

The Montague Reporter

BIRD SHOWS

Ambassadors of Healing



Conway raptor rehabilitator Tom Ricardi (right) presents a golden eagle to the crowd at Sunderland plant nursery Sugarloaf Gardens last Saturday.

By CHRISTINA TRINCHERO

SUNDERLAND – Injured hawks, owls, and eagles took center stage at Sugarloaf Gardens last Saturday, drawing a standing-room-only crowd eager to meet these birds of prey and learn about them from Tom Ricardi, a retired biologist, former environmental police officer, and licensed bird rehabilitator. Joining Ricardi from his Bird of Prey Rehabilitation Center in Conway were a peregrine falcon, red-tailed hawk, golden eagle, black vulture, saw-whet owl, and barred owl.

For over five decades, Ricardi has cared for thousands of injured birds. His pioneering efforts

with bald eagles have resulted in captive-bred eagles reproducing in the wild and captive-bred chicks being adopted into wild nests, as explained on the Massachusetts Fisheries & Wildlife blog, *Rare Species Success Stories*.

“Not to toot my own horn,” he explained to a crowd of more than 75 people, “but this is important work.”

Ricardi travels throughout New England introducing the bird species to the public through educational presentations at venues such as Sugarloaf Gardens, nursing homes, senior centers, and other community spaces. While doing so, Ricardi educates – and captivates –

see **PREY** page A4

Governor’s Winter Energy Emergency Act Draws Praise, Suspicion

By JEFF SINGLETON

BOSTON – “Families are seeing the impact of the war in Iran every time they fill up their gas tank, place an order for heating oil or open their electric bill,” Massachusetts governor Maura Healey wrote in a press release last week. “[I]n Massachusetts, we are going to use every tool we have to get people relief.”

Healey then signed an executive order declaring a State of Energy Emergency in Massachusetts, increasing fuel assistance to residents who already qualified for it, and extending it to many middle-class households who heat with oil but did not previously qualify.

The executive order, which avoids the legislative process, also eliminates the charge on residential electric bills for solar subsidies from January through March and temporarily funds the new benefits with industry fees previously used to subsidize clean energy projects. The order requires the Department of Public Utilities, in collaboration with other agencies and “stakeholders,” to review other policies which subsidize solar such as net metering, and requires all departments

see **ENERGY** page A6

Garage Fire Hits Large Ammunition Collection On the Hill

By REPORTER STAFF

TURNERS FALLS – The call came in just before 8 a.m. Tuesday for a house fire on Sunset Drive, just a quarter mile from the Montague public safety complex, and the Turners Falls fire department and Montague police were there quickly, but not before the fire reached a large stockpile of ammunition and black powder.

“The crews first arriving did an incredible job knocking the fire down,” Turners Falls deputy fire chief Kyle Cogswell told the *Reporter*, “but the rounds of ammunition were going off – we estimate in the thousands, due to the length of time it lasted for. Once the water took effect and everything got cooled, the ammunition stopped.”

Cogswell said his department was supported by Greenfield, Erving, Amherst, Sunderland, Gill, Bernardston, and Northfield firefighters.

“Having to attack the fire is a dangerous thing in itself,” Cogswell

see **FIRE** page A5

Town Meeting Asked to Fund Study of Sheffield, Hillcrest



One possible approach is to build an extension on Sheffield Elementary (above) and close Hillcrest, while another is simply to renovate both buildings.

By MIKE JACKSON

TURNERS FALLS – After four and a half years of public discussion of a plan to expand Sheffield Elementary and close Hillcrest Elementary, town meeting members in Montague are being asked to put public money toward the project.

The special town meeting on Wednesday, October 28 will be asked to spend \$1.75 million on a feasibility study and schematic design, steps required by the Massachusetts

School Building Authority (MSBA) for its grant program that would reimburse up to 76% of costs.

If Article 7 – which will need a two-thirds majority – passes, the town would borrow \$1.25 million and pull \$500,000 from its capital stabilization fund. If the entire sum is spent, MSBA’s reimbursement would come in at \$1.33 million.

The project was launched in March 2022, when Gill-Montague regional school business director

see **SHEFFIELD** page A5

GILL-MONTAGUE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

District’s Business Manager Announces Spring Retirement

By MIKE JACKSON

GILL-MONTAGUE – Joanne Blier, director of business and operations for the Gill-Montague regional school district, announced Tuesday that she plans to retire on April 5.

“It’s after the budget is done, but not after it’s approved by the towns,” Blier told the school committee.

Blier, a Turners Falls High School alumna hired by the district in mid-2014 after years working at Greenfield and Mohawk Regional, said she was “immensely proud of what we

have accomplished together,” and promised to leave her successor a “comprehensive handoff.”

The committee voted 7-0 to accept her retirement, though some members joked that they would refuse.

In her business report, Blier said that the last fiscal year, FY’26, closed with a roughly \$403,000 budget surplus, attributable in large part to unfilled staff positions as well as to higher-than-budgeted state aid and Medicaid reimbursements.

Supplemental rural aid funds

see **GMRSD** page A2

Comment Period Extended On Quabbin Water Transfer

By SARAH ROBERTSON

BELCHERTOWN – A proposal to increase the maximum amount of water pumped from the Quabbin Reservoir to communities in eastern Massachusetts received widespread opposition late last month at a public hearing in the western part of the state, leading officials to extend the deadline for comment.

The region’s two-year-long drought was officially declared over on Friday, but with water levels in the Quabbin now at a 20-year-low

of 77.5%, residents of surrounding communities said their sacrifice of economic development to protect metropolitan Boston’s water supply should be taken into consideration before expanding access to other communities.

“I ask the Commission today to recommend against any future water transfers from the Quabbin until the Commonwealth has resolved fundamental questions of equity, stewardship, and a common water future for all in Massachusetts,” said

see **WATER** page A5



State senator Jo Comerford said the communities around the Quabbin Reservoir face “chronic population decline, inadequate infrastructure, limited water and sewer capacity, and an utter dearth of economic opportunity.”

WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Insurance Payout Covering Fall Town Hall Makeover

By JOSH HEINEMANN

Town facilities manager Stephen Broll came in person to the Wendell selectboard’s October 7 meeting reporting that the town’s insurer had sent the town a check for \$16,800 to pay for the repair of water damage to the town hall basement and two bathrooms. That money follows Wendell’s share, a \$5,000 deductible.

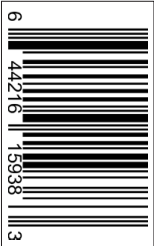
The insurance adjuster reportedly trusted the judgment of Broll and facilities engineer Jim Slavas and said more money may be available if more damage is discovered during the repair work, for example if opening a wall to start repair shows damage that the wall hid.

Ron’s Fuel serviced the furnace and boiler for \$800, taking the first part of the payment. The adjuster estimated \$3,600 for boiler repair. Slavas asked for \$1,083 for boiler parts, including a new expansion tank to replace a 35-year-old tank and a new pressure release valve to replace the old one, which is frozen. He offered to install them.

The selectboard approved spending that money before the serious heating season starts. Broll was also authorized to use \$615 of the insurance money to hire Stanley Steamer to clean the building’s heating ducts before then.

Broll and Slavas recommended

see **WENDELL** page A4



Packed With Language for the Human In Your Life	
Adopted Into Wild Nests.....A1	Slipped Down a Rung.....B1
Viewed as Internal Issues.....A2	Hovering Over the Liver.....B2
Full of Tree Food.....A3	Wander Around Bewildered.....B3
Rollled Around the Room.....A4	In a Last Graceful Flight.....B4
Released Back Into the Wild.....A4	Travel to the Ocean.....B5
Served By a Shallow Well.....A5	Noise Nomads, Fusion Nomads.....B6
Afraid to Turn On the Heat.....A6	Couchboy, Moon Bros, Swamp Dogg.....B7
Shorn of Their Gold.....B1	Billowing From Various Pipes.....B8

The Montague Reporter

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August 2002

GMRSD from page A1

from the state legislature, she said, have given Gill-Montague a roughly \$135,000 windfall this year, but \$100,000 was already spent replacing a boiler at Sheffield Elementary.

“We have some good revolving fund [balances], and our E&D is okay for moving forward,” Blier said, referring to schools’ version of free cash. “But the money will get tight as the years go forward.”

After the meeting, Blier told the *Reporter* she will “start making calls” to find applicants for her role. Her first plan after retirement, she said, is to stay with family in Florida for the end of her granddaughter’s senior year of high school.

Testing Data

The school committee heard a lengthy presentation from director of teaching and learning Karin Patenaude, including a review of new 2026 MCAS standardized testing results and related student data.

“Our overall attendance rates... have improved,” Patenaude reported, sharing charts indicating that attendance had increased from 89% to 93% over four years, and chronic absenteeism declined from 36% to 20%. “We obviously can’t improve in student achievement if they’re not sitting in front of us.”

The test results showed Sheffield had made “moderate progress,” but still ranked among the lowest 4% of schools in the state. The middle school and high school were in the lowest 11% and 12%, while Gill Elementary was in the upper 42%.

Patenaude discussed, at length, efforts by the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to support and monitor the district’s teaching performance. Interim superintendent Tari Thomas said DESE inspectors are in town this week and next to conduct a comprehensive review.

“This is going to be really, really wonderful for a new superintendent coming in,” she said, “because it will provide so much data for their entry plan in a nice document.”

Elementaries

The committee discussed the article going to Montague’s October 28 special town meeting to fund a feasibility study for renovating, or possibly combining, Sheffield and Hillcrest. The cost of the study, up to \$1.75 million, includes site reviews and schematic designs, and 76% of it is expected to be reimbursed by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA).

“If it fails,” Montague member Carol Jacobs asked, “if the money

is not appropriated, what happens?”

Gill’s Bill Tomb replied: “We go to the bottom of [MSBA’s] list.”

“Was there ever any discussion of having the Gill school join this initiative?” Jacobs asked. Blier noted that MSBA is planning to fund a new roof for Gill Elementary.

“I get that nobody wants to see their school close, and I also get that you’re putting money into the roof,” Jacobs went on, “but that could be something else for the town.”

“If the roof is put on under the MSBA, it has to be maintained as an educational building.... for a long number of years,” chair Jane Oakes, also of Gill, told her.

The committee unanimously approved an agreement allowing the town of Montague to borrow for the project. *(See article, Page A1.)*

Other Business

Oakes announced that a new contract had been settled with unionized staff in Units A and C, teachers and professionals, but that its language was being finalized.

Thomas reported that a vendor, Frontline Education, had informed the district it had fallen victim to a data breach, and that affected employees would be notified of their options directly by the company.

The meeting began with the news that Jimena De Pareja, the district’s Spanish-language community liaison, had been awarded a Latino Excellence Award by the state Black and Latino Legislative Caucus, “in recognition of her transformative work in the school district and across the wider community.” De Pareja was in attendance at the meeting, and Thomas and school committee members praised and congratulated her.

“I would say thank you very much,” De Pareja replied, “but all of this work I can’t do by myself – I am always receiving the support of my colleagues when I need it.”

Next weekend, October 23 through 25, the high school theater department is presenting *Clue: Immersive Dinner Theater* in the school cafeteria, with a script based on the screenplay for the movie based on the board game. A pasta dinner is included with tickets.

Oakes said the new superintendent screening committee met last week, and plans to meet again on October 26, after applications are due, and then several times during the week of November 9.

Finalists will be announced the week after that, and the school committee’s next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 17.



NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION



Phil Simon serves as the programming consultant at the Shea Theater in Turners Falls. He also handles a full roster of bands with his agency, Simon Says Booking, and recently purchased Greenfield’s oldest bar, “The Vic.” Phil says he is excited about the upcoming season at the Shea, which offers the busiest event schedule in recent memory.

Letters to

the Editors

Streeter Brings Right Values to Job

One of the many impressive accomplishments of Sheriff Lori Streeter’s office is its dedication to treatment and rehabilitation.

For example, one of the Franklin County Sheriff’s Office’s key innovations is the medication-assisted treatment (MAT) program for opioid use disorder.

A survey conducted nearly a decade ago found that more than 4 in 10 people incarcerated in Franklin County identified as opioid users. People leaving jail faced a 50-fold higher risk of overdose death than the general public.

Recognizing this situation as a public health crisis, in 2016 the Sheriff’s Office launched one of the nation’s first medication-assisted treatment programs, offering incarcerated patients naltrexone (Vivitrol), buprenorphine with naloxone (Suboxone), and naloxone (Narcan).

Sheriff Lori Streeter knows that such innovative programs must be created and supported because,

for decades, the problems of people inside the jail were viewed as internal issues only, with no impact on the public.

I value medication-assisted treatment because opioid addiction affects our entire community, and active treatment facilitates successful re-entry programs.

Please keep in mind that this is just one example of the many innovative initiatives underway at the Sheriff’s office. You will hear much more as her campaign unfolds.

I’m grateful for Sheriff Lori Streeter’s daily efforts to help make Franklin County a stronger, healthier community. Please join me on November 3 in supporting Sheriff Streeter at the polls. She brings the values and dedication this important role deserves.

Bill Benson
Greenfield
Former State Representative
Former Franklin County Commissioner

Rally, Register, and Vote This Saturday

No Thrones. No Crowns. No Kings. Let’s make our voices count by voting early for the November 3 election.

Next Saturday, October 17, the Montague town hall will be open from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. to offer voter registration, as well as an early opportunity for registered voters from any of the five villages in Montague to vote. If you want to register to vote, remember to bring an ID or your social security number.

Also on the 17th, many of our

friends and neighbors will be joining Indivisible Montague on the green space across the street from the town hall from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. for a “No Kings: Vote Early” celebration. Stop by to say hello before or after you head to the town hall to vote or to register to vote. We will be available to answer questions, and to encourage everyone to make a plan for voting.

Leigh Rae
Montague Center

CORRECTION

In our field hockey coverage last week (*Page A6*) our reporter wrote that he had “apologized to Mahar’s coach, Colleen Barrister, for asking for a roster.”

“Bannister, not Barrister,” our sports photographer chided us. “She’s a Turners Falls native, and a remarkable athlete and coach. She was a guidance counselor at TFHS for many years. She played D1 softball in college. She coached TFHS field hockey and turned it into a winning program. She was Westfield State’s head softball coach for many years....”

Thank you! Sorry for our error.

Published weekly on Thursdays.
*Every other week in July and August.
No paper the fourth week of November,
or the final week of December.*

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TURNERS FALLS AND VICINITY.

Compiled by MIKE JACKSON

The **weather** has been seasonable.

Spooky signs and objects now surround us – we’re approaching the event horizon, the twin horizon, staring down the double barrel, over the falls in two barrels: a big **Halloween** on Saturday the 31st, followed by a big midterm **election** on Tuesday the 3rd.

The last time **Halloween fell on a Saturday** was in 2020. That year there was no Rag Shag Parade in this vicinity, and down in Montague Center, the Firefighters Association published an edict warning that much of that usually candy-gushing neighborhood was “opting out of the Halloween festivities,” though some households were planning for masked distribution.

The town selectboard agreed to allow a socially distanced party of no more than 100 to be held, “in accordance with state guidelines for outdoor gatherings,” at the East Mineral Road cemetery after cemetery commissioners reassured them there would be no dancing on graves. *Board Approves a Graveyard Bash*, ran our headline.

The Saturday Halloween before that one was 2015. Then the Rag Shags were held, Greenfield on Friday, Erving and Turners on Halloween itself; Skeleton Crew Theater organized a haunted house at TFHS, while Ghost Light Theater put on *Evil Dead* at the Shea; and proper Halloween costume bashes were advertised at the Pioneer Tavern, Deja Brew, Harvest Restaurant, and Mocha Maya’s. The Turners Falls Football Indians beat the Cathedral Purple Panthers Halloween morning, 15 to 0, and the trunk-or-treat at the high school was canceled though we didn’t say why. Someone slashed the tires on construction equipment on L Street.

Prior to that we have to go back to 2009 for a Saturday. That year Charlie Choleva had a 300-pound pumpkin on his Seventh Street porch, the parties were at Burrito Rojo, Deja Brew, the Rendezvous, and the Route 63 Roadhouse, and MCTV aired scary black-and-white movies straight through ’til Sunday morning.

And the time before *that...* well, that was in 1998, and this little newspaper wasn’t even a twinkle in anyone’s eye.

What’s your costume this year?



The **Day of the Dead** altar in the Great Hall of the Discovery Center is looking awesome.

Here’s a seasonable announcement:
“Greenfield Savings Bank has partnered with Warming Homeless Hearts to help the nonprofit **collect sleeping bags** for those in the region who are facing a new winter without shelter.

“The bank is serving as a collection site for sleeping bags; items can be dropped off at the Greenfield Branch at 400 Main Street, weekdays between 9 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to noon. The effort runs through October 31, and bank staff hope to collect 150 sleeping bags.”

A worthy cause. Do you have a decent bag, in one of your closets, keeping nobody whatsoever alive? Consider depositing it.

I wonder what would happen if you dropped a sleeping bag off at a different branch. I’m not saying you should do that, but I do wonder.

If you do make it over to the shire town, however – maybe to donate a sleeping bag – check out the **Greenfield Community Television office** at 393 Main Street, which has been taken completely over by a unique art exhibit, “nearly 150 handmade heads crafted from corrugated cardboard, hot glue, and trash.”

There’s an opening reception for the exhibit, which is by artist Connor O., this Friday, October 16, from 6 to 8 p.m. Be warned, though: a press release acknowledges that it is “better described as an immersive experience.”

Lots of other good stuff is bubbling up in our **Events Calendar** – check it out on pages B6 and B7 as you plan out your next couple of weeks.

From the comings-and-goings file: Many patients of Dr. Geetu Shokeen, DDS, of **Montague Dental Arts** – “the dentist in the Shanahan’s building,” to non-patients – were shocked to receive a letter from her last week announcing that she was closing the practice, effective immediately, “permanently for personal reasons.”

Her letter strongly recommended patients to Turners Falls Dental, the practice of Drs. Col-lura and McLaughlin down in Montague City – though, and correct me if I’m wrong, she had been accepting MassHealth teeth and they currently do not. We imagine there’s a big shakeup underway – there’s also the Montague Dental Group on Dell Street, and Avenue A Family Dental just a couple doors down from our office. Beyond that, there’s Greenfield, with about a dozen practices open.

How’s your teeth feelin’?

I heard an interesting story this week from **nurses who work at Baystate Franklin**. They’re settling their contract, finally, with a ratification vote still underway but assumed to be a done deal. The union had voted overwhelmingly back in April to authorize a strike, but progress at the bargaining table was inching forward ever-so-slowly...

Until the end of September, when, I’m told, the union negotiating team threatened to schedule a strike to coincide with Baystate Health’s planned takeover of Mercy Hospital in Springfield on November 1. There’s a vacation freeze across the entire system while that integration is underway, so quite a pressure point was available to the nurses. Management, I’m told, agreed promptly to settle.

Glad that one’s resolved!

And as for that second barrel.... We’re now seven and a half months into the US-Israeli war on Iran, and it doesn’t seem about to end. America’s **strategic petroleum reserve** has run down from 415 million to 283 million barrels, though the global market has been cushioned even more by China’s reserve, estimated to have been drained from 1.4 billion to 1.1 billion barrels.

Israel’s election is on Tuesday, October 27, and the US midterms come one week later.

It’s impossible to know what will happen.

Send your little bits of news to editor@montaguereporter.org.

The Turners Falls Fire District will hold a special election on Monday, December 14, 2026, to fill several important positions, including seats on the Prudential Committee and the position of Water Commissioner. This is a unique opportunity for Fire District residents to get involved and help shape the future of the Fire District.

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

The last day to pick up nomination papers is Friday, October 23, 2026.

The deadline to submit completed nomination papers is Monday, October 26, 2026.

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DONNA PETERSEN PHOTOS



Donna Petersen writes: “A beautiful autumn day, and another successful Chestnut Festival at Big River Chestnuts in Sunderland this past Saturday. Nutheads, foragers, the curious, happy kids, and some very good dogs strolled among booths full of tree food offerings. Everything chestnut and more.

“Folks enjoyed roasted chestnuts, chestnut- and acorn-flour-baked goods, and treats from Masa Mexicana. The acorn ice cream sold out, as it did last year. You could buy chestnuts to roast at home, candles and honey, hickory oil, mushrooms, and chestnut saplings to plant.

There were farm tours, a chestnut pasta-making demonstration and a talk on acorn processing for flour and other uses...

“Big River will hold Saturday chestnut roasts and markets until later this fall.

Check out bigriverchestnuts.com and partake of the bounty that trees and nature gift us!”

Left to right: Kids crack acorns; Mulligan the dog considers the demonstrations on offer; a vendor sells chestnut saplings.

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PREY from page A1

young and old alike. Saturday’s demonstration was one of more than a dozen scheduled this month alone.

Each bird brought to Ricardi’s rehabilitation center is evaluated and treated, with most eventually released back into the wild once they have recovered. For non-releasable, disabled birds, Ricardi’s facility provides permanent housing and sanctuary.

“Approximately 70% of the injured birds can be released,” Ricardi noted. The others, he said, some of which were on display at Saturday’s demonstration, are used for educational purposes. “I take them on the road,” he said. “They are my bird goodwill ambassadors.”

While Ricardi introduces the public to these birds of prey, he also shares important messages gleaned from more than a half century of work with wildlife.

“If I could emphasize one key point,” he told this writer, “it is to avoid buying and using rodenticide. These chemicals pose a severe and widespread threat to birds, particularly raptors or birds of prey and scavengers. They can also be deadly to domesticated animals, too, such as cats and dogs.”

Second tip: If you see an injured bird of prey, do not try to move it. “People see what might be an injured bird – they put it in a box and bring it inside their home or garage,” Ricardi said. “Do not do that. If you think a bird is in trouble, leave it where it is.”

Ricardi recommends contacting a wildlife rehabilitator in your area for guidance, or calling the state Division of Fisheries & Wildlife at (508) 389-6300.

And a third tip: Discard food waste in the trash. Tossing food out of your car window – an apple core, or a piece of bread – attracts rodents, which then attract birds of prey.

“People don’t realize that rodents and birds of prey are creatures of habit,” he said. “A bird may patrol one area of roadway looking for food. They can sit in their perch and wait for any food scraps.” Many



Clockwise from top: Ricardi shows a black vulture, lets an audience member hold a kestrel, and explains an owl.

birds are injured by cars as they attempt to eat roadkill.

Of Saturday’s turnout, Sugarloaf Gardens manager and local bird enthusiast Dan Ziomek, was not surprised. “This is Tom’s third demonstration here,” he said. “While this year’s numbers were down slightly, from more than 150 attendees last year, fall is a busy time. We are glad

so many people came out to learn about the birds and to support Tom and the important service he provides to our community.”

“The birds are amazing,” Ziomek continued. “To see a bird perched on Tom’s arm gives people a true appreciation for how beautiful these birds are. During raptor season, educating the public, especially the

kids, on what is happening above them, is important.”

The Bird of Prey Rehabilitation Center is a nonprofit organization that operates on volunteer labor, tax-deductible donations, and community support. Donations can be sent to PO Box 26, Conway, MA 01310.

WENDELL from page A1

moisture in the basement. A basic fan system would cost \$750, and a premium system would cost \$1,750.

The women’s bathroom drain was disconnected during kitchen construction, and Slavas ordered cast-iron parts for restoring the connection. Broll said he would hold the flashlight while Slavas connected the pipes. The women’s bathroom needs only cleaning and repainting. The men’s room will have its flooring replaced and the wall between it and the vault opened to check for more water damage.

Broll said there were some things on the adjuster’s list that he and Slavas thought were not essential. He said if money is left over after bids are returned, the town hall has other projects that will not be hard to find.

Slavas and Broll said they were developing a scope of work so the projects can go out to bid. Town coordinator Kelly Tyler was given the task of asking Franklin Regional County of Governments personnel about procurement requirements.

More Town Hall Biz

Alistair MacMartin arrived to discuss the planned painting of the town hall interior by volunteers. He said he hoped to avoid a color selection committee, and thought the colors of the newly-painted foyer could be extended into the main hall.

MacMartin said Good Neighbors volunteer Ed Hebert offered scaffolding that can be rolled

around the room. Hebert has sound experience painting, he believed, including steeples in the Royalston and New Salem churches.

Selectboard chair Laurie DiDonato said he should contact the kitchen and town hall coordinator so that painting does not conflict with other uses. MacMartin said he has two gallons of paint, and thought he could “beat the bushes” and “pass the hat” for more.

No one bid on the town hall piano, which was declared as surplus, at an auction. Tyler reported that citizen Court Dorsey may be interested in it. If Dorsey is not interested, selectboard member Paul Doud offered to take it apart and put the pieces in the appropriate places at the WRATS.

Streamlined Permitting

Board of health clerk Tom Siefert came to follow up on a request from board of health chair Amy Simmons for permission to use town counsel for help with groundwater and private well regulations, and determining what criteria would require a permit applicant to pay for expert consultation.

DiDonato said she was inclined to approve the expense if there was money in the budget line. A quick check showed money was there, and the other board members agreed with her.

Siefert brought up the Massachusetts Climate Act and the newly-defined process for siting clean energy projects. A town can designate a local government representative (LGR) to coordinate the local boards that will have to work together within

the tight time frame allowed for a permit. Pay for the LGR may be included as part of the applicant’s filing cost, but that is not certain.

Some of what had been addressed in a site application is now part of pre-filing, and once the application is submitted, a 12-month clock starts after which the applicant gets automatic approval to build if the town has not reached a decision.

Siefert recommended that Wendell pass its own local energy siting bylaw soon.

Doud confirmed that Siefert had completed the relevant training, and the board voted to designate him as Wendell’s LGR.

A public forum on the new energy siting laws will be held on Monday, October 26 from 12:30 to 2 p.m. at the Shutesbury Public Library.

Other Business

Planning board chair Stephen Gross also asked to use town counsel at the next planning board hearing, scheduled for October 26, and possibly sooner to answer questions before the hearing. The selectboard has another meeting before then, and DiDonato said permission can be granted then.

Confirming Wednesday, October 28, at 7 p.m. as the date and time for a public forum on parking in the center of town, board members discussed methods of getting that information out to citizens and officials, singling out for their special interest fire chief Matt O’Donnell and tree warden Cliff Dornbusch. They agreed to announce the hearing on the townwide email listserv.

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FIRE from page A1

said, “and now we’re having to deal with that.”

According to the deputy chief, the fire consumed the entire garage and spread to the rest of the single-story house; the sole occupant escaped with a minor burn to the hand. The explosions lasted 10 to 15 minutes – some neighbors reported 20 on social media – and casings were flying in all directions.

Cogswell said his department located “bullet fragments in a lot of directions.... a few 100 yards away, in several areas.” One firefighter was sent to Baystate Franklin for a minor injury, which he said was not related to the shrapnel.

“Thank God there was nothing worse,” he said.

“It’s important to store all guns and ammunition in safes,” Cogswell said when asked if he had a

message for the public at large. “If they had been in a metal container, they would not have heated up to the point where they would pop off and explode.... Properly storing ammunition, and firearms, is so important to safety.”

As of press time, the initial cause of the fire was being investigated by the fire and explosion unit of the Massachusetts state police.



SHEFFIELD from page A1

Joanne Blier and superintendent Brian Beck presented the Montague selectboard and the school committee with the core problem: over the next five years, repairs at Sheffield and Hillcrest were expected to approach \$7 million. The pandemic “dip” was abating, Blier said, with 145 pre-K through grade 1 students at Hillcrest and 207 in grades 2 through 5 at Sheffield. (Data shared this week show 129 at Hillcrest and 177 at Sheffield.)

Furthermore, the *Reporter* summarized, “Hillcrest... does not have a library, storage space, a conference room, or fire doors; Sheffield lacks a music room and sinks in classrooms; and there is a general need for conference rooms, elective classrooms, space for family engagement and community resources, and breakout rooms for therapeutic programming.” Different solutions were put forward that year, including a new building on the district-owned lot the high school sits on, but the general consensus was that a “renovation” of Sheffield and closure of Hillcrest might be the most effective scenario.

The district applied to MSBA and was rejected in 2024, but accepted in 2025, and this summer a building committee was appointed, chaired by Steve Ellis, the former Montague town administrator who filled in on the school committee last year. The special town meeting was scheduled for October 28 in order to comply with MSBA’s required timeline for the study.

Should Article 7 pass, Montague would hire an owner’s project manager and an architect. The team would deliver a set of options to meet the district’s elementary school needs, with rough or “schematic” designs. The study would not lock the town into any course of action.

On Tuesday the school committee voted unanimously to sign an agreement allowing Montague to borrow the money for the project, as the town owns the buildings.

Other Articles

The other eight articles on the October 28 warrant range from tax policy to airport funding. The first four

come from the town accountant. Article 1 asks to spend \$1,643 from free cash to pay bills from prior years.

The next three involve the Turners Falls municipal airport, which has endeavored for several years to sustain itself entirely on outside grants and airport revenue, but is returning to the town meeting floor to request a bailout. Article 2 requests \$38,550 from free cash to patch the deficit in the fiscal year that ended in June, and Article 3 another \$15,000 to balance the current year’s books.

Article 4 is trickier – \$61,502 from free cash to cover eight “structural grant deficits,” with seven, amounting to \$53,080, airport-related. “In these cases,” the packet sent to meeting members explains, “the town did not receive grant reimbursement for different administrative reasons such as failing to submit for a timely reimbursement or not appropriately allocating a local cost share match.”

The eighth deficit of \$8,422 is for the Green Communities program, administered by the selectboard’s office.

Article 5 would allow the cemetery commission to take a total of \$12,032 from money earned by selling lots at Highland Cemetery and put it toward maintenance, supplies, and the stipend for the cemetery sexton. Article 6 lumps together “non-capital equipment and projects,” namely a machine to scrub the floors at the police station, another to groom the softball infields, and work to resurface the playground at Unity Park. These total \$16,300.

Those six articles boast unanimous recommendation of both the selectboard and finance committee. Article 7, the MSBA feasibility study, was endorsed 3-0 by the selectboard and 3-0 by the capital improvement committee – with one absence – but only 5-2 by the fin com.

The final two are non-monetary requests: Articles 8, which would allow the selectboard to set up a tax work-off scheme for residents with more age than income; and 9, to renew the lease on the former Central Street School, currently rented by Community Action Pioneer Valley.

A “virtual pre-town meeting” will be held next Wednesday, October 21, at 5:30 p.m. The Zoom link is available on the town website.



WATER from page A1

state senator Jo Comerford. “The MWRA’s proposal points to substantial projected economic growth in the communities that would receive this water over the coming decades, while the communities surrounding the Quabbin, though beautiful, continue to confront a very different future.”

Officials responded to the outpouring of opposition by extending the deadline to submit public comment on the proposal by three weeks until October 28.

The Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) is seeking to withdraw up to 20 million more gallons of water per day from the Quabbin to serve a growing number of communities in eastern Massachusetts. The authority is currently allowed a maximum of 312 million per day from the reservoir, and averages about 200 million.

As part of the application the Water Resources Commission (WRC), the state agency tasked with reviewing water transfer proposals, must hold hearings about their environmental impact on both the “donor basin” and “receiving basin” communities.

Comerford was among four state legislators who expressed doubt about the legality of the MWRA’s request under the 1983 Interbasin Transfer Act, as its application does not specify the communities in line to receive the additional water, or outline why they need it.

“There’s no complete account of the alternatives, the infrastructure, financing, or environmental consequences,” said state representative Aaron Saunders. “There’s only an extraction request in search of future water sales.”

Nearly 200 people attended the three-hour hearing at the Belchertown town hall, some via Zoom. WRC executive director Vandana Rao led with a presentation on the Interbasin Transfer Act. In 2018, she said, the law was updated to allow a single environmental analysis of the “donor basin” to cover new transfers to multiple communities.

Rao, who also chairs the state’s Drought Management Task Force, acknowledged the impact of climate change on the reservoir and the state’s planning. “Clearly that basin is losing some water, so we want to understand and know and evaluate what the impacts of that loss of water are,” she said. “This process does not diminish what the commission has been doing in terms of ensuring that the water is used in the most efficient manner.”

Belchertown officials testified that limited access to water has kept their town from redeveloping the former Belchertown State School for the Feeble-Minded into housing and commercial space. New Salem town coordinator Emily Hill reiterated that her town hall, police station, and senior center are served by a shallow well that routinely runs dry.

The MWRA claims the new

withdrawal would have only a “minimal impact” on the reservoir and river flows.

Days before the hearing, MWRA interim executive director Stephen Estes-Smargiassi spoke candidly with the authority’s two advisory boards about the withdrawal request, which he complained had been “grossly misrepresented in the press.”

“Throughout our history, as we’ve added new communities, our demand has continued to drop,” Estes-Smargiassi said. “I do expect to see some increases, at least in the short term, but we continue to see that improved efficiency of water use.”

Estes-Smargiassi said the MWRA was encouraged by the WRC to submit the entire request at once, and that had he known the backlash it would cause, he may have preferred to submit each donor basin analysis separately.

“This is not a giveaway, it’s not a free pass,” he argued. “This in some ways is more transparent and more comprehensive.”

Allowing more communities to join would allow the MWRA to distribute the cost of major infrastructure upgrades over the next decade across a broader range of customers, members of the advisory board said. To encourage towns to join, the authority decided in 2022 to waive admission fees for five years, an offer set to expire in December 2027. The *Boston Herald* reported that new

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PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that CAPTAIN’S COMMAND AT BLUEBEARD’S BEACH CLUB OWNERS’ ASSOCIATION, INC. hereby publicly apologizes to Terri Sevene Cappucci, Michael Sevene, and James C. Sevene, Jr. for incorrectly naming them as the heirs of Barbara L. Sevene and as having an interest in Week Number 10 in Villa Unit Number 225 in Captain’s Command at Bluebeard’s Beach Club, St. Thomas U.S. Virgin Islands.

Captain’s Command further publicly apologizes for foreclosing upon the above-referenced property in their names and publicly identifying or announcing Terri Sevene Cappucci, Michael Sevene, and James C. Sevene, Jr. as having defaulted on obligations associated with that property. They were not responsible for the property, did not owe the debt or obligation that was the subject of the foreclosure, and should not have been publicly identified as having defaulted upon such an obligation.

Terri Sevene Cappucci, Michael Sevene, and James C. Sevene, Jr. are not heirs of Barbara L. Sevene and do not have, and did not have any debt or obligation to Captain’s Command arising from the above-referenced property.

Captain’s Command further acknowledges that the responsible parties have been identified and that the information that resulted in Terri Sevene Cappucci, Michael Sevene, and James C. Sevene, Jr. being incorrectly named was provided or directed to Captain’s Command by those responsible parties.

Captain’s Command has been informed that the heirs are Rodney and Sheri Demers; Russel and Joanne Demers; Paul and Deborah Demers; Ed and Carol Demers; and Melissa and Arthur Patenaude.

Richard H. Dollison, Esq.
Attorney for Plaintiff,
Captain’s Command at Bluebeard’s Beach Club

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ENERGY from page A1

to aggressively investigate citizen complaints of “price gouging” on oil and gas.

Related to these provisions, Healey filed legislation to temporarily suspend the state gas tax, established a “winter warmth fund” in collaboration with the nonprofit Citizens Energy Corporation, and called on the state’s representatives in Congress to support federal legislation to increase fuel assistance.

Reactions to the program have generally been positive. “No one should be afraid to turn on the heat when costs are high. This is a matter of public health,” said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rebecca Tepper. “[W]e need to continue our all-of-the-above approach to energy to bring down costs and put an end to this costly volatility our residents can’t afford.”

“For too many of our neighbors, an unexpected heating emergency can quickly become a crisis – forcing families to make impossible choices between keeping the heat on and putting food on the table or paying other essential bills,” said Citizens Energy president Joe Kennedy III, a former member of Congress.

“We are excited that this program will be available this winter to people who have not previously qualified for aid,” Community Action Pioneer Valley executive director Lev BenEzra told the *Reporter*, noting that residents who apply for traditional fuel assistance, known as HEAP, are frequently just over the income limit.

BenEzra said her agency, which processes fuel assistance applications for Franklin and Hampshire counties and a number of towns in Hampden and Worcester counties, will be hiring extra seasonal staff.

She stressed that the application period for the new program will begin in December, and will be limited to residents heating with oil, as opposed to HEAP, which the agency began receiving applications for on

October 1 and which is available to those heating with either oil or gas.

A Fossil-Fuel Gift?

Concern has been expressed by some in the solar industry about what appears to be the use of money earmarked for clean energy subsidies to fund fuel assistance.

“We agree with the governor that oil prices have risen to the point at which the state needs to supplement federal support for low-income energy assistance,” Larry Chretien, executive director of Green Energy Consumers Alliance, wrote in an email to the industry news website *Utility Dive*. “However, we would rather see the money come from the general fund than [reallocate] ‘alternative compliance payments,’ which is funding that should go to clean energy projects.”

“The state has enough funding from other sources to cover the cost of the [solar] program for three months.”

– Tara Smith, MA Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities

Those payments, known as ACPs, are paid to Massachusetts by electricity distributors such as Eversource and National Grid *in lieu* of meeting clean energy benchmarks under the state’s Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target (SMART) program.

The Green Energy Consumers Alliance is also on record as opposing Healey’s gas tax holiday.

Vote Solar, a national solar advocacy group based in California, published an analysis last week headlined “Governor Healey’s Energy Affordability Actions Underscore Need To Build On Solar’s Proven Benefits.” The article does not emphasize the elements of Healey’s

order that temporarily suspend solar policy – and may produce long-term changes in it – but points instead at bills intended to expand solar power which are currently gridlocked in the state legislature.

A request for additional comment from Vote Solar was unanswered as of press time.

“The SMART program will continue to operate while the administration covers the costs,” Tara Smith, a spokesperson from the state Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, told the *Reporter*. “The state has enough funding from other sources to cover the cost of the [solar] program for three months, to help families during a winter with unusually high heating prices.”

Smith said most of the long-term changes established by Healey’s emergency order were contained in a bill filed in May 2025, the “Energy Affordability, Independence, and Innovation Act,” which is currently in the legislature’s conference committee.

“Nothing in this Executive Order shall negate the directive in Executive Order 654 to double the amount of solar on the system by 2035,” Healey wrote of a different measure she signed in March. “Massachusetts can both continue to grow solar and ensure ratepayers are not paying more than is necessary to realize the benefits of that growth.”

An October Surprise?

Several news articles on the heating emergency declaration note that it comes less than a month before the midterm elections, in which Healey faces challengers for her seat, and that Healey is pointedly blaming the Trump administration’s unpopular war on Iran for high heating costs.

“Of course it [is],” said Healey’s Republican opponent Mike Minogue, when asked by NBC10 Boston if he thought the energy order was motivated by politics. Minogue said he had been proposing a similar plan for nearly a year, but

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that it had been ignored.

“I’m glad she proposed it,” he told NBC10. “But again, what we need to do is work so the Legislature and everyone can find the waste, fraud, and excess.”

The energy-related policy proposals on Minogue’s campaign website include calls for a moratorium on the gas tax – not for the winter months, but whenever the price exceeds four dollars a gallon – and for the permanent elimination of the fees charged on electric bills for clean energy sub-

sidies. The *Reporter* was unable to find mention of increased fuel assistance. Minogue also promotes more natural gas pipelines, small nuclear power plants, and disincentivizing towns from rewarding builders of new housing for meeting energy-saving “stretch” codes.

Requests for comment from the Franklin Regional Council of Governments and state senator Jo Comerford on the emergency declaration received no response as of press time.

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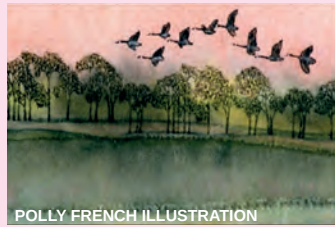
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NINA ROSSI PHOTO



POLLY FRENCH ILLUSTRATION

WEST ALONG THE RIVER

NOTHING
GOLD CAN STAY

By DAVID BRULE

*Nature's first green is gold,
Her hardest hue to hold...*
— Robert Frost

THE FLAT, ERVINGSIDE – So sayeth our New England poet, but what he had in mind is not always easy to grasp in spite of the simple wording. His plain-speaking has often deeper meaning than what appears at first glance.

But in this case, he may have been talking about my backyard.

All I can say is that our autumn neighbors, the maples, ash, birches and all, are blazing red, orange, and yes, gold. A fiery flame-out before dark November ushers in colder weather.

Our maples especially have turned to gold leaf, the brightness entering the parlor windows from the yard, the woodland path is like a tunnel of golden light.

But for sure, nothing gold can stay.

It took only a high wind last week and yesterday's rain to leave our proud maples shorn of their gold. The ephemeral blaze was enough to marvel at, even briefly, to give us a short time to feel pride and to boast about our Northeastern deciduous woodlands.

But our pride, in this respect, goeth before our fall. Down came the leaves, our yard carpeted with gold, now on the ground and turning brown.

Elsewhere, the mid-autumn movement among our feathered neighbors is a bit more urgent than was their behavior during all the

lazy days of summer.

The local catbirds have harvested the last of the dark purple chokeberries, though some still linger here and there, at random, on their magenta stems. Who could have imagined such a combination of color?

The catbirds chugged the berries down, but the bright colors of this berry could well be a warning of a deadly toxin if we tried to do the same!

The dainty and fine-feathered thumb-sized ruby-crowned kinglet has come pirouetting through the faded Joe Pye weed and picked through the bumble-bee-loud fall-time asters.

We bade brief farewell to the final monarch butterfly, who had been waiting in his chrysalis since Labor Day, before finally emerging this mid-October even after the danger of the first frost.

We had thought for sure, as we waited week after week, that the green chamber was sterile. When, *lo!* The monarch finally emerged on October 7 and then spent hours drying its wings, flexing, and climbing the homestead vine – until we briefly turned our back, and it was gone. Bliethe spirit, safe travels in winging off to Mexico.

Awasoos, the neighborhood bear, has come through on a midnight raid. But the household here on the Flat had dutifully brought in our bird feeders just after the last evening call for cardinals before closing the bar. So Sister Bear was out of luck.

Her hunger must be sated before see **WEST ALONG** page B4



MONIQUE BRULE PHOTO

A wheelbarrowful of apples in the author's yard.

Above: In the fields along the Connecticut River next to the Hatfield dike, an army of pumpkins rises.

REFLECTIONS

No Country for Smart Dogs

By EASTON SMITH

TURNERS FALLS – When I first told my parents I was moving in with some dear friends who live in a small town called Turners Falls, my stepdad responded, “The place where they make soy dogs?”

My stepdad has the photographic memory of a *Jeopardy* champion. He had recognized the name “Turners Falls” from the label on the hotdogs he bought in Southern California. As a vegetarian who was raised on microwavable soy products, I was excited to find this gastronomic connection to my new home. I thought I’d be entering a mecca of intensely processed fake meat products.

But in the five years I’ve lived here, I’ve eaten hardly a single dog. And my stepdad was the first and the last person to ever ask me about Lightlife. These days, my out-of-town friends and family are more likely to bring up my town’s proximity to a certain lesbian bar.

Even locals don’t talk about Lightlife much, despite the fact that it’s a major employer. I see bumper stickers around town that tout our “world-famous armored



SMITH PHOTO

mud balls.” Nothing about our “internationally-sold cylinders of water, soy protein isolate, soybean oil, raw cane sugar, salt, and 2% or less of...” And indeed it’s the other monolithic *Light* in town, First-Light, which has a bigger impact on day-to-day life around here.

But when I read that Lightlife was shuttering its local factory after 28 years of operation – and 17 years in Greenfield before that! – I felt a twinge of sadness. Those soy dogs were, I realized, a detail about this town that I cherished. Like the story of how the workers cheered

when the lumber baron George Van Dyke drove his fancy car off the bluff by the river. Or the fact that we can support two separate Polish social clubs.

And I realized that, despite walking around town on a near daily basis, I’d never even *seen* the Lightlife factory.

On a recent day, as I was feeling nostalgic, smoking a secret cigarette on a rock by the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge, looking out at the riverbank – perhaps right at the very spot where George Van Dyke see **REFLECTIONS** page B8

The Week in High School Sports:
A Big Comeback; Up Memory Hill

By MATT ROBINSON

TURNERS FALLS – The newest MIAA power rankings came out this week, with teams from Franklin Tech and Turners Falls High bouncing up and down on the leaderboard. The biggest surprise was in volleyball. Tech went 2 and 0, but slipped down a rung, while the Turners Thunder went 2 and 1 and slid down four places.

Meanwhile, the Football Eagles, who had lost some points last week after their close victory against Ware, nudged up in the standings to #3 in the state after blowing out Greenfield.

Cross-Country

It rained all day on Tuesday, and while other outdoor sports were canceled or postponed, the cross-country teams ran on the trails off Sumner Turner Road up in Northfield in the rain.

In the boys’ meet, Turners raced against Pioneer, Smith Voc, and Mahar, while the girls competed against just Pioneer and Smith.

For the boys, Lucian Carlo placed second against Pioneer and third against Smith Voc and Mahar. In the girls’ race, Olivia Wolbach placed fourth against Pioneer and first against Smith, while Eleanor McAndrews finished sixth and fourth respectively.

I must admit that I only went to two meets this season, and I was relegated to stopping traffic on Hillside as the runners crossed the road.

Cross-country used to be king in Turners Falls.



DAVID HOITT PHOTO

Turners Falls High School junior Olivia Wolbach races past fall foliage at the five-town cross-country meet at Pioneer Valley Regional School in Northfield on Tuesday. Wolbach finished fourth overall with a time of 24:09:00.

When I was a little kid, we’d travel to the old high school and join other families, and we all cheered when the starter pistol went off and clapped for each runner as they crossed the finish line. Of course, as a child, I took

see **SPORTS** page B5

Pet of the Week



CARMODY COLLAGE

‘PANCAKE’

Meet Pancake, a young female Rex rabbit in foster care. Pancake has lived with other rabbits, but would appreciate slow introductions. This beauty loves to chomp fresh veggies and treats.

Rabbits typically live eight to 10 years. We recommend a 16-square-foot indoor enclosure, which would allow her to stretch her legs. Expect to spend around \$100 on housing, and bear in mind that most housing sold at pet stores is too small for

small pets. No wire floors, please – they are bad for bunnies’ feet. Check Dakin’s Thrift Shop for options.

If you are looking for a fuzzball friend, Pancake might be your girl. The adoption fee is \$75, and includes a veterinary exam and spaying. To start the adoption process, call Dakin at (413) 781-4000, extension 1 or email springfield@dakinhumane.org. If you have a cage, please send a picture when you inquire.

Senior Center Activities OCTOBER 19 THROUGH 23

GILL and MONTAGUE

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

Monday 10/19
10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
3 p.m. Quilling

Tuesday 10/20
9 a.m. Chair Yoga
11 a.m. Money Matters
12:30 p.m. Tech Tuesday
3 p.m. Tai Chi

Wednesday 10/21
9 a.m. Veterans’ Agent
10 a.m. Outdoor Yoga at the Discovery Center
10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
12 p.m. Bring Your Lunch Bingo
1 p.m. Parking Lot Food Pantry
4 p.m. Mat Yoga

Thursday 10/22
1 p.m. Pitch

Friday 10/23
10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
12 p.m. Pizza Party
2 p.m. Chair Dance
4 p.m. Tablet Class (pre-register)

of each month. The next clinic is October 20. Luncheons are held on the fourth Friday of each month at town hall. For more information, contact (413) 548-1022 or coa@leverett.ma.us, or check the town newsletter or the Leverett-Connects listserv.

ERVING

Open Mondays through Fridays from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 1 Care Drive. Daily snacks and coffee. Fitness room and pool table open.

Monday 10/19
9 a.m. Good for U
10 a.m. Seated Fitness
12 p.m. Pitch Game
1 p.m. Yoga

Tuesday 10/20
9 a.m. Stretch and Balance
10 a.m. Line Dancing
11 a.m. Social Stringer

Wednesday 10/21
Closed

Thursday 10/22
Closed

Friday 10/23
Closed

WENDELL

Foot care clinic is the first Wednesday of each month. The next clinic is November 4. Call Katie Nolan at (978) 544-2306 for information or appointments.

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

LEVERETT

Chair Yoga classes are held Wednesdays at 10 a.m., hybrid, at the town hall and on Zoom. Foot care clinics are the third Tuesday

PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

Greg Reil at the County Fair

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – I like to write music reviews. Sometimes they are about people who have performed at local places around Greenfield.

Greg Reil is a guitarist I saw performing at this year’s Franklin County Fair. According to his official website, he has also been a performer at the Big E in Springfield, which I also have been to multiple times myself. He is apparently called “Greg Reil of Reil Country.”

A decent crowd sat down in the area where he was on stage to hear him perform at the fair. I like people who play guitar, when it comes to performers. He plays pop, country, and classical music on his guitar.

I found him to be very enjoyable to hear, and not just on the guitar. His singing was enjoyable, too. One song he sang was “Hungry Like the Wolf,” by Duran Duran, I believe. He also did one of his own songs, which wasn’t bad.

I heard a fair amount of applause from the audience, which indicated they found it enjoyable too.

I couldn’t recall if he had played at the fair before, but I would be surprised if he didn’t continue to be a repeat performer, because people like having him there.

You can find this guy on Facebook at www.facebook.com/reilcountry. His official website is www.reilcountry.com, and there are other original songs of his you can listen to for 99 cents on the website.

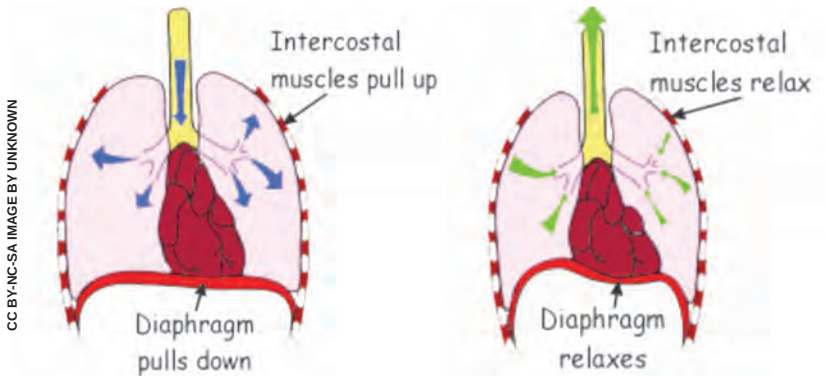
DIY Bodywork For All

simple tips for self-care monthly

By JAMIE SIMPSON

TURNERS FALLS – Breathing is arguably the single most important bodily function necessary for our survival. We could fast for weeks, last several days without water...but a few minutes without breath would mean our end.

When you think of breathing, what parts of the body come to mind? The mouth and nose, certainly. And the throat. And most likely the lungs.



The diaphragm pulls down when we inhale (left) and relaxes up when we exhale (right).

But what about the respiratory diaphragm?

If breathing is our top priority, then the diaphragm muscle and its health must also be, as the diaphragm is the engine that powers both autonomic and conscious respiration. If it is weak, consistently compressed, or has limited range of motion, our breathing is less efficient, which has negative consequences for every single body system. (Yes, everything in the body is connected.)

also massage the contents of the abdominal cavity, and it is thus intimately linked to our digestion and elimination processes.

Whew, that’s a lot of exposition.

So – how can we get to better know and care for our diaphragm, and its close connection to our digestion?

Part 1: Belly Breathing. Lie face-up on something – a bed, sofa, exercise or yoga mat, or just the floor. Lying down means not having to resist gravity, so you can relax more deeply. Make yourself comfortable: small cushions, rolled-up towels, or folded blankets under the neck, pelvis, or knees might feel good, taking pressure off the lower back.

Rest your left hand on your heart and your right hand on your low belly. Take eight to 10 slow breaths in and out, feeling the rhythm and movement of the breath, your hands, your thorax, and your abdomen.

Breathing into your belly means the breath has to pass through the thorax on its way to the abdomen.

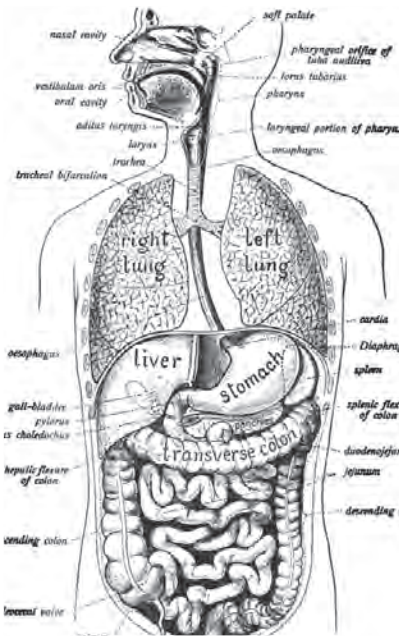
Let’s start with a bit of anatomy.

The diaphragm, at rest, is umbrella-shaped, hovering over the liver and other upper organs of the abdominal cavity. Its muscle fibers attach to the inside of the lower ribs, the inside of the sternum’s “tail,” the xiphoid process, and the upper lumbar vertebrae. (The lumbar spine is the lowest part of the spine.) At the top these fibers join to form a central tendon, which attaches to connective tissue around the lungs.

Here’s a not-so-well-kept secret: the lungs don’t move on their own.

When you breathe in, the intercostal muscles between your ribs contract to lift the rib cage up and out. At the same time, the diaphragm also contracts, pulling that central tendon downward. These two simultaneous movements create space in the thoracic cavity, which outside air rushes in to fill: inhalation.

At the end of the inhalation, the intercostals and diaphragm relax and move toward each other, and the now-reduced volume in the thoracic cavity presses the air up and out: exhalation.



The human respiratory and digestive systems, from the 1906 edition of Johannes Sobotta’s Atlas and Text-book of Human Anatomy.

When you do this, you’re inhaling fully, as the diaphragm creates a vacuum in the lungs when it pulls them down. That vacuum is filled by the oxygenated air coming in.

Part 2: Gut Feeling. Do this part only on a relatively empty stomach, and only when your abdomen feels okay – no recent injuries, surgeries, or digestive distress. Also, avoid this if you’re pregnant and starting to show. If you have any doubts, ask your primary care provider.

You’ll need something soft to place under your belly, such as a blanket, towel, cushion, soft cylindrical bolster, or partially-deflated beach ball. Place the center of the object under your navel and slowly lower your full body weight onto it, or to your tolerance.

Go slow, especially in the beginning. Breath is your barometer: if the pressure feels like too much and you’re holding your breath, do less. Use a smaller or softer object, or rest on your forearms so your belly isn’t sinking in so deep.

When you get to where the belly pressure feels manageable, stay and take eight to 10 slow, full breaths in and out. Then remove the object and repeat Part 1, lying face up. How does belly breathing feel now?

Bonus Round: Breath Freshener. At the end of one or more of your full, relatively passive belly breaths, pull your low abdominal muscles down toward the floor. This forces out some of what’s called the “expiratory reserve volume,” or ERV – the air left in your lungs after normal exhalation.

The ERV can be a bit stale, so breathing it out makes room for freshly oxygenated air to take its place. Doing this periodically not only refreshes your lungs’ reserve air volume, but helps keep the diaphragm and other breathing muscles strong and resilient.

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LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here’s the way it was on October 13, 2016: News from the Montague Reporter archive.

Board Bandies Bandit-Busting Bylaw

At its October 3 meeting, the Gill selectboard discussed a new town bylaw proposed by member Greg Snedeker.

The bylaw, modeled after one adopted by the town of Uxbridge, would include Gill in an electronic system that helps to identify stolen goods received by second-hand dealers, pawnbrokers, and precious metal dealers. The system is designed to deter and prevent the sale of stolen goods by aiding law enforcement officers in apprehending and prosecuting any person who facilitates their

theft, possession, or sale. Snedeker reported that after adopting this plan the Uxbridge police department was able to solve 11 open cases, and the city of Springfield had seen a steep reduction in the buying and selling of such goods. He said that he felt it was important to create such a bylaw following a recent incident involving a break-in theft at his own residence.

New Voting Option

For the first time in Massachusetts history, early voting for the November 8 presidential election is now available for all registered voters to cast their ballot before Election Day, during normal business hours from October 24 through November 4.

20 YEARS AGO

Here’s the way it was on October 12, 2006: News from the Montague Reporter archive.

Bewildered Beavers, Slumping Edges

Ludlow Construction has licked the toughest part of the job on Ave A: Getting the first piece of pipe in the ground. The pipe is 14 feet below the pavement, but the job called for removing an additional underlying five feet of peat and unstable soil to replace it with stone and granular material, to create a solid base.

Getting the initial hole dug seemed hopeless. Ground water, peat, clay and loose soil made difficult going. Water poured in; silty soil followed, and the edges of the hole slumped.

The water table is high here because of leakage from the power canal. Beavers have dammed up the old railroad bed, and when the canal is drawn down, the water disappears and the beavers wander around bewildered, wondering where the water went. Had this job been coordinated with the annual canal drawdown, it would have been much easier.

140 YEARS AGO

Here’s the way it was on October 13, 1886: News from the Turners Falls Reporter archive.

Turners Falls and Vicinity

The gentle rain to-day is greatly appreciated.

Chas. N. Johnson is slating the roof of the new French church.

Road Commissioner Hiram Martin has cleaned all the alleys of the village so that they are as wholesome as the avenue. There has always been a great temptation to dump rubbish in the alleys.

The Thomas Brothers are getting along quite rapidly with the reservoir on Wills Hill. About fifty men are employed under the foremanship of Mr. White of Northfield, and everything favors the construction of one of the best reservoirs ever devised by an engineer.

Ed. Goland has one hand in a sling on account of injury to one of his fingers by a gear falling on it.

Treasurer M.B. Collins is getting along famously collecting taxes and he will make the best showing the town has seen for many years. The whole tax levy – fire district and all – was \$54,000. A balance of

only about \$6,000 is now outstanding. All poll-tax payers who have not yet been up to the captain’s office may escape the annoyance of a visit from the constable by slipping in to the constable’s office at once.

All interested in having a trotting park for Turners Falls should meet at the Farren House on Friday evening. Little Charlemont draws a crowd from three states to see a few horses trot around among the cradle hills, and Hinsdale, N.H., is known far and near for no other reason, and we think it would be a good thing for Turners Falls as it would get a new crowd in the habit of coming here, and possibly some of them might drop a dollar by accident, and then we’d all scramble for it.

The master mechanic of the Brooklyn Bridge had a few hand bills up announcing a lecture at Colle opera house but not a soul put in appearance.

J.F. Bartlett and wife arrived home from Washington last evening. They attended the reception of President Cleveland on Saturday.

It is a noticeable fact that not a few workmen who were in the habit of getting drunk once a month under the monthly payments now “enjoy” a weekly spree.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Loading Dock Unfazed; Why The Caged Skunk Sprays; Fishing Boat Adrift; Fourth Street Neighbors Miffed

Monday, 10/5

10:57 a.m. 911 caller from Family Dollar reports that a vehicle crashed into their rear loading dock, then fled. There is a windshield and car debris scattered around. Camera footage shows a white Subaru hatchback with what appears to be New Hampshire plates backing into the loading dock and damaging the car. No damage to loading dock. Two males in grey hoodies were seen arguing outside of the vehicle behind Aubuchon before getting in and smashing into the loading dock. Vehicle appeared to speed off on J Street. Unable to locate. 2:53 p.m. Caller reports individuals using e-bikes and e-scooters have been traveling on the sidewalk downtown. Advised caller we would log the call and pass information along to officers.

3:54 p.m. 911 caller from East Taylor Hill Road advises that a dog ran at her four-year-old daughter and no owner was around. Caller states there are no injuries; wishes this to be logged.

10:35 p.m. Caller reports a dog barking from a possibly abandoned location in the area of Swamp Road and Federal Street for the past 45 minutes or so. Caller called back advising the noise was a coyote.

Tuesday, 10/6

10:48 a.m. Caller from Lake Pleasant Road states that he has equipment on site to build a garage and it was vandalized overnight. Report taken.

12:05 p.m. 911 caller from Mormon Hollow Road states that her grandson had a trap set and they caught a skunk. Caller states that when she tried to let it out of the cage, it sprayed her. Caller unsure how to release it at this point. Services rendered.

5:53 p.m. Caller reported that a vehicle sideswiped another vehicle in the parking lot of Franklin County Technical School. Officer spoke to the owner of the vehicle that was struck; she advised that the party who struck her vehicle reached out and provided info. She does not want a police report.

6:14 p.m. 911 caller states she is in the area of Unity Skatepark and is being harassed and threatened by 20 individuals. Several people could be heard talking in the background. Caller states that this stemmed from her yelling at the operator of a vehicle that almost hit her. Officer advises caller will be leaving area; spoke with another individual who advises that the altercation was verbal only.

8:17 p.m. Caller from

Fourth Street states that his neighbor appears to be running a generator on the second-floor balcony. Units advised.

Wednesday, 10/7

6:09 p.m. Caller from Mormon Hollow Road reports that a male was on the property revving his dirtbike, and his grandchildren felt threatened by this. Officer spoke to caller. Property checked; involved male gone on arrival.

Thursday, 10/8

7:09 a.m. 911 caller states that she just struck a deer at the Route 47 crossover. She is not injured, but there is some damage to the vehicle. Vehicle was able to drive away. Deer got up and walked into the woods.

7:47 a.m. 911 caller reports that she was hit from behind by another vehicle at the crossover. Vehicles are damaged; caller is concerned they may be injured. PD responding; EMS toned out by Shelburne Control. Both parties refused transport to hospital. Both vehicles able to drive away.

11:37 a.m. Shelburne Control received a call about a possible brush fire in a grassy area near Turners Falls Road and Grove Street. Fire extinguished by FD.

2:13 p.m. Caller states that he is stuck out on the Connecticut River in his bass boat; requesting assistance getting to shore. Dispatch spoke with TFFD, who stated they would go out with their boat and try to get him.

5:35 p.m. Caller reporting an injured turkey vulture near an Alice Street address since Saturday. Message left for animal control officer.

6:28 p.m. Caller from East Main Street requesting officers to her address; states that her neighbor borrowed something from her two and a half weeks ago and he will not return the property. Report taken.

10:59 p.m. Caller from Fourth Street states his neighbor is playing loud music and he would like officers to speak with them. Officer spoke to a neighbor who stated that there was a car parked out front playing music and it is not there anymore. Units clear.

Friday, 10/9

8:01 a.m. Landlord states

she received a call from a tenant in a Fourth Street building reporting that the second floor has a generator running in the building. Officer advises quiet upon arrival; spoke to downstairs neighbor, who states that she did hear it but it’s outside, and that the tenant runs the generator because he does not have electricity.

1:21 p.m. Caller advises she received a scam call stating they were from the Franklin County Sheriff’s Office and there was a warrant out for her arrest due to failure to appear for a murder trial at Greenfield District Court at 8:45 this morning. States she Googled the phone number and it came back to the FCSD. Wants on record; she is reaching out to FCSD to discuss further with them.

5:16 p.m. Officer advises he was flagged down at Unity Park by a female party who advised that a hit-and-run occurred in the parking lot of Cumberland Farms. Female states her vehicle was struck and the other operator did not want to call police but provided her name, phone, address, insurance company, and plate information. Not actually a hit-and-run. Officer advises he is out on Fourth Street looking at vehicle damage.

6:21 p.m. Caller from Riverside Drive states that a vehicle described as a white Subaru with a blown-out rear windshield has been parked for a bit; states it is odd, as she has never seen the vehicle before. Spoke with owner of the dealer plate via phone; he states the vehicle belongs to his son and he does not have permission to use the plate. Officer advises he is out with the vehicle, which may have been involved in the incident at Family Dollar earlier this week. Tow requested. Officer will be returning the plate from the Subaru to its proper owner. 9:48 p.m. Caller from Marshall Street states that she has a possum in a basket that she thinks may have been hit by a car. Caller advises it is not gravely injured and she is unsure what to do with it. Advised caller to let possum go.

Saturday, 10/10

8:44 a.m. Highly upset 911 caller states that a cement

truck almost ran him and his grandchildren over near the soccer field on Lyman Street; states the truck then almost hit his car. Truck no longer on scene. Concrete truck *en route* with another load. Officer standing by to avoid another issue. Officer spoke with operator of truck, who states the caller’s car was in the incorrect lane of the road, and that he used the horn and said some choice words. Officer spoke to all parties; caller not happy.

12:05 p.m. Caller from Family Dollar reports that a male party keeps stealing carts from the store and urinating on the dumpster, and is causing a disturbance inside and outside of the store, screaming profanities. Officer advised male regarding shoplifting laws.

4:30 p.m. Caller reports hearing loud yelling at Sixth and J Streets for the past several minutes. Officer advises he spoke to a male party on Sixth Street and was advised that two males were arguing in the park over food stamps. Officer checked area; unable to locate.

Sunday, 10/11

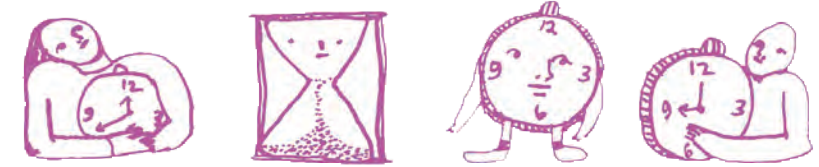
3:17 p.m. First of three reports of an unwanted male party refusing to leave an East Main Street residence. Officer advises contact made with involved male party; he was asked to leave the property and did so willingly. Officers will stay in the area to observe.

Monday, 10/12

1:53 a.m. Assisting Erving PD and state police with a disturbance on Gunn Street in Erving.

3:53 p.m. Caller concerned about a younger child going over the side of the Eleventh Street bridge and playing near the water. Officer spoke to two juveniles who are fishing on the east side of the canal. Juvenile advises line was snagged and they moved over on the bridge to untangle the line. Juveniles will stay on bike path side of fence.

4:31 p.m. Anonymous caller reporting a juvenile throwing rocks on the black bridge by Railroad Salvage. Caller doesn’t believe anyone should be on that bridge as it is old. Officer spoke to a group of juveniles on the Bailey bridge and moved them along.



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The monarch emerged last Wednesday, then disappeared.

WEST ALONG from page B1 her long three-month sleep. But the woods this year are full of hickory nuts, fruit of all kinds, berries, acorns, and even apples from ancient trees long abandoned far through the woods. Those wild apple trees are a reminder of the farmsteads and homesteads abandoned a hundred years ago on Mineral Mountain. All that is left are the empty cellar holes and fallen apples. So now the leaves come down, in a last graceful flight, tilting and making the final trip to the ground, their loveliest and longest journey before reaching the earth. Once fallen, they become piles for children and dogs to play in and hide. They definitely provide a reason for the adults to grouse about. So many leaves this year! We trundle them off to the edge of the woods or the compost pile where they will provide a good win-

ter home for all manner of insects, including the heroic bumble bees. In a year, the golden leaves will biodegrade, making an abode for nightcrawlers, and then go back to the garden to nourish new life in the soil. Around and around goes the cycle. So we'll savor the last of the old gold in the trees before the drab days of November find us, with images of gray-clad Puritans on their way to church matching the grays of our leafless landscape. Nothing gold can stay, but we know too that eventually the earth will turn, the sun will again gain strength, and Nature's first green will reappear. Then leaf subsides to leaf... So dawn goes down to day. Nothing gold can stay. — Robert Frost



October 8 Crossword Answers



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MONTAGUE CRYPTOJAM !!!

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UK KUMMUTZ UT L ANNB
DUMP KNBG FILTH VLVGA.
MPLM'K PGLOGT.
- ENABLE BEELAMPS

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SPORTS from page B1

the term “cross country” literally, and wondered how they could run all the way to California and back.

When the new high school was built, a new course was carved out which crossed Hillside Road. This was not an easy jog in the park. Runners from near and far spouted the curse, “Socquet’s Hill,” as they ran. Across the road, the path ran straight up a hill named for the old Socquet Hillside Farm Dairy.

In 1976, the team went 10 – 0, but didn’t necessarily get all the credit it deserved. The football team was also 10 – 0 that year, and was much more of a media darling. But Coach O’Riley, who also coached track in the spring, had the entire football team wait at the finish line during their last meet to cheer on the boys as they finished.

Today, with declining enrollment, only a fistful of students went out for the team this year, but the ones who did have done remarkably well.

The Northfield race was the last scheduled meet for the girls, but the boys’ team will travel to Orange next Tuesday to run against Mahar and Franklin Tech.

Golf
TFHS 172 – Mohawk 179
FCTS 167 – Smith Voc 177
FCTS 153 – TFHS 199

Last Thursday the Turners golf squad bested the Mohawk Warriors at Thomas Memorial.

I met with coach Bill Fitzpatrick and the players as they were warming up. With a record of 5 and 7, they knew they wouldn’t qualify for the post-season, but that didn’t stop them from stopping the Warriors. Cam Cogswell and Jameson Betteres each shot a 37, followed by Trevor Lyons with 47 and William Tyler and Rowan Deery with 51 each.

While the Thunder was notching their sixth win of the year, the Franklin Tech golfers were at Wyckoff Country Club, where they outclassed the Smith Voc Vikings.

“This guarantees us at least a share of the league title,” coach Mike Duclos texted me after the victory. I replied immediately, because Smith and McCann, the team’s two closest rivals in Bi-County East, each have multiple losses and have each lost to the Eagles twice. He corrected himself: Even if they lose the final two matches, they would still be league champs.

At Wyckoff, Jack Day tied for first with a 40, with Braeden Talbot (41), Grady Deery (42), and Brady Wood (44) taking the next three spots on the board.

And then, last Friday, the Eagles and the Thunder played each other. I sat down with both coaches in the clubhouse before the match. Duclos especially was grounded, taking his undefeated season in stride while encouraging the Turners players to play strong



Great Falls Middle School’s Lucian Carlo placed sixth overall in the boys’ varsity division at Tuesday’s five-town meet in Northfield, with a time of 20:23:00.

against his crew.

Tech’s Day topped the leaderboard with a 35, followed by Wood (37) and Talbot (39). Cogswell led the Thunder attack with a 41, coming in fourth place, followed by Tech’s Everett Eichorn with a 42. Lyons (48), Rowan Deery (51), and Tyler (53) also scored points for Turners.

Girls’ Soccer
FCTS 1 – St. Mary 0
FCTS 4 – Westfield Tech 3

Last Thursday, October 8, Franklin Tech’s hybrid soccer girls escaped with a 1-nil nail-biter win over the visiting St. Mary’s Saints.

The teams battled back and forth in the first half, but each attack was thwarted. Late in the period the Eagles were awarded a penalty kick, but the Marys successfully blocked it to keep the game a scoreless tie at halftime.

As the end of the game approached with it still knotted at zero, the clock froze at two minutes, keeping the players, coaches, and fans guessing at how much playing time was left.

The Eagles mounted one last attack. Faythe Sobieski took a pass on the near sideline and kicked the ball across the crease, where Sofia Melnik was positioned. Melnik head-butted it into the net, breaking the double goose egg. Before the players could line up, the horn sounded and Tech escaped with the victory.

“We spent the last half hour of yesterday’s practice working on corners,” coach Jason Butynski shouted to me as he ran down the

field. “We knew we had to figure out how to score from that angle.”

On Monday, although it was a holiday, the hybrid team laced up their cleats again to defeat the visiting Westfield Tech Tigers. “It was wonderful,” one player told me on Tuesday.

“It was our best game of the year,” her mother agreed, and then corrected herself: “At least in the second half.”

The Tigers had been on top 2-0 at half-time, and scored again 45 minutes into the second to put the Eagles in a 3-nil hole. But in the waning minutes of the battle, Tech scored four goals to put the game in the win column. Sobieski, Kaelyn Mclean, and Summer Williams scored the goals, with Williams scoring twice, and the assists came from Melnik, Sobieski, and Indira Wiles. In goal, Sheyenne Ballentine made nine saves.

And although the Eagles won two straight games this week, they slipped from #30 to #31 in the MIAA Division 5 power rankings. This means they are on the cusp of qualifying for the playoffs, but will most assuredly play on the road.

Football
FCTS 44 – Greenfield 6

Last Friday the Blue Eagles decimated the Green Wave of Greenfield to maintain their perfect record in football. This was one of those games where the one-sided score matched the actual action on the field.

Tech got the ball first. It took them two plays to get it to the Green 20, and three more

to score their first touchdown of the night. The 2-point pass attempt was incomplete, which would become a repeating pattern throughout the contest: quick touchdowns, followed by missed extra points. The Eagles would go on to score seven touchdowns, but came up empty on every extra point attempt until the final try.

After Franklin scored their first TD of the night, their defense forced a Green punt and the Eagles held a long, sustained drive, culminating in another touchdown and a 12-point lead.

This kept the Wave on their heels, and miscues and miscommunications forced the visitors to burn an early timeout and make another punt.

In the second quarter, with Franklin leading 18-0, Green fumbled and the Blue Birds scored on their first play from scrimmage.

In the third, with the Eagles on top 36-0, Green ran a reverse all the way down to the one-yard line, and then scored. The extra point was denied, which was very important, as it made it a 30-point game. Football’s version of the mercy rule dictates that if the spread is 30 points when the game reaches the fourth quarter, the clock runs uninterrupted.

At the end of the fourth quarter, with the score still 36-6 and Tech facing a fourth-and-15 deep in their own territory, they ran a play. The Eagles flew down the field to the enemy’s 24, setting up their final score of the night.

“They would’ve punted,” one of the Tech fans said as he hurried down the sidelines to where the ball was now spotted, “if our punter wasn’t in the hospital.”

The Eagles scored, and this time the extra point was good to increase the lead to 44-6. Greenfield then fumbled, and the Franklin players simply took a knee to stop the bleeding.

Mason Bassett threw for 103 yards, with Hunter Donahue and Nolyn Stafford as his targets. On the ground, although Stafford, Donahue, Bassett, Justin Lent, Wyatt Whitman, and Cole Gamache all carried the ball for the Eagles, Brady Gancarz was their workhorse, running for 185 yards and scoring five touchdowns. Whitman scored the other 12 points.

On special teams Donahue and Jaxon Silva returned punts, Stafford kicked off eight times, and the Eagles didn’t ever need to punt because they scored on every possession until the final whistle.

Defensively, the tackles were evenly spread among 13 players. Gamache made two sacks, Matthew McIntyre and Raiden Quinones caused fumbles, and McIntyre and Zachary Brown recovered them.

The Eagles have proven they can beat local teams, but this Friday they travel to the ocean to take on the undefeated Hull Pirates.



Montague Community TV News

Seat Is All Yours

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

TURNERS FALLS – Whether it’s the “One Love” Reggae Festival, the “Great Ghouls” Night Market, the Gill standout, or the Montague finance committee, our cameras have you covered! We’re happy to film, edit and produce the happenings that make our town special. We hope you can join us in this important work.

Montague Community Television relies on a volunteer board of community members. The board of a non-profit guides the way it runs, how it spends its money, and what sorts of projects it can do. There are many exciting opportunities for MCTV board members to get creative while providing support to the important tasks of keeping our public access station running.

MCTV is looking to fill an empty board seat, and we hope that if you’re

reading this, you’ll consider it! The commitment is just one meeting a month, with food and drink provided; no experience is necessary.

Please reach out by emailing a letter of interest to infomontaguetv@gmail.com, calling us up at (413) 863-9200, or stopping by the station at 34 Second Street to talk with Dean or Deirdre, Mondays through Fridays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

And if you see us out there filming, say hi! And let us know if there is any performance, meeting, or other event we can film, or any movie project we can help with. MCTV is stocked with cameras, microphones, and anything you need to make a video, and we can help edit it.

Check out all we do, including recent recordings of committee meetings, at our Vimeo page, which can be found linked on the “Videos” tab at montaguetv.org.

MR Wrapping Paper Edition

Artist Profile #2

By REPORTER STAFF

TURNERS FALLS – This summer we invited people to submit design proposals for our fifth special Wrapping Paper Edition, to be printed in November. This



fundraiser for the *Montague Reporter* will feature full color designs printed on double pages of newsprint, meant to wrap presents in. We received 34 submissions to our call, and we have selected seven artists, including one Youth artist, for our edition this year.

We can’t wait to bring these wonderful designs to life in this special edition, which will go to press Thanksgiving week! We are introducing the artists to you by asking each the same three questions.

Pam Acosta Hernandez of Northampton won with a colorful, abstract design. She answers our three questions this week:

MR: What would you want your wrapping paper to say, and feel like, for the person it is being gifted to?

PA: I want my wrapping paper to feel like a cheerful mystery. Like it might contain your new favorite ____.

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

PA: I’d love to receive books and zines! Maybe a work in translation, indie comics, art zines, or a special rock. Chocolate is always welcome.

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

PA: Newspapers have given me plans, plants, books, and all manner of sweet gifts. I love repurposing newspaper and other remnants to create DIY wrapping paper. I’m so delighted to be a part of the special wrapping paper edition!

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EVENTS

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15

Leverett Library, Leverett:
Ariel Shapiro & Clarissa Lyons. Yiddish music from the archives to the present. 5:30 p.m. Free.

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: *Climate-Resilient Toilet and Greywater Systems*, talk and discussion with Connecticut River Conservancy and Rich Earth Institute staff. 6 p.m. Free.

Northfield Mountain, Northfield: *Co-Existing with Black Bears*, presentation by biologist Meghan Crawford. 6 p.m. Free.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *Open Stage*. Five-minute slots for Halloween-themed performing arts. 7 p.m. By donation.

Buoyant Heart, Brattleboro: *Boring Man, Noise Nomads, Filthy Sensor, Ts, Haitlin*. 7 p.m. \$.

Brick House, Turners Falls: *Spectre Folk, Jumpy, barbie. ai, Intac*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Wendell Meetinghouse, Wendell: *The Burning Reed*, one-person show by Joe Laur with new versions of Rumi's stories and poems. 7:30 p.m. \$.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Kidleidoscope Story Hour: Squirrels*. For ages 3 to 6. 10:30 a.m. Free.

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls: *Needle-Felted Pumpkins*. Crafts for adults; registration required. 10:30 a.m. Free.

Incandescent Brewing, Bernardston : *The Happy Accidents*. 6 p.m. No cover.

Shutesbury Athletic Club, Shutesbury: *Garold Amadon*. 7 p.m. No cover.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: Screening, *Dark Side of the Rainbow In 3D*. Determine for yourself whether the 1973 Pink Floyd album was engineered to match up purposefully with *The Wizard of Oz*... or vice versa. In Anaglyth 3D. 7 p.m. \$.

Wendell Meetinghouse, Wendell: *The Burning Reed*, one-person show by Joe Laur with new versions of Rumi's stories and poems. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Born Again Vintage, Northampton: *Letters of Marque, Daisy Chain, You Are Not Brave Enough, YourArmsAreMyLegs*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Ladies of the '80s*, tribute show. 8 p.m. \$.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Melanie Blackbird*. 8 p.m. No cover.

The Drake, Amherst: *Gold Dust, Stella Kola, Miles Hewitt*. 8 p.m. \$.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *The Grotesque Burlesque, Fool & the World, Orange & Amber*. 8 p.m. \$.

Hutghi's, Westfield: *Orchid Club, Concussionists, Folly of Three*. 8 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17

Peskeompskut Park, Turners Falls: *Great Falls Farmers Market*. SNAP accepted. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Free.

Avenue A and Second Street, Turners Falls: *No Kings* voter registration event. 10 a.m. to noon. Free.

Northfield Mountain, Northfield: *Mushroom Walk*. Learn safe and responsible foraging methods with Mass Audubon field naturalist Jonathan Kranz. 10 a.m. Free.

Greenfield Savings Bank, Turners Falls: *Melinda Georgeson*, harp. 10:30 a.m. Free.

Dickinson Library, Northfield: *Dungeons & Dragons*. Single-day campaign for ages 16 and up, all XP welcome. Register at www.northfieldrec.com. 11 a.m. Free.

Franklin County Fairgrounds, Greenfield: *Fall Festival and Round House Rally*. Classic cars and trucks, crafts, kids' activities, vendors. Benefit for LifePath Meals On Wheels. Rain date October 18. 12 to 6 p.m. Free.

Leverett Library, Leverett: *Kids' Open Mic*. 12:30 p.m. Free.

Next Stage Arts, Putney: *Tony Vacca & Fusion Nomads, Massamba Diop*. 6 p.m. \$.

Ja'Duke Theater, Turners Falls: *The Addams Family*. 7 p.m. \$.

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

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Outro, Tiffy, Gum Parker*. 7 p.m. \$.

Nova Arts, Keene: *Sol y Canto, Doozy Jane*. 7 p.m. \$.

Palladium, Worcester: *The Dillinger Escape Plan, Many Eyes, Johnny Booth, Godseyes*. 7 p.m. \$\$.



Connecticut-based cellist and composer Johnathan Moore is the featured performer at Música Franklin's community concert next Thursday, October 22 in Greenfield.

Wendell Meetinghouse, Wendell: *The Burning Reed*, one-person show by Joe Laur with new versions of Rumi's stories and poems. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Last Ditch, Greenfield: *Autumn & the Afterthoughts*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Institute for Musical Arts, Goshen: *Chris Williamson*. 7:30 p.m. \$\$

Bellows Falls Opera House, Bellows Falls: *Fred Eaglesmith and The Velvet Frogs*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Steely Beck*, dual Steely Dan and Jeff Beck tribute. 8 p.m. \$.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *The Suitcase Junket*, special guests. 8 p.m. \$.

Academy of Music, Northampton: *Mount Eerie, Mirah*. 8 p.m. \$\$.

CitySpace, Easthampton: *The Culture*, ballroom showcase with Springfield's *Maison of Saint Morta*. 8 p.m. \$.

EXHIBITS

Waterway Arts, Turners Falls: *Open Up!*, installation by Lo Roux, through October.

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Migrations*, colorful works depicting scenes of village life, history, and Mayan culture in Guatemala, through November. A *Day of the Dead Altar* built by local families will be on display until November 3.

Montague Center Library, Montague: *Flower Show*, paintings by Kate Spencer. Through November, with a reception on November 9 at 5:30 p.m.

Sawmill River Arts, Montague: Guest artist *Emet Aron* of Dream Seed Arts displays prints, ceramics, and wearables, through November. Guest jeweler *Chelsea Dupuis*, through November, with a reception Saturday, October 24 at 1 p.m.

Rhodes Art Center at NMH, Gill: *Out of the Frame*, reduction linocuts by printmaker and faculty member Stephen Allison. Through October 23, by appointment at mseno@nmhschool.org.

Leverett Library, Leverett: *Falling in Love with Rainbow Valley*, art by Ezra Wilde, through October.

Leverett Crafts & Arts, Leverett: *Color Stories*, paintings, prints, drawings, and quilts by Sarah Stroud, Sara Casilio, and Lori Lynn Hoffer, through October.

Artspace, Greenfield: *Carnival Studies*, Polaroid instant photos of carnival scenes, through this Sunday, October 18.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: Photography and collages by *Morgan RaShel Kelner*, through October.

Greenfield Library, Greenfield: *Coalescence*, group show by Laura Davis, Jorie Morgan, and Whitney Robbins. Through October, with closing reception October 30 at 5:30 p.m.

GCTV, Greenfield: *Headspace 3*, immersive installation of over 150 large multimedia illustrations and sculptures by Connor O, through December.

Fiddleheads Gallery, Bernardston: *A Touch of Whimsy*, fanciful and humorous art, through October 25.

Sunderland Library, Sunderland: *Embrace the Wrinkles*, collages by Sarah Gately, through October.

Gallery A3, Amherst: *Variations/ Sensations*, paintings by Janet Winston, through October.

Shelburne Arts Coop, Shelburne Falls: *Floorscapes: From Mountains to the Sea*, new designs on painted table mats and runners by Joanne Gold, through October.

New England Visionary Artists Museum, Northampton: *Gaia's Garden*, paintings by Charlotte Treiber and Jules Jones, through October.

CALL FOR ART

HumanArtis Gallery in Northampton is looking for portraiture and figurative work featuring people, doing what they do, for an exhibit called *Humans Being Human*. Submission deadline is November 7 for the December show. Email info@humanartis.org with "Entry Question" in the subject to learn how to submit.

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CALENDAR

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SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25

Turners Falls High School, Turners Falls: *Clue: Murder Mystery Dinner Theater*. Tickets include pasta dinner. 6:30 p.m. \$.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27

Wendell Meetinghouse, Wendell: *Honoring Elders*, Nancy Spittle and Rich Drohen. 6:30 p.m. Free.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls: *Pokémon Club*. For teens. 5 p.m. Free.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30

Unity Park Nova Stage, Turners Falls: *Zombies With Attitude, Hot Rod, Sam Mulligan*. Costumes encouraged. 7 p.m. By donation.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Wildlife Costume and Bat Appreciation*. Wear costumes and learn about bats. Refreshments. 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Free.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1

Unity Park, Turners Falls: *Montague Soapbox Races*. 12 p.m. Free.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12

Marigold, Brattleboro: *Holy Basil, Moose, Oscar Shaw*, poetry by *Daryl Gussin*. 7 p.m. Free.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21

Whately Town Hall, Whately: *Tony Trischka & Earl Jam*. 7 p.m. \$.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22

CitySpace, Easthampton: *Mehrnam Rastegari*. 7 p.m. \$.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9

Palladium, Worcester: *GWAR, Midnight, Mac Sabbath, X-Cops*. 7 p.m. \$\$.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12

The Drake, Amherst: *King Tuff, Sheer Mag*. 8 p.m. \$.

Organ Factory, Brattleboro: DJs *Topher, Concrete Morning*. 9 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Kilgore Trout, 3verbound, Science In The News*. 9:30 p.m. No cover.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18

Apex Orchards, Shelburne: *Fall Festival*, with vendors, food, face painting, music by *Matt Emmer*. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Free.

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Indigenous Fishing Along the Kwenitekw*. Learn traditional fishing methods and the cycle of the seasons from Indigenous perspective, weave a fishing net, more. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Free.

Ja'Duke Theater, Turners Falls: *The Addams Family*. 2 p.m. \$.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Saving Vice, Slob Drop, In Shallows, Provenance, The Lycan, The Eyes of Apathy, Amora Downs*. 2 p.m. \$.

Feeding Tube Records, Florence: *Bastian Void, NxCx*. 4 p.m. By donation.

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

Organ Factory, Brattleboro: *Concrete Morning, Iscah*. Ambient. 7 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Karaj*. 8 p.m. No cover.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Dustbowl Revival*. 8 p.m. \$.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 19

Montague Center Library, Montague Center: Best Briefs book club, *The Penelopiad* by Margaret Atwood. 4 p.m. Free.

Four Corners Conservation Area, Montague: *Site Walk*. Bring insect repellent and water. 5 p.m. Free.

Sawmill Herb Farm, Montague: *Community Discussion* about the history and future of the Four Corners Conservation Area. 6 p.m. Free.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20

Town Hall Annex, Turners Falls: *Flu Clinic*. Covid and pneumonia vaccines also available. Walk-ins welcome. Bring your insurance card if you have one. 3 to 5 p.m. Free.

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls: *Needle-Felted Pumpkins Crafts*. For adults; registration req'd. 5:30 p.m. Free.

Bombyx Center, Florence: *Suzanne Vega*. 7 p.m. \$.

De La Luz, Holyoke: *The Blind Boys of Alabama*. Tribute to Stevie Wonder's *Songs In the Key of Life*. 7 p.m. \$.

Cold Spring Hollow, Belchertown: *County Conservation District, Heartbroken Slut, Roxy Duke Ego Birth, Cursed Image*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Palmyra, Olivia Ellen Lloyd*. 8 p.m. \$.

MASS MoCA, North Adams: *Earl Sweatshirt, MIKE*. 8 p.m. \$\$.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: Matinee, *To Die For* (1995). 4 p.m. Free.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *Jessica Pavone, Kelly Bray, Julie Bodian*. 7 p.m. \$.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Kristine Leschper, Free Body Estimate, DJ Quills*. Easthampton Tenants Union mutual aid fund kickoff. 7 p.m. \$.

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: *Urine My Garden: Why and How to Pee*cycle, ecological sanitation talk and discussion with Seeds of Solidarity and Rich Earth Institute staff. 6 p.m. Free.

Buoyant Heart, Brattleboro: *Heartbroken Slut, Miracle Curse, La Claire, Shane "Bray" Kerr, Julipode*. 7 p.m. \$.

THCC, Easthampton: *Glasss, Negative Action, Divergents*. 7 p.m. \$.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Documentary, *Far Out: Life On & After the Commune* (2024). Discussion with filmmaker Charles Light, Daniel Kelle, Sam Lovejoy, and Patty Carpenter follows. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Wendell Meetinghouse, Wendell: *The Burning Reed*, one-person show by Joe Laur with new versions of Rumi's stories and poems. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Floodwater Brewing, Shelburne Falls: *Briezyjane and the Hurricane*. 7 p.m. No cover.

Florence VFW, Florence: *Dawn of Sorrow, Siberian Kiss, Fifth World, Bullzeye, Six2Twelve, Industry Standard*. 7 p.m. \$.

Belltower Records, North Adams: *Creative Writing, Dominick & The Family Band, Slowpoke Records*. 7 p.m. \$.

Brick House, Turners Falls: *Outer Shapes, Feldspar00000, Mary Jester, IKandy*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Wendell Meetinghouse, Wendell: *The Burning Reed*, one-person show by Joe Laur with new versions of Rumi's stories and poems. 7:30 p.m. \$.

CitySpace, Easthampton: *Doctor Gasp, Moon Hollow*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Vapors of Morphine*. 8 p.m. \$.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Jacob Kordas*. 8 p.m. No cover.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *BASSTHOV3N*. 9:30 p.m. No cover.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24

Downtown Brattleboro: *Circuits In The Woods 2*, featuring *dälek, Jeffrey Alexander & the Heavy Lidders, Wet Tuna, Emergency Group, Dave Seidel, Burial Woods*, many more. 12 p.m. \$.

Leverett Library, Leverett: *Forest Health and Managing Forest Fire Risk*, talk and discussion. 1 p.m. Free.

Guiding Star Grange, Greenfield: *Swedish Dance*. Intro workshop, yummy snacks, open dancing. Live music on five-string fiddle and nyckelharpa. 1:30 p.m. \$

St. Kaz, Turners Falls: *Kids' Costume Party*. Music, snacks, games, prizes. 5 p.m. Free.

Thompson Temple, Lake Pleasant: *Owsley's Owls, Grateful Dead* tribute. 6 p.m. \$.

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: *Ghost Town at Sundown*. Pop-up trick-or-treat village on the common. 6 p.m. Free.

St. Kaz, Turners Falls: *Monster Mash Party*. DJ, costume prizes. 7 p.m. \$.

Brick House, Turners Falls: *Rumyn, Couchboy, Datura*. 7 p.m. \$.

Looky Here, Greenfield: *Josephine Foster, No Land, Moon Bros*. 7 p.m. \$.

Palladium, Worcester: *Insane Clown Posse*. 7 p.m. \$\$.

Institute for the Musical Arts, Williamsburg: *Bitch, Kay Turn Her and the Pages*. 7:30. \$.

Next Saturday, October 24 the second annual *Circuits In The Woods* festival, which "celebrates Southern Vermont's important place in the development of electronic music," will be held at four venues in downtown Brattleboro. The daylong event culminates with a set by the distinguished experimental hip-hop group *dälek* (above). See circuitsvt.org for a full schedule.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Troy Ramey*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Parlor Room, Northampton: *Told Slant, H. Pruz, Sable Island Pony*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Wes Brown, Eric Hangen*. 8 p.m. No cover.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22

The National Spiritual Alliance, Lake Pleasant: *Lofi Lab on the Road*. Creative hangout space for kids and teens. Sponsored by Montague Public Libraries. 4 p.m. Free.

First United Methodist Church, Greenfield: *Música Franklin* community concert, with student chorus and featured cellist *Johnathan Moore*. 5 p.m. Free.

Magic Wings, Deerfield: *Magic Wings After Dark*. Adults only. 5:30 p.m. \$.

Music Connection, Turners Falls: Listening party for the new *Olivia Tremor Control* album. 6 p.m. Free.

Bowker Auditorium, UMass Amherst: *Christian McBride & Ursa Major*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Carsie Blanton, The Burning Hell*. 8 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Ella Aslin, Hazel Basil, Lila!*. 9 p.m. \$.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23

Food City, Turners Falls: *Flu Clinic*. Covid and pneumonia vaccines also available. Walk-ins welcome. Bring your insurance card if you have one. 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Free.

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Kidleidoscope Story Hour: Night Animals*. For ages 3 to 6. 10:30 a.m. Free.

Leverett Town Hall, Leverett: *Cribbage*. 10:30 a.m. Free.

Turners Falls High School, Turners Falls: *Clue: Murder Mystery Dinner Theater*. Tickets include pasta dinner. 6:30 p.m. \$.

Ja'Duke Theater, Turners Falls: *The Addams Family*. 7 p.m. \$.

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REFLECTIONS from page B1

met his end – I realized that I could just visit the Lightlife factory. Why not? This is my town, after all. I could talk to the workers, see what they had to say about their lives and their jobs; about the growth of monocultural crops like soy; about cycles of boom and bust in a capitalist economy; about the ethics of our dietary choices; about the limited ability of individual consumer actions to enact structural change; about the possibility of a vibrant renewal in a post-collapse world.

The work whistle no longer calls the masses of Turners Falls to their factory outposts along the canal each morning. Our manufacturing is now tucked away in “industrial parks.” I had to Google the location of Lightlife. By foot, it would be an hour and 16 minutes from my house. By car, it’s just seven. And so, equipped with my limited gumption for initiating conversations with strangers and a therapeutic microdose of a redacted substance, I went in for some gonzo journalism.

I drove past the industrial weed operations, the daycare, and the banners for amateur theater productions. I parked in one of the spots labeled “Visitor.” I got out and stared at the tan, square building with the red Lightlife logo. Sprawling out behind that building, like a small chain of mountains, were the telltale trappings of *the Means of Production*: nondescript buildings with loading bays, smoke in various colors billowing from various pipes, boxy metal protrusions of unknown significance, antennas, and security cameras. I saw several employees on break, idly scrolling on devices under a gazebo.

I got back in my car and drove home. It’s easy for me to imagine entering the other industrial buildings in our town. The ones where the machinery – all but the occasional built-in scale or rusted hinge – was removed long ago. Where the floors are unstable. Where you would have had to slip under a fence or through an unsanctioned hole in the wall to enter. (Not that I would ever trespass in those death traps.) So why was I so afraid of entering an operational factory?

The ruined mill buildings along the canal were one of the first things I fell in love with in Turners Falls. Meandering in the vicinity of those giants, I felt a strange serenity: the furious churn of production is over. Living out west, I had watched as beloved landscapes were ripped up in real time. A meadow turns into a strip mall seemingly overnight. A vast and biodiverse expanse of desert gets strip-mined for shale oil. Out here, I get to watch the inverse: nature reclaiming its materials. The brick, metal, and stone that humans had erected over a century ago fall back into the river.

This place – and the wistful emotions I feel here – have been a major inspiration for the fiction I write. My short stories often feature a canal, a polluted river, or a post-industrial town. My debut novel is set in a not-so-care-



Lightlife’s parent company, Maple Leaf Foods, announced last month it will close the plant in 2027.

fully disguised proxy for Turners Falls. But I have to be careful. It can be too easy to romanticize post-industrial decay, to infuse it with my own vague notions about the world and to confuse those notions for truth. The ruined mills are only part of the story. As evidenced by Lightlife, Judd Wire, and plenty of other businesses in the area, industry still churns. The longer I live here, the better I understand this place as an ecosystem of overlapping and sometimes conflicting needs: economic, social, environmental. As fun as it might be for someone to explore the future ruins of the Lightlife factory, I’d rather people keep their jobs. As much as I don’t want the town to demolish the Strathmore – and I truly don’t – I have to confront the idea that the ruins may be poisoning the ground and the river.

I have to be especially careful in the fall, when I start listening to Mazzy Star and musing about the inevitability of decay; when one secret cigarette can easily turn into two and I begin staring at the fossils in the rocks, thinking about how nothing much matters when you consider deep time. I must remind myself that a vague fascination with weathered brick is something I share with your average loft-dwelling hipster. Allegiance to nostalgia alone is a dangerous course. There’s more to this town than its past. There’s a screaming present, a precarious future.

It was with all this in mind that I gave myself a challenge: go back to Lightlife and actually talk to people. Once again, I drove past the industrial weed operations, the daycare, and the banners for amateur theater productions. This time I parked closer to the employee gazebo. I got out of the car and immediately approached the two individuals there. One of

them was willing to talk with me. Ignoring the most basic rules of journalism, I didn’t ask her what her name was. I didn’t record anything. But I can paraphrase: she told me she’d worked for Lightlife for over 30 years, starting back when it was a small operation in Greenfield. She said she doesn’t live in Turners Falls. In fact, according to her, most of Lightlife’s employees are from out of town. She said people in Turners don’t like to work. (Guilty as charged.) She said that, after a boom during the pandemic, sales had been declining steadily. The factory had gone down to one shift.

She said that the company hadn’t given them an official end date yet, and that the employees didn’t know if they would receive any kind of severance. When I asked the employee if I could go inside and see how the plant-based sausage was made, so to speak, she said that I’d have to talk to HR, and directed me to the door of the main building. But when I went inside, I was quickly intercepted by a man in a blue uniform. I don’t think his name was HR. He said that if I wanted to come inside I’d have to “go through corporate.” I’ve been known to do many things in service of my writing, but I draw the line at going through corporate. So I left.

Well, what exactly did we learn here? My second outing to the factory didn’t yield much new information about its closure or the fate of the workers inside. Still, pushing myself to return to Lightlife did help me put my finger on a thought I’ve been having recently. It’s come up as I’ve considered recent ballot questions about a new library and a new building for the Franklin County Technical School. It’s a thought that came up when I started noticing new graffiti go-

ing up around town. I’ve always been on the side of the graffiti artists, even the more baffling ones (“old people be dying faster” was a personal fave). But this particular tagger was pushing my limit by hitting up the anadromous fish informational placard with a vague message about “West Asia.” How had someone with a commitment to anti-imperialism that – on the outside at least – seemed similar to mine decided that this was okay? Then came the vandalism on Avenue A.

The thought that kept coming up for me throughout these incidents was this: while we can afford a lot of things in this town, the luxury of lazy divisions is too expensive. And I’m not without guilt here. Too often, I sequester myself in a particular part of town, commit to only a particular subset of its culture. I only frequent one of the two Polish social clubs. What am I afraid of? Perhaps I’m too new to the area to say this – after all, I wasn’t even here for the Mascot Wars – but it seems to me that Turners actually does quite well when people meet face to face, rather than on Facebook forums or through messages scrawled by cover of night. We may not want to work, but we love to hash things out in town meeting – or in line at Food City. We love to gossip with the cashiers at our thrift stores (“The Survival Army,” I call them both). We nod to each other on the canalside trail, celebrate Christmas in July together, and communally grumble about which bridge is randomly closed that day.

When I first moved here, I felt like I’d maybe slipped in at just the right moment, a sweet spot between economic downturn and rampant gentrification. But the truth is, sweet spots are not given. They are made. I fear there are many inevitable challenges coming our way as a town (and as a country, and a world). While we might not be able to stop them, we can shape how we respond to them – whether it’s a hedge fund buying the dam, a factory closing its doors, masked men trying to kidnap our neighbors, urban hipsters chasing post-industrial small-town charm, or climate refugees migrating north.

Seeing how downtown businesses have responded to the aforementioned graffiti incident gives me some hope. Perhaps we can find some similar grace for anyone who loses their job in the coming seasons. Our local “Plant Protein Centre of Excellence” may be relocating to Indianapolis, but we’ve still got our pierogies. We’ve still got a damn fine skate park, an active senior center, two boozy brunch spots, three record stores, a deli, the best Subway franchise this side of the Mississippi, a worker-owned (*but what does that mean?*) grocery store, a town-owned theater, a greasy spoon, a greasy pizza house, a dry little bookstore, and so much more. Most importantly, we’ve still got a whole bunch of people who – in a sometimes stoic and gruff New England sort of way – really do care about each other.



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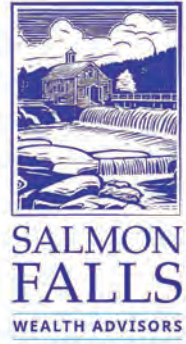
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