-up required. Two sessions, noon to 1:30 p.m. and 4 to 5:30 p.m.

## LEVERETT

**Every Thursday: Mah-jongg.** Beginners welcome. 1:15 to 3:30 p.m.

**Starting January 4: Botanical Photography** by Marilyn London-Ewing.

**Every Saturday: Tai Chi.** Intermediate to advanced 10 a.m.; beginners 11 a.m.

**Every Monday and Wednesday: Online Qigong.** See [leverettlibrary.org](http://leverettlibrary.org) for info. 10:30 a.m.

**Tuesday, January 7: Craft Circle.** For adults. 6:30 p.m.

**Thursday, January 9: Library Tech Help.** Drop in 2:30 to 4 p.m.

**Saturday, January 11: Music and More with Geno.** For all ages. 10:30 a.m.

**Saturday, January 11: Art Reception.** 12:30 p.m.

**Thursday, January 16: LEGO Builders.** Ages 5 to 12. 4 p.m.

**Tuesday, January 21: Midwinter Drawing Social.** 4:30 p.m.

**Saturday, January 25: Science Saturday.** For ages 4 to 7. 11 a.m.

**Saturday, January 25: Hands Across the Hills** book launch and reading. 1 p.m.

## NORTHFIELD

**All month: In-Library Kids' Scavenger Hunt.**

**Thursday, January 2: Spice Club pickup starts.** Sample and recipes while supplies last. *This month: cumin.*

**Friday, January 3: Coffee/Tea Social.** 10 to 11 a.m.

**Saturday, January 4: Puzzle Pick-Up.** For info, email [friendsofdml01360@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofdml01360@gmail.com). 10 to 11:30 a.m.

**Every Tuesday: Drop-in Knitting/Crafting.** 6 to 8 p.m.

**Every Wednesday: Storytime: Music and Movement with Robin.** For toddlers and pre-schoolers. 10 a.m.

**Wednesday, January 8: Tech Help.** Bring your device and ask your questions. 1 to 3 p.m.

**Wednesday, January 8: Readings Group.** Bring a poem to share. 3 p.m.

**Thursday, January 9: Take-and-Make Craft.** Pine cone peanut butter bird feeder. While supplies last.

**Thursday, January 9: Trivia Night.** Four Star Farms Brewery, 6 p.m.

**Thursday, January 16: LEGO.** 3:30 p.m.

**Thursday, January 16: Animal Tracking.** Indoor intro with naturalist David Brown. 5:30 p.m.

**Wednesday, January 22: Poetry Discussion** with Nick Fleck. 3 p.m.

## WENDELL

**All month: Art Exhibit,** art by Amy Fagin.

**Every Friday: LEGO.** 4 to 5 p.m.

**Every Sunday: Yoga.** 10 a.m.

**Monday, January 6: Fiber Group / Mending Circle.** 6:30 p.m.

**Every Tuesday: Adult Art Group.** 5 p.m.

**Tuesday, January 7: Adult Book Group.** 10 a.m.

**Every Wednesday: Movie.** 4 p.m.; *Yoga*. 6:20 p.m.

**Every Wednesday: CNC Playgroup** with Sylvia. 10 a.m.

**Saturday, January 11: Free Breema Bodywork.** 20-minute sessions, registration required. 10 a.m. to noon.

**Saturday, January 11: Indoor Plant Swap.** 1 to 3 p.m.

**Tuesdays, January 14 and 28: Cyber Seniors Tech Help.** 2 to 5 p.m.

**Tuesday, January 21: Make Your Own Snow Globe.** Registration required. 4 p.m.

**Friday, January 24: Friday Night at the Library.**

**Saturday, January 25: Group Puzzle Time.** 1 to 3 p.m.

## Senior Center Activities JANUARY 6 TO JANUARY 10

### 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 1/6

10:15 a.m. Aerobics  
11 a.m. Chair Exercise  
1 p.m. Kitchen Club

#### Tuesday 1/7

9 a.m. Chair Yoga  
11 a.m. FCTS Celebration  
12:30 p.m. Tech Tuesday:  
Drop-in Tech Help

#### Wednesday 1/8

4 p.m. Mat Yoga

#### Thursday 1/9

1 p.m. Pitch  
**Friday 1/10**  
10:15 a.m. Aerobics  
11 a.m. Chair Exercise  
2 p.m. Chair Dance

### Tuesday 1/7

9 a.m. Stretch & Balance  
9 a.m. ASK the Nurse  
10 a.m. Line Dancing  
11 a.m. Social Stringer

### Wednesday 1/8

9 a.m. Interval Training  
10 a.m. Chair Aerobics  
11:30 a.m. Bingo  
1 p.m. Veterans

### Thursday 1/9

9 a.m. Barre Fusion  
10 a.m. Pilates Flow  
12 p.m. Senior Tech Help

### Friday 1/10

10 a.m. Quilting Workshop

### LEVERETT

Chair Yoga classes are held 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).

### WENDELL

Foot care clinic is the first Wednesday of each month. Next clinic is January 8, 2025. Call Katie Nolan at (978) 544-2306 for information or appointments.

For Senior Health Rides, contact Nancy Spittle at (978) 544-6760.

### 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 1/6

9 a.m. Good For U  
10 a.m. Seated Fitness  
12 p.m. Pitch Players  
1 p.m. Yoga

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# Their Memories Will Last

By LEE WICKS

**MONTAGUE** — “And just like that,” to use the title of a TV show, another holiday season is done. There are no more parties. There is nothing to buy. Everyone can relax. I expect we’ll get a brief respite until Valentine’s Day, and then we will be reminded to demonstrate love with chocolate and roses. But now, only the remnants of Solstice, Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanza remain.

And those memories: they are tricky, don’t you think? While each holiday creates a new set of memories, it also calls up ghosts of the past, and as time goes on, I find the old memories becoming more vivid and dear.

I will remember this season with gratitude for family and friends, but these memories will not have time to grow ripe with age until they are distilled into a heady brew where slights, both real and imagined, are forgotten, and only the good remains. That takes decades that I no longer have.

I’m talking about the Christmas morning when my brothers and I crept down the stairs long before first light and found three shiny bicycles under the tree.

I’m remembering a Christmas Eve when my dad, who’d done his last-minute shopping that afternoon, packed his gifts in his van, went to lock the door to his grocery store, and found all the packages had gotten stolen in the few minutes he’d turned his back. He then threaded carrots on a string and made my mom a “fourteen-carrot necklace,” and wrote IOUs for my brothers and me. Then he went across the street for a drink or two, and came home later than he should have.

My mother was angry, but I don’t remember much about that now, though I’ll never forget the carrots.

**My treasured childhood memories contain no awareness of people less fortunate than my family, except for those living far away.**

Or shopping at Macy’s with my mom. Every year my brothers got a new train for their huge setup of Lionel trains that occupied half the basement. The engine had smoke pellets, and periodically emitted little puffs of gray smoke into the air. It was probably carcinogenic. We did not know. I miss not knowing.

One year I got a makeup kit with an eyelash curler, and I am now embarrassed to say that I sat at my vanity table humming the tune to “I Enjoy Being a Girl” while I “put my face on.”

I’ll also never forget the year I searched for a Cabbage Patch doll for my daughter as if the world would come to an end if we didn’t

find one, or the year my grandson was born, just 11 days after Christmas. My daughter gave me a wooden salad bowl almost as big and as round as she was at that time. My grandson is 20 now, and I still have that bowl.

I am lucky to have these memories. The stories and movies that come out during the holidays would have us believe that everyone does. But that’s not true – not when the paper puts up the hours for local warming shelters and soup kitchens, and homelessness is rising every year.

What must children think when they hear that Santa rewards good children, and they have tried to be good, but still there was no Santa visit for them, or it was scanty, and the gifts were bought by strangers who knew nothing about them? How do parents feel when they cannot provide?

That *crèche* on the church lawn honoring a homeless mother and her newborn son feels ironic and tragic as we look to a future when the new administration is planning forced deportations of refugees and trying to end birthright citizenship. We’ve lacked a sane immigration policy for decades, and something must be done. But the mean-spirited words that attack people seeking shelter, opportunity, and a better life contradict the message of Christmas.

My treasured childhood memories contain no awareness of people less fortunate than my family, except for those living far away. Children in India or China were starving; that’s why you had to clean your plate. I don’t know why anyone accepted that logic, but we did. If there were homeless people in Brooklyn, I never saw any or thought of them.

Like not knowing that cigarettes cause cancer, like putting your feet in the x-ray box at the shoe store, like thinking a painful sunburn was necessary for a good tan, like believing the West was “won” and not stolen, like not knowing the Eisenhower administration ran a vast deportation plan to get rid of illegal immigrants titled Operation Wetback, ignorance upheld a false innocence.

No wonder we had a social revolution in the Sixties. I hope I live long enough to see another one.

The *crèche* in front of the church has been taken down and stored for next year, and the Hanukkah candles have burned out, but people with loving hearts can be the light in the dark days ahead.

Volunteer for Montague Villages or any other worthy organization, visit the Gill-Montague senior center and check out their wonderful offerings, smile at strangers, keep up with friends, reuse, recycle, write to your representatives on issues that matter to you, and be kind. Connect whenever possible.

For our grandchildren to have the memories we treasure, we need to do what we can to repair our damaged world.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

### Reverse Santas; Fake Gun; Eavesdropper; Solstice Takeover; Stolen Pierogies; Cruiser Vs. Guardrail; Gas Station Robbery

**Monday, 12/16**

11:15 a.m. Caller from Highland School Apartments would like on record that several packages have gone missing from the common area where mail and packages are delivered. The property manager has been notified and will be checking the cameras. 5:20 p.m. Caller from Fourth Street reports a package was delivered at 1:18 p.m. and he received a photo confirmation to his phone. When he got home, it was missing. Report taken. 6:17 p.m. Caller reporting that North Leverett Road is getting slippery. DPW advised.

**Wednesday, 12/18**

7:54 a.m. Accident with property damage at Turners Falls High School. Citation will be mailed to one operator. Report taken. 9:14 a.m. Caller reports that her car is stuck in the automatic car wash as her tire slid off the side. She does not see anyone around to assist her. No updated contact information for new car wash owners. Owner on way to assist vehicle. No damage to vehicle or car wash equipment. Officers clear. 4 p.m. 911 caller states she observed several youths playing with what appeared to be a firearm behind a Third Street address. Youth that was holding the firearm threw a backpack by a nearby garage. While providing description, caller advised that officers are speaking with that youth now and she can see that an officer is now in possession of the potential firearm. Officer advises he is off with that youth now and has the item, which is a BB gun. Advised officer of discarded backpack; confirmed that item is next to them as well. Summons issued.

**Thursday, 12/19**

3:11 p.m. Caller from Fourth Street states that he was leaving for work and heard a conversation from a neighbor’s apartment that they were buying drugs; caller also noticed a vehicle in the area that doesn’t belong. Call printed for detective. 6:17 a.m. Caller states Lake Pleasant Road is very icy and he was sliding all over. Officer advised; DPW contacted. 8:27 a.m. DPW advises a silver Audi with no plates and flat tires hasn’t moved from a spot on L Street for some time. Officer advised. Tow company has vehicle. 8:38 p.m. Officer checking on vehicle with single occupant backed into the woods off East Mineral Road. Owner operator; active license, no active warrants. 8:46 p.m. Checking on vehicle with single occupant

at Cabot Camp. Active license, no active warrants. Registration expired. Vehicle on private property as of now. Occupants will look for a different ride. 8:58 p.m. Checking on an occupied vehicle at Mineral and Cemetery Roads. Active license, no active warrants. Playing a game; nothing suspicious noted. 9:10 p.m. Caller from East Main Street reports radio has been blaring for the last four hours. She is hitting the ceiling, and he isn’t stopping. Officer spoke with caller; second officer stood outside door; some audible noise, but not a disturbance. Party wouldn’t open door, but was advised of the complaint. 10:26 p.m. 911 caller reports he was just assaulted. Unable to provide exact location; states he’s in front of the Pizza House, then in an alleyway, then changed his request to a wellbeing check on a female. Did not give name of female; again switched back to reporting he was assaulted. Officers advised. Caller reporting argument between a male and female and wants a welfare check on them. All units clear. Contact made with female, who declines services. States verbal altercation; will call if she needs assistance.

**Friday, 12/20**

3:44 p.m. 911 caller reports she was involved in a vehicle accident on Millers Falls Road at Cross Street; no injuries. Officer requesting tow for two vehicles; airbag deployment on both. Report taken. 6:30 p.m. DPW reporting vehicle accident at Turners Falls Road and Turnpike Road. TFFD reporting same via Shelburne Control. Officer requesting tow for both vehicles; front end damage. Report taken. **Saturday, 12/21** 9:14 a.m. 911 caller states he struck a deer on Turners Falls Road and there is damage to his truck. Deer headed towards woods. Investigated. 11:03 p.m. Anonymous caller states there is going to be a “takeover” in town on Avenue A. Caller states there will be multiple cars in the street doing burnouts and other things. Caller advises he saw this online and wanted us to know. Limited info provided by caller. Shelburne Control advises Athol had a riot/protest with a large number of people. Vehicles and people were seen in Erving near Flis Market headed westbound. Vehicles and people with masks were seen in the roadway, roughly 30-plus, before leaving the area. Officer advises large group of cars downtown at this time. Vehicles are currently going down side streets. Green-

field PD advises off-duty officer observed a large caravan of vehicles headed towards Turners Falls. Officer advises line of vehicles stretching across the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge. Officer advises large line of cars passing Fifth Street. One vehicle ran a red light; citation issued. Majority of vehicles continued through downtown Turners westbound towards Greenfield. GPD advised.

**Sunday, 12/22**

8:23 a.m. Report of smoke coming from Our Lady of Częstochowa church. Transferred to Shelburne Control. 10:55 a.m. 911 caller reports someone broke into her house and stole 30 pierogies from her freezer. She wanted the info logged and does not want to speak with an officer. 8:30 p.m. 911 caller reports that her drunk boyfriend is trying to cook food and she smells fire. Does not see flames or smoke. Officer out with TFFD. Officer advises small fire within a pan in the kitchen. Male party will try to sleep it off. Advised caller to call if further assistance needed. 9:36 p.m. Dog bite report faxed from Baystate Franklin Medical Center involving a Dell Street address. Call placed for animal control officer; print-out left in ACO bin. No call reported to PD.

9:58 p.m. 911 caller from Millers Pub reports a red truck is parked on the sidewalk and the male party in the driver’s seat is covering his face. Caller reports the vehicle does not look damaged and the male party is moving. Officer requesting medical for evaluation. Does not seem alcohol-related. Operator being transported to hospital. Tow requested. 11:10 p.m. 911 caller states there is a black Jeep parked partially in the roadway on North Leverett Road that could cause an accident. Caller states there wasn’t anyone in/with the Jeep that he could see. Officer requesting tow and following up at registered owner’s address; advised owner of vehicle tow. **Monday, 12/23** 11:10 a.m. 911 caller reports he was purchasing a car off someone and the guy gave him fake paperwork, then ran off on foot. The caller was chasing him and ended up on someone’s property who came outside and assaulted the caller for being on his property. The vehicle he was supposed to purchase is parked on Newton Street in Millers Falls. Officer stopped a white pickup truck that was about to leave the scene on Franklin Street where the caller was assaulted, and got more of the story from

the operator. Male party advised of options.

9:49 p.m. 911 caller reports he just went outside his apartment and a male was smoking crack in the hallway. He pepper-sprayed the male after he refused to leave and advanced toward him. Caller reports he is standing in the hallway next to the pipe that was left behind. Officer advises no paraphernalia; it was a rolled-up Ziploc bag and a can of Coca-Cola.

**Tuesday, 12/24**

8:42 a.m. Caller from L Street reports that a male was outside urinating on a dumpster. She contacted her landlord and he requested she call to have it on record. Male is now inside his home. 12:53 p.m. Multiple 911 calls reporting two parties fighting in the parking lot at Walgreens. Situation mediated.

4:20 p.m. Officer out with hit-and-run at Food City. Investigated.

**Wednesday, 12/25**

1:26 a.m. Caller from Avenue A states the music in the apartment below her is so loud it is vibrating her floor. Advised of complaint; parties turned it down. 4 p.m. Officers flagged down by a motorist at Seventh Street and Avenue A reporting there is a big rock in the road on Turners Falls Road. Officers will move rock.

11:58 p.m. Caller from Park Street states a car with a loud exhaust has been idling across the street for approximately two hours. Gone upon officer’s arrival.

**Thursday, 12/26**

9:53 p.m. 911 caller reporting two-car accident on Millers Falls Road. Control contacted to dispatch fire and EMS. Tow requested for both. Report taken.

**Friday, 12/27**

4:48 p.m. Caller states he was driving on Route 2 and could see people on the ice below the dam on the Turners Falls side. Officer drove over bridge and doesn’t see anyone; officer advises there is not even ice on the Turners Falls side.

**Saturday, 12/28**

4:12 a.m. 911 caller states the roadways are slick due to ice and she hit the guardrail a few times trying to maneuver her vehicle on Sunderland Road. Minor damage to vehicle; mostly concerned about road conditions. DPW called and advised. Responding officer advises cruiser is currently stuck in the area along with the caller, against the guardrail. Slight damage to cruiser. Multiple callers from area report icy road conditions. Advised all callers that DPW is out and will be there as soon as possible. See MPD next page.

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## MPD from page B3

as they can. Officer advises vehicles in area clear. 5:24 a.m. Multiple 911 callers report multiple vehicles involved in an accident on Unity Street near Scotty's due to road conditions. Advised caller officer would be there after clearing from previous location. 7:11 a.m. Caller reports she hit a vehicle on Fifth Street and is currently home. She is unsure what kind of vehicle she struck. Caller advised to

get involved vehicle info and call back in. Caller called back with plate info of vehicle she struck. Dispatch attempted to call vehicle owner, but voicemail was full. 2:27 p.m. Multiple callers reporting a group of people arguing in the Eleventh Street alleyway. Officer has male party detained at this time. Summons issued. 8:53 p.m. Report of suspicious activity caught on cameras on O Street. Report taken.

## Sunday, 12/29

12:05 p.m. Walk-in from Burnett Street reporting late-night harassment by people pounding on the front door, then fleeing in a vehicle. Advised of options. 10:25 p.m. 911 call from Nouria reporting robbery that just occurred. Caller states she could see the outline of a gun under the male's shirt but he did not brandish it and did not tell her he had it. Last seen leaving on foot

toward L Street; appeared to be alone. Advised caller to lock door while awaiting officer. Officers checking area. Officer advises store will be closed until a manager responds. District manager advises he is currently traveling from Connecticut to involved location; inquires if footage is needed for tonight. Advises 45-minute ETA. Officer will respond to location upon arrival of district manager.



## Sex Matters

a sex-positive health column

by STEPHANIE BAIRD

**SOUTH HADLEY** – For those of you who enjoy making New Years' resolutions, how about centering self-care as a gateway to sexual accelerators?

Anyone who has read any of my previous columns will recognize the terminology, which I often refer to, of a *dual control model of sexual brakes and accelerators*. Very simply, sexual brakes are anything you perceive that is a sexual turn-off – such as a phone call from your boss just as you were about to make out with your lover – while sexual accelerators include things that increase your mental and/or physical interest in sexual activity. An example might be your partner doing a sexy dance for you, giving you a wonderful foot massage, or taking care of a bunch of errands and chores unasked.

These are all subjective to the individual person, and can even change within the same person moment to moment based on circumstances. However, people can get a general sense of what they like and don't like by being a scientist for themselves, logging things they notice that are appealing versus blocking.

I recently spent time at the Kripalu Center in Lenox, engaging in some serious self-care by attending a weekend workshop on "Sound Healing and Restorative Yoga," led by a lovely teacher named Yuval, to help restore the nervous system. I got to thinking more about the link between sexual interest and the nervous system.

Serendipitously, in October my colleague Sarah Burnham gave a presentation and completed a succinct and clear piece of writing on Polyvagal Theory.

"Polyvagal Theory posits that humans have three possible nervous system states," she wrote: "*Ventral Vagal, Sympathetic, and Dorsal Vagal*. Sympathetic and Dorsal are commonly referred to as fight/flight and freeze/numb.

"Ventral Vagal is the state we are in when we have sufficient cues of safety, that is, when we feel safe enough. The accelerator and brake are in balance, adjusting our energy throughout the day so we have more energy when we need it – for example, to complete a task or when laughing with friends, and less energy when we need to downshift (i.e. rest and digest). We feel present, able to connect with ourselves and to others.

"This internal 'checking in' is

called *neuroception* and plays an important role in self-regulation. However, Ventral Vagal state is not synonymous with a 'happy place.' We may feel any variety of emotion, but it is a manageable amount of emotion.

"In this *resilient zone* we experience emotions in waves; they crest and ebb. We are able to think about our response *before* acting. In this state, our frontal lobe, a.k.a. thinking brain, is fully online."

The ventral vagal state, which governs the "social engagement system," is also more conducive to sexual activity and desire than the other states, sympathetic and dorsal, in which our minds and bodies are focused essentially on basic survival mechanisms such as getting away from danger.

At Kripalu, Yuval spoke often about our nervous system and how many of us are operating in a low, ongoing sympathetic state, due not only to world events, but also to the interminable notifications that appear on our phones and our constant exposure to media, fast-changing stimuli, etc.

One obvious solution to fight this chronic sympathetic state is to remove notifications from your phone and other devices. This means you will have to manually go in and check to see if you have new emails, Facebook notifications, text messages, etc.

Another solution is to take tech breaks, or "Wifi fasts," as a friend of mine calls them. Put your phone away for hours at a time. Do not plug it to charge at night in your bedroom, to avoid sleep interruptions and the temptation to doom-scroll.

I am explaining this at length as I have had to discuss it in great detail with many clients in my efforts to persuade them to remove sexual brakes and chronic low-level stressors.

What other daily or chronic regular intrusions, no matter how small they seem, can you remove?

Once you have made a list of these low-level, ventral-vagal-interfering stressors to remove or reduce, and enacted some of the identified measures, you can consider which self-care activities to add that might complement, activate, or expand your sexual accelerators – in other words, positively interact with your social engagement system.

Perhaps basic things like bubble baths, good-smelling lotions, new

underwear, a delicious meal, or re-watching *Outlander* or *Tales of the City* might be enough to get you back in touch with sexual interest.

If you feel your nervous system has been on a steady diet of ventral-depleting activities, you may need to add in repeated activities for a few weeks, like 10 to 20 minutes a day of restorative yoga, *yoga nidra*, or attending or listening to sound baths. Relaxing teas accompanied by soothing reading or music, most days, may also help the overtaxed nervous system. Taking a rest when your body is feeling tired – which means listening to your body's messages – will help.

Daily or frequent exercise will also help discharge – and prevent – build-up of stress. Exercising with friends might even turbo-charge this discharge, as might finding other physically active things to do with friends like dancing, hiking, or biking.

Regular time out in nature is a known tonic for bringing a sense of ease and connectedness. Tending to your spiritual life, whether that means finding a congregation of some sort to join or simply developing a regular meditation, spiritual reading, or other mystical practice, may also go a long way to enhance the ventral vagal system.

Keeping up with regular medical appointments, and certainly discussing any sexual-health-related pain or concerns with trusted doctors, can also help keep your mind and body ready for sexual activity.

So, reader, I challenge you to pick at least one chronic stressor to eliminate. Maybe this means removing all notifications from your phone. Once you have enacted that, I challenge you to pick a ventral-vaga-enhancing activity, like listening to a 20-minute *yoga nidra* daily. (There are tons on YouTube.)

Write me in a month or two and let me know any changes you are noticing to your ventral-vagal system in the form of increased sexual interest.

*Stephanie Baird is a certified OWL facilitator and an EMDR psychotherapist and consultant who encourages her clients towards thriving sexual health. She is the author of the book EMDR Therapy and Sexual Health: A Clinician's Guide (2023). She welcomes feedback and suggestions@sexmatters@montaguereporter.org.*

## Become a Volunteer With Village Neighbors!

**WENDELL/LEVERETT** – Village Neighbors (VN) is growing – 267 members and 150 volunteers. Joining is easy, and volunteering is fun and rewarding! This organization helps people in Leverett, New Salem, Shutesbury, and Wendell continue to age in place.

One of the best things about volunteering for VN is that it's on your terms, and doesn't have to be a huge commitment. You decide what you're interested in doing, and then offer those services as life permits.

That said, we are always delighted to get new volunteers.

You need to be 60 and over to be a member of VN, but anyone of any age can be a volunteer. There are lots of different volunteer jobs. Some volunteers provide rides, some make daily check-in phone calls and friendly visits, others make meals or provide tech help. There are tons of ways to help, including administrative or operational jobs.

It takes a lot of volunteers to keep this amazing neighborhood

service running! As volunteers, we are helping our senior neighbors and at the same time creating connections and friendships.

Next **Tuesday, January 7 at 6:30 p.m.**, we're having a volunteer orientation at the Wendell Senior Center. Let us know if you hope to attend. Call Village Neighbors at (413) 345-6894 or email [volunteers@villageneighbors.org](mailto:volunteers@villageneighbors.org) with your contact info. There is also an option to attend on Zoom.

At the orientation meeting you will learn more about our organization and meet other new volunteers. The orientation lasts about an hour, and you'll fill out an application and give permission to do a background check. Please bring contact information for two references.

If you plan to provide transportation, we'll also need a copy of your driver's license and Page 1 of your insurance coverage selection pages.

If you would prefer an appointment for orientation at another time, arrangements can be made.

### MOVIE REVIEW

## Netflix's *Six Triple Eight*



By **MELISSA WLOSTOSKI**

**GREENFIELD** – I like movies based on true stories. An all-black and all-women army unit called the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion delivered mail to the troops during World War II. This sounded like one cool true story to see a movie on.

This movie, *Six Triple Eight*, premiered on the Netflix streaming service on December 20. I knew from the trailer Kerry Washington was in this film as someone who is part of the unit.

*Six Triple Eight* starts out with one woman's life before joining the unit, and then shows things up to her joining the unit. Then it shows them getting the assignment to deliver the mail to the troops in Europe.

We also get a good portrait of Washington's character, Major Charity Adams, the commander who is in charge of the unit. She was a woman who was trying to give these women her best.

"You do not have the luxury to be as good as the white soldiers," she states to them. "You have the burden to be better. You are not only representing America – you are representing the Negroes of America."

Sam Waterston from *Law and Order* plays President Roosevelt, and Susan Sarandon is his wife. Oprah Winfrey has added to her acting resume with a role as a woman named Mary McLeod Bethune.

Despite what one member has

heard from her family, these women have operated a switchboard for phone calls instead of cleaning and cooking in the Army. They do that along with driving trucks and being a part of the motor pool.

A little bit of background when it comes to delivering the mail to soldiers in Europe is that the Army had tried to do it with a corps of white women, and it was a nightmare. It is suggested they try their hand at doing the job with the 6888th. These women finally get over there to deliver the mail.

If you want a visual of how much of a nightmare this was, picture an insanely enormous pile of mailbags that these women find themselves looking at. The pile had been there for over 10 months. The Army thinks the unit will fail, and has given it six months to do the job.

One of the women learns how things are at the front from a soldier she meets at a dance. They task some of them with a bit of useful knowledge about certain tasks in order to do the job better. Sometimes they really had to play detective when it came to certain pieces of mail.

Obviously, these women succeeded nicely with doing all of this, and that is shown on screen through various scenes of mail being delivered successfully. Along with that, we are shown real-life images of the women from the 6888th Battalion.

It turned out they had delivered 17 million pieces of mail!

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MATHS

# A Squared-Triangular Year

**FRANKLIN COUNTY** – Ominous hints about 2025 may abound in the social realm, but don't tell that to math, which absolutely loves the number!

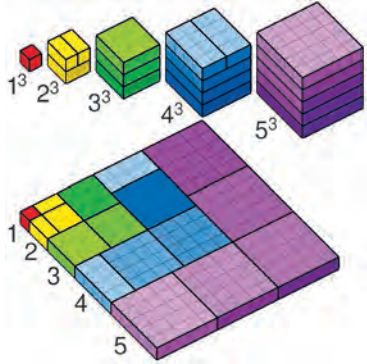
For ages – the earliest written record is from Nichomachus, a mathematician living under the Roman Empire around 100 AD in present-day Jordan – people have noticed that the square of the sum of the first sequence of natural numbers equals the sum of their cubes:

$$(1+2+3+4+5)^2 = 1^3+2^3+3^3+4^3+5^3$$

$$15^2 = 1+8+27+64+125$$

$$225 = 225$$

This works infinitely! The sums being squared – 1, 3, 6, 10, 15, 21, etc. – are known as “triangular” numbers: picture billiard balls racked up to break, in an equilateral triangle. Those results are *squared triangular* numbers (not to be confused with the even rarer *square*



A visual “proof” of Nichomachus's theorem. (Creative Commons image by Wikimedia user cmglee.)

triangular numbers, like 36, which can be arranged into either shape).

2025 factors down to  $3^4 \cdot 5^2$ , which means it's  $45^2$ , the only square year most of us will live through. And, since 45 is a triangle,  $2025 = (1+2+3+4+5+6+7+8+9)^2 = 1^3+2^3+3^3+4^3+5^3+6^3+7^3+8^3+9^3 = 1+8+27+64+125+216+343+512+729$

So at least we'll all have that!

## TEEN'S POV from page B1

there for about 20 seconds, then do it all again.

All of this eating definitely paid off, because within a couple of weeks there was a clear size difference, and we had to move them into a bigger container. My mom bought an indoor chicken pen that was about four times that size. They liked it there much more, and they were of the age that they didn't need the heat lamp much anymore. They were about the size of apples when we put them in there.

Around then was when we noticed that they wanted to fly more, so every night we would close off the kitchen and let them fly around for about 30 minutes. They only flew about one foot at a time, but it was still great for them to get exercise and get excited about going outside. My whole family would often sit down on the ground and let them climb all over us. For some reason, they really liked to climb up onto the top of my head and sit there.

It was around that time that my mom bought a coop for them, and that we started to build their run. This was a huge project, and we spent weeks doing it. Our coop can hold 10 chickens, but our run can hold 30.

We started with a wood frame and then built extra support beams across it. My mom and I then started to drill on chicken wire, to prevent any predators from getting inside. We live at the base of a mountain, so we spent lots of extra time making sure that this run could

withstand a lot of force. My mom and my brother made a custom door that was big enough for us to go in and out, while still not being able to let them out.

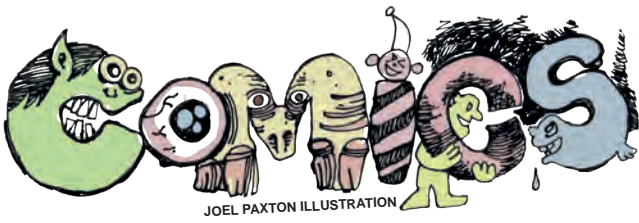
The first time that we let them out in the coop, they were so happy! They flew around and foraged constantly for days.

Ever since then we have been changing tiny things about the run to make sure that they like it the best, and that they are even more safe. One of the major improvements that my mom and I worked on was adding an underground chicken wire curtain so predators could not dig their way into the run. We also added a mini-jungle gym for them, which can be seen in the photo, and added a covered place for their food and water to go.

My family and I headed to Maine for the holidays, so we made sure that their coop was properly insulated as it was going to be very cold when we were gone.

In the end, having chickens has been a great experience that was very different than I expected. We are possibly getting three more chickens in the spring, and once they are old enough we will release them into the run. In the spring I am planning to teach them how to play tic-tac-toe, because that is actually something that chickens can be very good at with enough training.

My next column will be about volunteering with Frontier Community Access Television, and what it is like to film sports games, performances, and so much more!



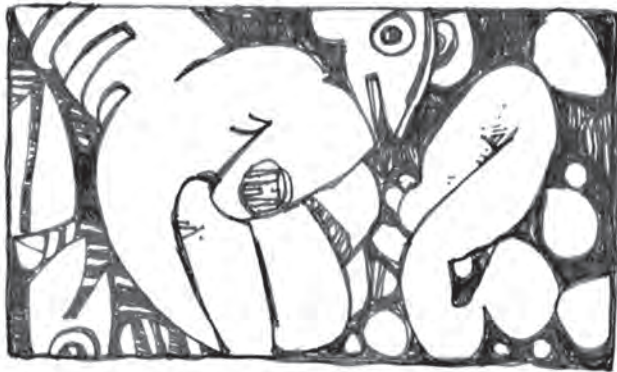
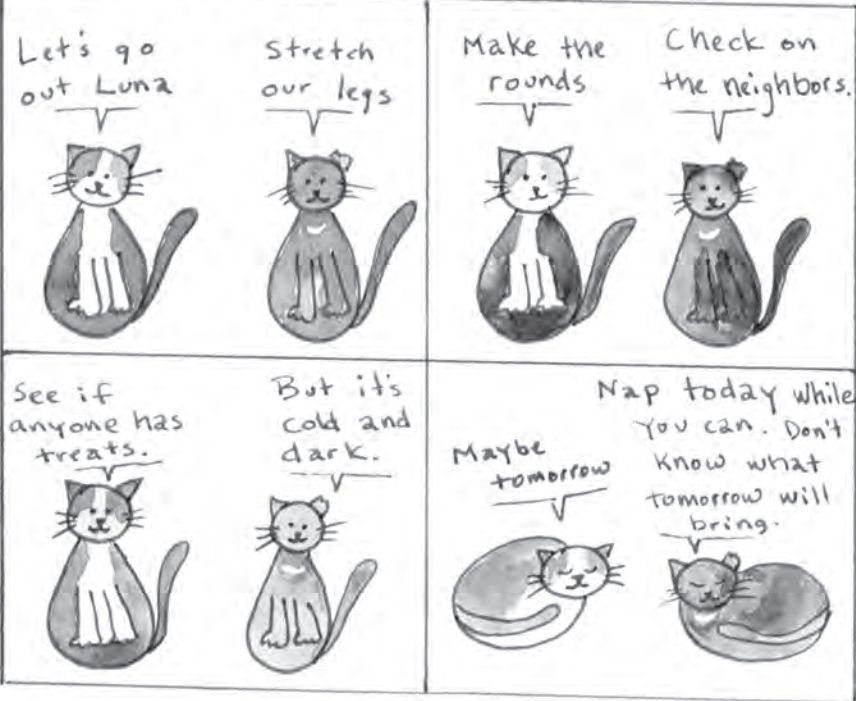
JOEL PAXTON ILLUSTRATION

# and PUZZLE

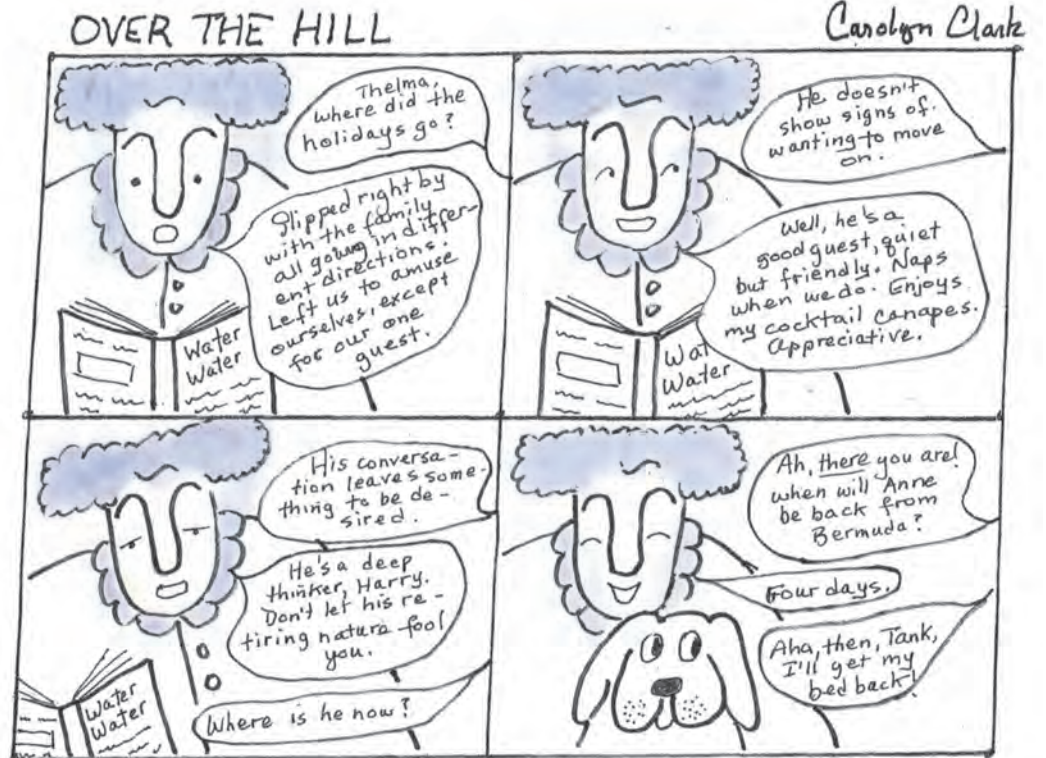


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## Cool Cats on the Ave



JOEL PAXTON ILLUSTRATION



Carolyn Clark

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# EVENT LISTINGS

## FRIDAY, JANUARY 3

Dickinson Library, Northfield: *Coffee/Tea Social*. 10 to 11 a.m. Free.

Downtown Turners Falls: *First Friday*. (See Page A3.) 4 to 8 p.m. Free.

Montague Common Hall, Montague Center: Screening, *Down By Law* (1986). Shorts and music before the film. Benefit for the Common Hall ramp. 6 p.m. \$

Leverett Village Co-op, Leverett: *French Press*. 6 p.m. Free.

Brick House, Turners Falls: *The Spatulas, Red Herring, Bent Light, Karen Schoemer, DJ Seasonal Work*. Gaza benefit. 7 p.m. \$.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Adam S.Z & The Inner Fiyah*. 7 p.m. No cover.

Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *Next Stop Comedy*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

## SATURDAY, JANUARY 4

Brewery at Four Star, Northfield: *Moon Hollow*. 5 p.m. No cover.

Unnameable Books, Turners Falls: Reading, *A Seam of Electricity* by Ian U Lockaby. 6 p.m. Free.

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

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Gaybo the Drag Clown, Blue Berimore, Anita Blunt, Huck Pew*. 9:30 p.m. No cover.

## SUNDAY, JANUARY 5

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Valley Tea Dance*. 2 p.m. \$.

Polish American Club, South Deerfield: *Three Kings Day party* with French-Breton music and dance, hors d'oeuvres potluck. Jam session at 2:45 p.m., dance from 4 to 6 p.m. \$

Brewery at Four Star, Northfield: *Rosie Porter*. 3 p.m. No cover.

Belltower Records, North Adams: *Life Abuse, Owen Manure, Schenectavoidz*. 3 p.m. \$.

## MONDAY, JANUARY 6

Greenfield Garden Cinemas, Greenfield: Silent film, *The Strong Man* (1926), with live accompaniment by Jeff Rapsis. \$. 6:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Open Mic with *Jim McRae*. 8:30 p.m. No cover.

## WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8

Dickinson Library, Northfield: *Readings Group*. Bring a poem to share. 3 p.m. Free.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Falltown String Band*. 8 p.m. No cover.

## THURSDAY, JANUARY 9

Northfield Mountain, Northfield: *Monthly Hike*. With snowshoes or microspikes, depending on conditions. Registration at [www.bookeo.com/northfield](http://www.bookeo.com/northfield) is required. 1 p.m. Free.

Parlor Room, Northampton: *Natalie Padilla and Quinn Bachan*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

The Drake, Amherst: *Yeison Landero, DJ Bongohead*. 8 p.m. \$.

## FRIDAY, JANUARY 10

St. Kaz, Turners Falls: *Records, Gumbo & Booze*. 6 p.m. No cover.

Leverett Village Co-op, Leverett: *Rebecca Weiss & Accomplices*. 6 p.m. Free.

Wendell Meetinghouse, Wendell: *Goodness Shakes Community Dance*. All ages. 6:30 p.m. By donation.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Melanie Blackbird*. 7 p.m. No cover.

Memorial Hall, Shelburne Falls: Film, *Delicatessen* (1991). Music at 7 p.m.: *Tandem Jump*; screening at 7:30 p.m.

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

Nova Arts, Keene: *Greg Davis, Dave Seidel, Saapoto, Temporal*. 7 p.m. \$.

Looky Here, Greenfield: *Content Clown, Ditch & Palisade, The Origin of the Whale, Z the Clown, The Little Man Who Makes the Music*. Clowning and puppetry. 7:30 p.m. \$.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Falltown String Band returns to the Rendezvous next Wednesday night.

Parlor Room, Northampton: *Keith Murphy and the Band of Amber*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Tree House Brewing, Deerfield: *Eggy*. 8 p.m. \$.

CitySpace, Easthampton: *Skinlab, Dead By Wednesday, One Ton Tommy Gun, Infinite Cruelty, Skud*. 8 p.m. \$.

## SATURDAY, JANUARY 11

Leverett Library, Leverett: *Music and More with Geno*. For all ages. 10:30 a.m. Free.

Leverett Library, Leverett: *Art Reception*. 12:30 p.m. Free.

Brewery at Four Star, Northfield: *The Bandit Queen of Sorrows*. 5 p.m. No cover.

Looky Here, Greenfield: Opening reception for *Salt, fat. Sweet!*, work by Caroline Davis. 5 p.m. Free.

Deep Thoughts, Northampton: *Bad History Month, Mibble, Bryan Gillig*. 6 p.m. \$.

The Clark, Williamstown: *Williamstown Synth Fest Concert and Synthesizer Petting Zoo* feat Architrave, Hissquiet, OrangePeelMystic, NXOR, Michael William Gilbert. 6 p.m. Free.

Montague Common Hall, Montague Center: *Common Hall Open Mic*. Featured act TBA. 6:30 p.m. By donation.

Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *Small Town Radio*. 7 p.m. No cover.

Memorial Hall, Shelburne Falls: Film, *Delicatessen* (1991). Music at 7 p.m.:

*the frost heaves & hales*; screening at 7:30 p.m.

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

Parlor Room, Northampton: *Joe K. Walsh and Matt Flinger*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Guiding Star Grange, Greenfield: Contra dance with *Cumming, Lavaggi, Kenney, & Kenny*, with *Will Mentor* calling. 8 p.m. \$.

Tree House Brewing, Deerfield: *Eggy*. 8 p.m. \$.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Mono Means One*. 8 p.m. \$.

## SUNDAY, JANUARY 12

Daily Op, Easthampton: *Elucid*. 7 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Karaoke hosted by *Buckingham Rabbit Vintage*. 9 p.m. No cover.

## TUESDAY, JANUARY 14

Parlor Room, Northampton: *Queer Open Mic Night*. 6:30 p.m. \$.

## WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Wes Brown & Friends*. 8 p.m. No cover.

## THURSDAY, JANUARY 16

Dickinson Library, Northfield: *Animal Tracking*. Indoor intro with naturalist David Brown. 5:30 p.m. Free.

Montague Center Library, Montague Center: *Oral History Training*. 6 p.m. Free.

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1/9 & 1/23 STILL LIFE SOCIAL CLUB. 6-8PM ALTERNATING THURSDAYS. \$10

1/11-1/31 MAKE OUR MERCH! A FREE SEWING AND UPCYCLING CLASS. FRIDAYS 3-5PM

1/10 THE LITTLE MAN WHO MAKES THE MUSIC: A CLOWN PUPPET SHOW. 7:30 DOORS, SHOW AT 8, \$10-20

1/11 SWEATSHIRT WEAVING WITH RAE HELLER. 12-3PM \$55

1/11 GALLERY OPENING: SALT, FAT, SWEET! WORK BY CAROLINE JAMES 5-8PM

1/15-2/19 MAKE A MARIONETTE WITH BRITISH CONTROL WITH JULIA ZANES & WEDNESDAYS 6-8PM \$200

1/16 & 1/30 FIGURE DRAWING. BYO MATERIALS ALTERNATING THURSDAYS 6-8PM \$15

1/17 LADYSLAIN READING SERIES #6: EMILY PETTIT, SARAH WISBY, KEL WARREN & VANESSA BREWSTER 7PM \$10 DONATION

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1/25-2/8 QUILTING 101 WITH RAE HELLER. 3 WEEKS ON SATURDAYS 3:30-5:30 \$155

1/31 OPEN MIC FOR WRITERS! 7-9PM \$10 SUGGESTED DONATION

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## EXHIBITS

**Rendezvous, Turners Falls:** *Wax, Water and String*, paintings in encaustic, watercolor, and embroidery by Pam Allan, through January.

**Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls:** *A First-Class Machine Shop*, local history exhibit with images, text, maps, and artifacts, and *Junior Duck Stamps*, top youth entries for the statewide 2024 Junior Duck Stamp competition, through January 16.

**Montague Center Library:** Susan Dorais, collages combining natural

and architectural elements to create fantastical sights, through January 3.

**Sawmill River Arts, Montague Center:** Guest exhibit featuring Andrew Vlock and Chinatsu Nagamune, ceramic and textile artists from Leverett, through January.

**Rhodes Art Center, Northfield Mount Hermon, Gill:** *Countervail*, words and ceramic work by Anne Thiam, through January 24. Email [jrourke@nmhschool.org](mailto:jrourke@nmhschool.org) to visit.

**Greenfield Public Library, Greenfield:** *Franklin County's Forgotten Alien Encounters*. In the Local History

Room, through January.

**Looky Here, Greenfield:** *Salt, fat. Sweet!*, work by Caroline Davis. Through February 8; opening reception next Saturday, January 11 at 5 p.m.

**Gallery A3, Amherst:** *Improvisations*, paintings by Gordon M. Green and GK Khalsa, through February 1. Reception tonight, January 2 at 5 p.m.

**Oxbow Gallery, Easthampton:** *Scenes from Here and There*, paintings by Karen Evans, mostly of locations in and around Turners Falls, where she lives, through January 5.

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**MUSIK** from page B1

them a couple times, when Jack invited me down to jam, where I met Eric and later Mike. I have played with both of them together, and separately gigging with Chaleur, and also Century Plants.

Sky Furrows was the next logical step in the orbit of the Helderberg House.

**KS:** Eric and I knew each other from college in Virginia and we reconnected at a Century Plants show in Hudson around 2011. I knew he was also organizing shows with the Albany Sonic Arts Collective, which I admired very much.

Burnt Hills blew my mind and also intimidated me – I'm a person who shows up with words carefully worked out in advance and typed neatly on paper, so the improv aspect of BH impressed me a lot. But from the very beginning I felt at home and accepted with Mike, Phil, and Eric. Everyone is curious, chill, open, and generous.

When we first started writing songs, I'd bring in finished poems, they'd jam material and I'd find ways to integrate my writing into the rhythms and sounds they were playing. After a while we began writing in a more structured way, with Mike (usually) bringing progressions to the band, and I'd write from and to the music.

We have a lot of shared influences: American and British punk and postpunk, New Zealand bands like The Clean and The Verlaines, no wave, experimental rock, and jazz.

Unfortunately (fortunately?) I'm the only person in the band who has out-of-body experiences at Guided By Voices shows. I also admire Robert Pollard's collage lyric-writing style.

**MMM:** Oh cool. And you have a poetry background, right? Do you have any other projects or releases?

**KS:** I've been writing poetry for about 15 years, but before that I was a journalist and music critic. I started focusing on creative writing in the mid-'00s and around 2012 Mike Watt, who I'd met when I wrote a story about him in *Newsweek* in 1995, invited me to contribute poems to a music project he was working on with a guy in England named Oli Heffernan.

That led to Jaded Azurites, which is my voice-bass duo with Watt. We've released 6 digital EPs and we're at work on a seventh.

I've published a few poems in journals and I have a project called August which will be out in 2025 as both a poetry collection and an album, with contributions from many of the amazing people I'm fortunate to work with.

**MMM:** What is the band psyched about right now? Any recent jam sessions or gigs that you all would like to discuss? We have heard that you are recording – do you have a label in mind for your third LP?

**KS:** I've noticed a couple of times lately that at practice the guys start playing something out of the blue, they invent beautiful instant sounds out of thin air and I'm like, "whoa, what the hell is that, don't lose it." It's grace of god stuff, it's otherworldly. Musicians are magical people.

**MG:** We are currently in the midst of mixing some recordings that we did with Justin Pizzoferrato at Sonelab Studios. We were pretty happy with the label situation for the second LP, a co-release on Cardinal Fuzz and Feeding Tube. We will see how things progress as we get closer to finishing the record, as we've got a lot of recent material to record

in addition to what we're mixing right now.

**PD:** We are working on new material to finish our next record, and the last practice went really well! Albany is a bit quiet now. Troy is where most things are happening, mainly No Fun. Superdark Monday in Saratoga is where our next gig will take place.

**MMM:** Did you have fun at that show at the Voo? That was really cool. Do you have favorite kinds of venues, and do you prefer shows or recording more?

**PD:** The Voo was great. Lots of cool people. Four record store owners were there!

I like irregular venues the best, and the smaller the better! Haha! I prefer intimacy and camaraderie to professionalism! It is good to be able to hear everyone though through a decent system.

**KS:** I love the Voo! I love playing western Mass, so many brilliant people turn out. I love playing anywhere! I have no standards. I came to performing late in life, so I never want to miss a chance to play out.

**MG:** We really enjoy playing live. Out-of-town shows have been a lot of fun for us in the last year...

We hope to continue to get up to western Mass, it's always a blast up in the area – there are lots of good folks who are attentive listeners, and many record stores.

We've been very fortunate to play out more, and we've enjoyed playing shows in the last year with bands like Oneida, the Chris Brokaw Rock Band, Animal Piss, It's Everywhere, Creative Writing, Opto S, and Slyne and the Family Stoned. Their records are all good – go check 'em out!

**MMM:** Any good band stories, or west Mass or Albany stories? Are there any other contemporary bands, books, or writers you are really into and can recommend?

**PD:** I've been a fan of western Mass for a while. My older sister and my high school girlfriend both went to Mount Holyoke. I used to visit my girlfriend and started seeing shows back then including Jane's Addiction at Pearl Street, Soul Asylum and Agitpop at Hampshire, and Miracle Legion at one of the five colleges as well.

We all love APIE, and their show with us in Saratoga was epic! My favorite record of the year is by Shirese.

**KS:** When Sky Furrows got together I was very focused on writing and literature and was out of the habit of going to shows. I would show up at practice and the guys would be yakking away about bands they'd seen, records they'd heard, labels they liked. I never knew what they were talking about. Everyone seemed to be named Rob or Ted. I'd be like, "Who's Rob? Who's Ted?" They'd yak about it more and it would go over my head.

Then one time I was at a show in Easthampton – I was seeing MSSV, which is a band Mike Watt plays in. A woman with very long straight hair came up to me and was chatting, and all of a sudden I was like, "This woman played guitar in a band we played with recently." It was Kryssi from Mountain Movers.

From then on, I got it. I started paying a lot more attention. And it's been a gift for me to reconnect with live music in a powerful way.

I think we're in a golden age of live music, it's the cheapest and easiest way to make art in real time that requires you to be present. It's not a screen thing. You have to grab it from the air while it happens. If and when the world ends, I hope I'm at a loud show.

**WEST ALONG** from page B1

the cactus's liking. Our friend thought it would enjoy life in the country, up here in the region where it began its long life on a Deerfield farm.

So it, too, spends the season in plant summer camp in the shelter of the south-facing woodshed, occasionally being rolled out to bathe in a warm August shower.

Beyond the plants keeping the room green, there is the usual clutter of books and dossiers, comfy chairs, a music stand and violin. Enough to keep me occupied on long winter days, and into the evenings.

There are times too when, standing outside at midnight with the dog who needed to attend to doggy business before bedtime, I look back at the quietly warm ell of my winter quarters, fondly contemplating the gentle slope of the roofline. Sometimes a light snow is falling, giving a magical

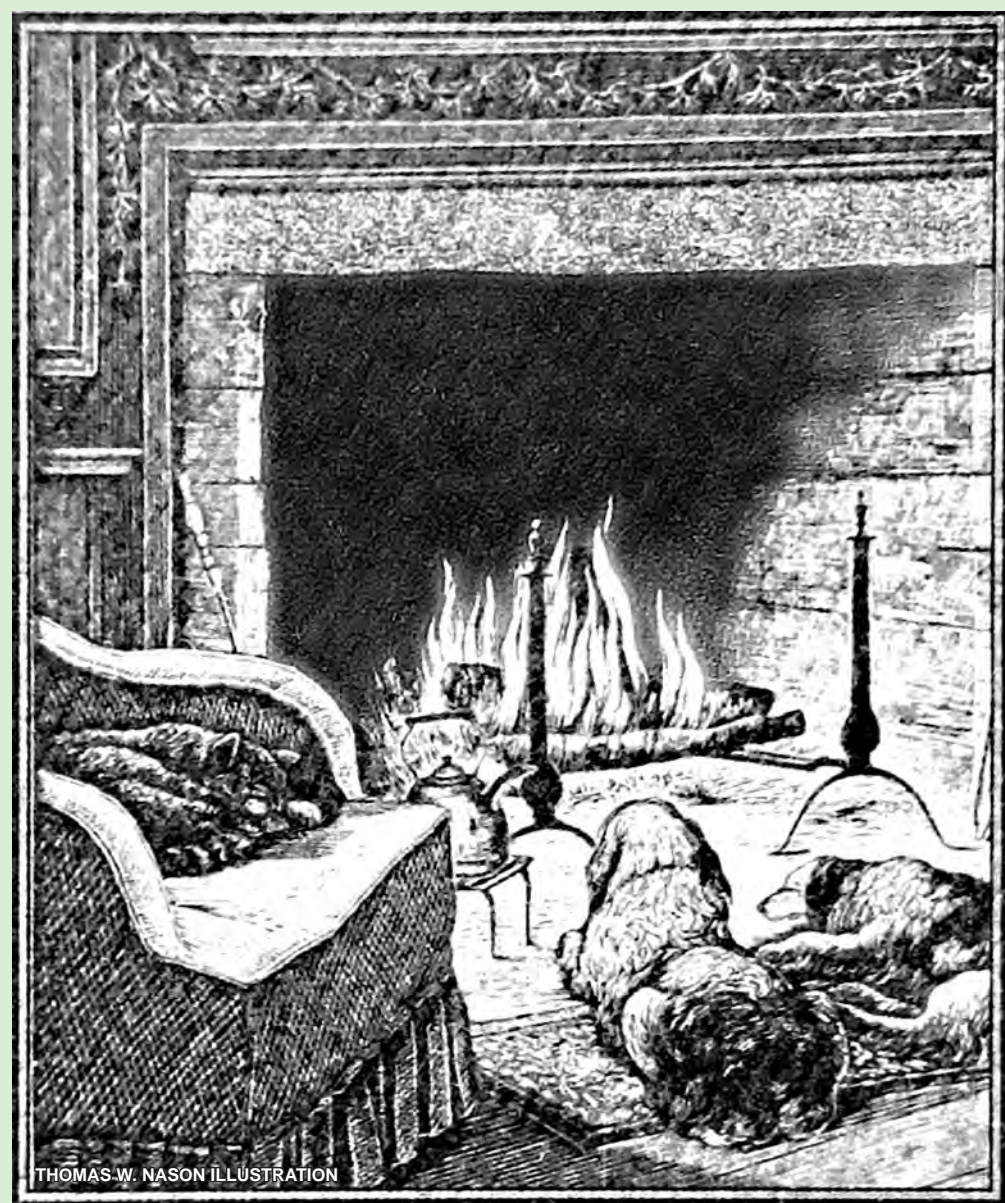
luster to the shining windows, the warm lights, and the greenery within the glassed-in room, as seen from the distance of the garden's picket fence.

Back inside, for tonight I'll abandon the upstairs summer bedroom for this, my spot near the fire and the dog dreaming on the rug. Here, in spite of the weather outside, there lingers a hint of summer greenness.

My winter bed is pulled up by the hearth. Snug in my own quarters for the winter, I can watch the shadows of flames flicker along the walls, keeping me and the dog in good warm company.

From my cozy vantage point on the sofa I can see that in the sky outside, Orion is rising, the moon and the Seven Stars are keeping a winter's night watch over all the sleeping creatures, and, as I pull the covers up to my chin, that includes me!

MD



THOMAS W. NASON ILLUSTRATION

**Montague Community Television News****Commune Doc Panel Up**

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

**TURNERS FALLS** – The immersive installation of *Leviathan* has been captured in full, allowing you, our dear viewers, to enjoy a near complete experience of Eggtooth's October production at the Shea Theater.

We also have footage from the December Q&A event at the theater with Charles Light, the director of the recently-released documentary film *Far Out*; Montague Farm commune member and anti-nuclear activist Sam Lovejoy; and Verandah Porche, poet and longtime member of the Packer Corners farm, which the film focuses on.

We do not yet have the rights to air the

film itself on our station, but we hope to gain permission to help share this important local history with our community.

All MCTV videos are aired on Channel 9, as well as 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 [infomontaguestv@gmail.com](mailto:infomontaguestv@gmail.com) or (413) 863-9200, follow us on Facebook, or find us on Instagram @montaguecommunitytv. Find our video archive and more via our website, [montaguestv.org](http://montaguestv.org).

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Amanda Gorman, *The Hill We Climb*

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