

# The Montague Reporter

YEAR 16 – NO. 22

also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

\$1

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

MARCH 22, 2018

## Nothing But Open Water



JAMES PHOTO

The last patches of visible winter ice, melting on Lake Pleasant's placid surface.

By DAVID JAMES

**LAKE PLEASANT** – 40-1-1...? Seems as though those numbers could be the ring record of a world champion middleweight boxer. But they're not. Rather, the numbers are a statistical analysis of the state-of-being of winners of Lake Pleasant's Ice-Off-the-Lake Contest, an annual winter pastime event since 1977.

Forty times the winner has been a human, once a dog... and this year, a departed spirit.

At 5 p.m. on March 17, from the traditional midpoint Raisin Rosen picket on the Bridge of Names, Ice-Off contest chief judge Patrick Otto, Sr., surveyed the visible lake surface with high-powered binoculars and saw nothing but open water.

Consequently, Otto declared the 42nd annual contest concluded and its winner to be Shelby Leonard, late of Roanoke, Virginia, and mother of Debra Goodman James of this community's Montague Avenue.

Lake Pleasant, smallest and youngest of the town of Montague's five villages, sprang from the loins of the Massachusetts Liberalist and Spiritualist Association, organized in 1874 as a warm-weather camp meeting grounds. Twin core beliefs of that organization included: the human mind and soul is eternal, and communication exists between souls in the material world and souls in the formless world of the afterlife.

Though now long a secular community, Lake Pleasant for half

see **ICE OFF** page A3

## True Tales from Real Life: First "Story Slam" a Success

By DINA STANDER

**LEVERETT** – Standing at the podium with her white hair shining in the late afternoon sun, Portia Williams Weiskel opened her story with these words: "I have learned that the anecdotal value of mortifying experiences is that they make great stories."

The entertaining promise of true tales from real life drew a crowd of curious listeners to the community room of the Leverett Library on Sunday, March 18. No one left disappointed.

Organized by library director Ashley Blais, with support from the local cultural council, the event was billed as a story slam, hosted by Steve Adams and Bruce Watson. In his opening remarks, Watson, an author whose broad body of work

showcases uniquely American stories, made the point that story telling events, popularized recently by public radio's Moth program, rather than being some new trend, are the oldest form of human entertainment.

The library's full-to-capacity community room was evidence that storytelling draws a crowd.

The tone of this non-competitive event was more casual than the term "slam" might convey. Tellers, experienced and newcomers alike, were given a time guideline of five to ten minutes, and did not appear to have pressure from the hosts to rush.

The audience sat rapt as each story provided a front row seat on: a sailboat traversing the Panama Canal; an epic bus rescue; a runaway horse; becoming an outlaw (and subsequent border crossings);

see **STORY SLAM** page A6

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

## Town Will Reconsider Civil Service Chief; Public Gets First Look at Negotiations

By JEFF SINGLETON

The Montague selectboard has decided to revisit the question of whether the chief of the town's police department should be covered under state civil service law. The discussion, which took place at the board's March 19 meeting, comes on the heels of the recent negotiations with former police chief Charles "Chip" Dodge. These negotiations ended with a separation agreement that will allow Dodge to remain on administrative leave, with full pay and benefits, for nearly

another year.

The board also released the minutes taken at two of a series of closed-door sessions, which suggested that Dodge's civil service status may have been a point of leverage in the negotiations which led to the agreement.

An employee covered by the civil service system can only be fired "for cause," which generally means a clear and documented violation of department rules. The employee can appeal a local decision to the state Civil Service Commission, and can then appeal a decision by that board

in state court.

According to town administrator Steve Ellis, the Montague chief has been covered by civil service since 1934. An attempt to remove the position from the system in 2002 failed to win the approval of town meeting.

The agenda item under which the discussion took place did not mention the civil service, but rather the "next steps in the Police Chief hiring process." But selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz immediately brought up the question.

see **CHIEF** page A6

## School Police Proposal Moves Forward; Gill Selectboard Criticizes Spending Priority

By MIKE JACKSON

**GILL-MONTAGUE** – "Things have shifted, I think," superintendent Michael Sullivan told a joint meeting of Montague's selectboard and finance committee last week, in a pitch for the town to shoulder part of the cost of a police officer for district schools.

"We have anxious students, anxious parents, more so than in the past.... A couple of weeks ago we had an incident where a student stole a couple handguns, and got himself into very hot water, but the police intervened."

Acting Montague police chief Christopher Bonnett said the annual cost of a new position is estimated at \$66,730 in his department's budget, of which the school district would reimburse Montague \$50,250.

The school committee approved a final budget Tuesday night that included that expenditure. The district's assessment to the town, as well as the larger police department budget, will require approval at town meeting in May.

Sullivan and Bonnett spent time last Wednesday arguing the merits of creating the position, known as a "school resource officer" (SRO), though Bonnett reminded town officials of the 2014 state law requiring police departments to place police in local schools if their budget permits.

"What I see in the power of an SRO is not somebody who's going to be there when things hit the fan," Sullivan said, "but someone who's going to be able to

see **SCHOOL POLICE** page A7

## Montague's Dems Hold Tiny Caucus For Town Election Nominations

By MARK HUDYMA

Montague's Democratic committee held its annual caucus Tuesday night at the town hall, to nominate its candidates for the May 21 town election. In the caucus's only contested vote, selectboard member Chris Boutwell secured the party's nomination to continue his other extracurricular pursuit, the board of health.

There was chatter throughout the meeting, and an informal discussion on strategy for town Democrats occurred during the open voting period. Thirteen voters were present

when the meeting opened, promptly at 7 p.m., and though polls were required to remain open for 30 minutes, no one else arrived.

"There's no one running for selectman," committee chair Mark Wisniewski observed. "Everything else, you can either choose the person that's there, or write in someone."

During the voting period, candidates who appeared on the ballot – Boutwell and Al Cummings, the Democratic committee vice-chair and incumbent soldier memorial trustee – left the room, to prevent

see **CAUCUS** page A5



HUDYMA PHOTO

One of the town's 1937 hand-cranked ballot boxes was used to officially count the 13 ballots cast at the party caucus.

## Amherst-Pelham Will Still Choice to FCTS, But \$25,000 Hole Remains in Budget

By JEFF SINGLETON

**AMHERST** – At its March 12 meeting, the Amherst-Pelham school committee voted down a proposed agreement with Smith Vocational Technical School that would have made that school the only destination for students from the Amherst-Pelham district's member towns wishing to attend a vocational-technical school. The agreement would have eliminated the ability of students to attend Franklin County Technical School, beginning with those applying this year.

The proposal would have saved Amherst-Pelham \$25,000 in next year's budget, savings the district says it needs to close a \$1.1 million gap with a budget recommended by towns in the district.

A long line of Franklin Tech School students and parents of students, primarily from the towns of Leverett

and Shutesbury, trooped to the microphone during "public participation time" to oppose the proposed policy.

Numerous alumni said they owed their current career success to the school. One speaker from Leverett said he had a bad experience at Amherst Middle School, and said his time at the Turners Falls tech school had gotten him a job at MJ Moran: "still there now, 14 years later."

An Amherst woman who identified herself as Bonnie said she had attended Franklin Tech, where her father had once worked. Her son is currently a junior there, and she said he is "finally doing great." She was hoping that her two six-year-old twins would eventually be able to attend the school.

A Franklin Tech graduate from Shutesbury said that her husband also graduated from the school, which "did more than anything else when my father passed away.

see **AMHERST DISTRICT** page A4



STANDER PHOTO

Author Steve Adams co-hosted the storytelling event at the Leverett Library.



# The Montague Reporter

"The Voice of the Villages"

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## Managing Crumbs

If you think about it, it's a strange system we live under, that requires each one of our towns to grow its tax base at a regular pace to keep up with the rising costs of public education, public infrastructure, and public safety.

Next Thursday, Montague town meeting members will decide whether the town should appropriate \$11.15 million to build a new highway garage near the public safety complex.

Town officials' case in support of this massive expenditure – nearly half the town's annual budget – have focused on the long-term fiscal benefits, including cost avoidance, of the investment. They acknowledge the garage is likely to postpone the town's ability to borrow for other capital projects.

Funding the garage would also require a debt override vote this spring. A large anticipated hike in sewer fees has been deferred until the following year. And that's to say nothing of the potential demolition and cleanup of the Strathmore.

Next door in Leverett, one of the county's more affluent towns, departments struggle to maintain level services, as tax revenues have stagnated for years.

It's no wonder that both towns seem ready to accommodate the legal cannabis industry.

According to a recent *Boston*

*Globe* head count, 59 of the state's 351 municipalities have banned weed sales, and another 130, including Shelburne, Bernardston, Greenfield and Northfield, have enacted temporary moratoriums.

But given the high tax rate (17% at the state level and often more in each town) and the nature of the industry, it seems likely that much of the market will be cornered by highly capitalized, large-scale, vertically integrated first-comers.

Returns will probably diminish after the gold rush. There are limits to how much a population can spend on the plant, however much production is scaled up; factor in legalization in adjacent states and competition from continued black-market sales, and it seems reasonable to expect a long-range decline in prices and perhaps tax revenue.

The only silver bullet for rural town economies seems to be concentrated production for export – as in Erving, which benefits from the pumped-storage power plant Northfield Mountain. Otherwise it's down to residential real estate, and not every town can become a popular bedroom community or retirement destination to attract income earned elsewhere.

No wonder no one wants to get involved in local government. We've created a perpetual motion machine for economic anxiety.

## Letters to the Editors Likes New Column

I am enjoying your new columnist Ms. Vachula-Curtis. Her enthusiasm for books is refreshing, and I am impressed with her author interviews!

Thank you for sharing her reviews with us.

Emily Monosson  
Montague Center

## High School Walk-out

Thank you for the coverage of the walk-out at the middle school and the high school. The young people quoted in the article were compelling and clear-spoken.

I am proud of the faculty for supporting the students' interest; learning when, where and how to make one's voice heard in a democracy is so important, and I'm glad our school is helping the students practice.

Civic engagement starts early, and whatever you feel about the students' ideas, it is unequivocally good that they are learning to speak clearly, and respect those who disagree with them.

What a great 17-minute civics lesson. Congratulations to all. We hear you.

Elizabeth Irving  
Montague Center

## THREE CORRECTIONS

Last week's edition (March 15) was pockmarked with errors.

In our lead news story, *Hallmark Buildings Under Consideration By Housing Authority, Cannabis Farmers*, we misidentified the former Hallmark Imaging building at 253 Millers Falls Road in Turners Falls as being "formerly occupied by the Hallmark Institute of Photography."

The Imaging company was inde-

pendent of the school (though Hallmark owner George Rosa was one of its directors).

Our interview with Sally Pick, *Energy-Saving Endeavors*, identified her as being the Montague energy committee's chair. That seat is held by Chris Mason. It had said "chair" next to Sally's name on the town website, but that is being taken care of, too.

Sally also wrote to clarify that carbon fee rebates proposed by the state legislature would go not just to residents, but to businesses.

And finally, in the biography following Jay DiPucchio's guest editorial *Montague DPW Facility: The Planning Process*, we misidentified Jay as a town meeting member for Precinct 5. He is a resident of that precinct, but is not on town meeting.



## GUEST EDITORIAL

## Golrick: Garage Shouldn't Cost \$11 Million; Process Untransparent

By PETER GOLRICK

The Town of Montague Special Town Meeting is being asked to endorse a question to the voters to spend \$11,146,762 for a new DPW facility. Based on the available minutes from the Facility Planning Committee, this was not as open and transparent as has been recently promoted.

There is no record of complying with the Open Meeting Law requirement to record all votes taken, especially the annual requirement to elect a Chair and other officers. There are no Agendas posted on the web, and minutes from only 12 meetings are posted. The Planning Committee knew, according to their own minutes, that \$5 to \$5.5 million was what they should expect to get approval for from Town Meeting, yet there is no indication that they tried to meet that budget number.

Using three separate methods of calculation, I came up with a figure of about \$4 million to complete the facility. First, using the construction avoidance approach, they could have gone after an existing building that would meet the needs. Just such a building was available – the Hallmark Auditorium in the industrial park, assessed at \$1.8 million.

After asking the question three times and getting a different answer each time, the minutes of another

meeting reflect that the main reason they did not investigate this was because it would take a building off the tax rolls. If we add the value of 30 years of lost taxes at the current assessment, we get roughly \$2.1 million. Combining the assessed price of the building with the lost taxes puts us at \$3.9 million. Yes, some renovation might be needed, but not \$7.2 million worth.

Using a cost comparison method, I looked at the new MassDOT facility in Erving. I agree that it is only similar and not exactly what we need, but it is reasonably close. Even if we double the cost of that project, we are looking at \$3.4 million; adding some modifications, we are still not looking at \$7.8 million worth of adjustments.

Lastly, looking at commercially available steel structure buildings – not unlike the hangars at the airport, or the Erving MassDOT structures – the cost to make a 200' by 600' building is around \$250,000 with a heated pad. The cost of four of those is \$1 million, and would provide more square footage and flexibility than the Committee's current proposal. Even adding all the necessary plumbing, heating, ventilation, locker room, administrative spaces, new workbenches, furniture, and fixtures, the project cost would be well under \$3 million.

The plan calls for storing the ve-

hicles inside, but – to use their own words – "the real benefits are more nebulous." Did they consider using block heaters for the trucks for the less than 30 days a year they are needed? It looks like they got all their data from a single source, and without regard for budget.

Some of the more curious quotes from their minutes include:

- "We need to get the ugly facts out to the public to get them over sticker shock ASAP!"
- "This needs to move forward with a certain speed if we are going to get it done."
- "We need to dispel the usual negative views and questions."
- "CIC didn't think we had explored enough options; W&S sort of steered us to what we have."

It seems to me that we have been given a sales pitch that should end with "but wait, if you act now..." Spending \$11.1 million is not something this town can afford. It will place library additions and upgrades, as well as those for a Senior Center, in jeopardy for lack of funding capacity.

There are ways to get what we, the people, need at a fraction of the cost of what they, the Committee, want.

Mr. Golrick is a Precinct 2 town meeting member. He lives in Millers Falls.

### Published weekly on Thursdays.

Every other week in July and August.  
No paper last week of November,  
or the Thursday closest to 12/25.

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# LOCAL BRIEFS

JESSICA LARKIN ILLUSTRATION

Compiled by **DON CLEGG**

Our Lady of Czestochowa Church, 84 K Street in Turners Falls is holding an **Easter Bazaar and Spring Gaik** on Saturday, March 24, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The event will include crafts, items from Poland, Polish food, tag sales, and raffles, along with gifts for baptism, First Communion, and confirmation.

**Join the Sheffield 3rd grade** at the Garden Theater, at 362 Main Street in Greenfield, this Saturday morning at 9:30 a.m. to watch *Sherlock Gnomes* and support the class' spring field trip to Old Sturbridge Village.

Tickets are just \$5 for all seats, and 100% of the profit goes towards the trip. Doors open at 9 a.m., and

tickets may be purchased at the door the morning of the show.

The **Farley Stringed Band** will be performing at the Greenfield Savings Bank in Turners Falls this Saturday, March 24, from 10 a.m. to noon. The band previously performed in the bank's community room as the Farley Five, but has grown. The music will be pleasing to your ears. Refreshments provided courtesy of the bank.

Step out of the cold and into some great music as Franklin County's Coop Concerts presents "**All Cooped Up**," its annual winter concert, on Saturday, March 24, from 7 to 10 p.m., at The Great Falls Discovery Center, 2 Avenue A, in Turners Falls.

Artists performing will include

Katie Clarke & Larry LaBlanc, Sheryl Stanton & Bobby D., the Desmond Burke Trio, Pat & Tex LaMountain with Dennis Avery, Austin & Elliott, Russ Thomas, Joe Graveline & Nina Gross, Orlen, Gabriel & Avery, the Frost Heaves and Hales, Jim Eagan with Dennis Avery, Michael Nix & Chris Devine, Sue Kranz, and Roland LaPierre.

The show offers a wide variety of styles: folk, country, blues, bluegrass, singer-songwriter, comedy, pop and Americana. This evening is always festive and upbeat, the room is comfortable, and the refreshments are always plentiful. Suggested donation is \$5 to \$15, sliding scale.

This performance is co-sponsored by the Friends of the Great Falls Discovery Center and the Franklin County Musicians Cooperative, presenters of Coop Concerts, a series of free community concerts which take place Thursday evenings in the spring and summer at Greenfield's Energy Park.

Children ages 4 to 12 are invited to take part in the **13th Annual Peter Cottontail's EGGstravaganza** on Saturday, March 31. The siren goes off at 1 p.m. sharp at Unity Park in Turners Falls.

Children will have an opportunity to get their pictures taken with Peter Cottontail, enter into a bunch of raffles, and enjoy an Egg Hunt where they will have the challenge of finding approximately 5,000 candy- and toy-filled eggs strewn throughout the park. Participants must bring their own basket or bag for the eggs.

Montague Parks and Recreation co-sponsors are the Montague Elks, Letourneau Plumbing, and Greenfield Savings Bank. (The snow date for the event will be April 14.)

The Our Lady of Peace Women's Group is looking for **crafty people who may have excess craft supplies** to de-stash. They will be holding the 4th Annual Stash Bash at the church on April 14.

If you would like to reserve one of the few remaining tables, or be added to the waiting list to sell your own stash, please call Chris at 367-3052. Tables are \$15 to rent, and you keep the proceeds of your sales. If you have craft supplies to donate, please call Bev at 863-7783.

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**TURNERS FALLS FIRE DISTRICT NEWS**

## Notice of Streetlight Removal on Avenue A

Approximately 20 utility-pole mounted streetlights on Avenue A from Second street to the Greenfield Saving Bank will be turned off, according to the Turners Falls Fire District.

The District is the entity within the Town of Montague that manages streetlights in Turners Falls. The purpose is to remove redundant and excessive overhead lighting resulting from the recently in-

stalled Avenue A LED Streetscape Lighting project.

The lights will be turned off on a trial basis through June 1, at which point the light fixtures will be considered for permanent removal.

Questions, comments, or concerns can be directed to Accountant Eileen Tela at the Fire District Office, (413) 863-4542, or Walter Ramsey, town planner, at (413) 863-3200 ext. 207.

**ICE OFF** from page A1

a century following its birth was the largest gathering place for Spiritualists in the United States and – by virtue of the presence of the National Spiritual Alliance – it remains the oldest continuously existing same-site Spiritualist center in the country.

The 2018 Ice-Off-The-Lake Contest date range was February 22 through April 19. Those dates represent the earliest (2012) and latest (1978) that ice has been judged gone since the event began. Participants paid a dollar to play, and took their chances with blind-luck draw of a departure date when judicial

declaration would be made that not a visible ice cube remained afloat.

As with so much of life, however, what you see depends upon where you stand.

Because there is no site on the Bridge of Names which commands a view of the entire lake surface, a winner may be declared even though ice still exists around the bend to the northwest near the Turners Falls Water Department pumping station, or out of sight to the southeast in the cove below the railroad embankment and tracks.

As has not infrequently occurred in the past, such was the case this year as well.



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**GUEST EDITORIAL**

## Morin: Garage Plan "Judicious and Appropriate"

By **KEN MORIN**

In advance of Montague's special town meeting to be held Thursday, March 29, as a member of the Public Works Facility Planning Committee, I would like to address recent questions.

At the November 8, 2017 meeting, the six-member committee unanimously voted to recommend the DPW facility project proposal. For over two years, the committee had met regularly, including with several town boards, thoughtfully engaging in its charge to study an appropriate public works facility and be thorough in its analysis of what best met the needs of the DPW to serve town residents.

There was information gathering and review, lots of healthy discussion, and disagreement at times. Since that time, three public information sessions have been held, and the committee has attempted to be transparent in sharing its analysis and presenting its findings and conclusions.

There may be misunderstanding about the type of building construction with discussion around a "Butler building." For clarification, Butler pre-engineered buildings are a recognized brand in the pre-engineered

metal building industry. The Committee recommended this style of building, but not any specific brand or contractor. With this type of building the structural frame is metal, is set on a concrete foundation, and is designed to handle snow and wind loads for our region. While the roof and walls are typically metal, there are different brick or block facades.

Various designs were presented to the committee with different layouts and variations of finishes. We reviewed them and chose a design with everything under one roof. We decided upon a metal building that fits our needs for office space, employee areas, ADA-compliant women and men locker/rest rooms, mechanics' bays, equipment washing room, a combined shop area for several departments, and adequate storage space.

This design was less expensive than what we had previously reviewed and better met the operational needs. According to the highway superintendent, the planned space will be fully optimized based upon current storage and work space needs.

While this has been a feasibility effort, many committee members know from both personal and professional experience, and appreci-

ate, the value in appropriately – and honestly – assessing needs and doing research in the early stages of any build project. Otherwise, you can end up adding significant expense later on in the project.

The heated space area, including that for equipment storage, as well as the type of heat has been questioned. Radiant floor heat has been discussed, but the actual type of heat and recommended temperature would be decided upon during the final design through a cost-benefit analysis with safety considerations.

I began my career as a heavy equipment operator. While equipment can be parked outside and plugged in to ensure vehicles start, those covered in snow and ice present a safety issue. The public works crews can be called out all hours of the night. Having to climb on large trucks to clear them of ice and snow is risky and time-consuming. Inside storage has been proven to extend the life of equipment with less maintenance, provides for shorter emergency response time, and enables faster, more efficient, daily startups.

The Town of Montague is experiencing some positive growth right now. Two large solar projects are near completion, three different companies in the industrial park

are expanding their physical presence, and a regional bus garage is proposed at the Sandy Lane site. Downtown Turners Falls has increasingly become a destination town, with several great events and eating places, and talk of another proposed restaurant.

Judicious and appropriate investment in necessary town services is vital to sustainably supporting this growth. Considering the condition of the current DPW facility, and its important role in providing for the staff and services that safely maintain our roads and overall infrastructure, I'd ask you to favorably consider this investment in our residents, businesses, and continued growth.

The Town of Montague is headed in a positive direction, thanks to the good work of our town planner, administrator, and the many residents who sit on town boards and committees. With an updated safety complex nearby, this committee believes the location and facility we have chosen is the right thing, and that now is the right time.

*Ken Morin is a member of the Public Works Facility Planning Committee, and is a water commissioner for the Turners Falls Fire District. He is a Precinct 4 resident.*

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## GUEST EDITORIAL

# Youth, Gun Control... and the Pentagon

By H. PATRICIA HYNES

To my astonishment, I began receiving daily news updates from the Pentagon, innocuously named the *Early Bird Brief*, about a month ago now. Here is one particularly perverse news brief.

The number of out-of shape and unfit youth is an imminent national security crisis, not because young people matter for themselves, but because they are “too fat to fight,” as one commentator put it. According to a report done for the Pentagon, 7 of 10, or more than 24 million Americans between the ages of 17 and 24, are not qualified or eligible to join the military because of inadequate education, overweight, poor health, and criminal records.

Let's dig more deeply into this, in the light of evidence that our government cares more about fitness for war, and the unhindered flow of guns here and abroad, than for the health and well being of our children.

**Education:** The US high school graduation rate, which ranged from 66% to 94% by state and District of Columbia in 2015, ranks near the bottom when compared with other industrial countries.

A recent international study found that Americans with a high school diploma had math skills equivalent to those of high school dropouts in other comparable countries. Our students fell significantly below international students in literacy skills and scored last in technology skills.

**Physical activity:** Nationally, almost 1 in 3 youth between ages 10 and 17 are overweight or obese. Re-

cent national surveys find that high school students are spending more recreational time on computers, watching less television and getting little physical exercise.

**Nutrition:** Unhealthy foods are heavily marketed to children, according to national reports on child obesity. One in 5 US children (more than 15 million) live in poverty and “food-insecure” households, having limited access to adequate food and nutrition due to cost and local availability.

Most low-income children live in low-income neighborhoods; and they are much more likely to be overweight or obese given limited access to sidewalks, safe parks, recreation centers and quality food stores.

**Health:** One in 8 U.S. children and teens had a diagnosis of attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in 2011, an increase of 43 percent since 2003. This condition can cause learning setbacks and behavioral difficulties and result in excessive medication of children.

The percentage of U.S. children with asthma doubled in the 1980s and 1990s and has been increasing steadily since then, though not so dramatically. The reason for the increase is little understood; but possible factors include exposure to secondhand smoke, obesity, poor housing (mold, mildew, infestation), air pollution and children's immune systems failing to develop properly.

Asthma is the primary reason that children miss school – and thus, a real setback in learning. The Pentagon's concern: asthmatic youth are “too sick to serve.”

**Crime:** The Mapping Police Vio-

lence has correlated the impact of police in schools with the criminalization of youth. Over the past two decades, 10,000 police have been stationed in schools. In that same period, there has been no impact on violence in schools.

Yet, one million students have been arrested, with black students much more likely to be arrested than white students, for behavior that prior to police presence warranted detention or suspension.

So what's the remedy, according to the Pentagon, for their shortage of recruits? Improve education, nutrition, and physical exercise; reduce youth crime and drug use. But doesn't it border on insanity to have the military, among all the federal agencies, recognize this youth crisis when their mission is to arm young people and send them to war where many will come back with brain injuries and traumatized with PTSD?

Further, where will the funding for improved education, nutrition, physical exercise and crime reduction come from, given our federal budget loots education, health, environment and housing while expanding military spending?

The recent 2018 Congressional budget deal allots 54% of the discretionary budget to the military and 5% each to education, housing and health. Trump's 2019 budget request lards the defense budget even more while reducing education by 14%, health by 26%, housing and community programs by 35%, and energy and environment by 36% when compared to the 2017 budget.

Some might call this psychotic, or more politely, cognitive dissonance.

Meanwhile, Michelle Obama's “Let's Move” campaign to address childhood obesity and lack of exercise has not been sustained by the Trump administration. As of December 2017, no new directors had been appointed to the President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition.

Further, Trump's 2019 budget, which is a massive entitlement program for the Pentagon, proposes eliminating 14 environmental programs, among them ones that worsen air pollution and the indoor environment of low-income homes – triggers for asthma and poor lung function.

The youth of Marjory Stoneham Douglas High School who confronted U.S. Senator Marco Rubio on lack of federal gun control; the Maryland and Virginia high school youth who held a demonstration and die-in for gun control in front of the White House and U.S. Capitol; and the students across the country organizing March for Our Lives on March 24 – are the wise ones.

Soon, as they have said, they will vote; and then they will run for office. And they, hopefully, will finally extract the rotten roots of this country awash in war and weapons peddling abroad; and military-style weapons, gun violence and school-to-prison pipelines at home.

Support them, join them on March 24 in your local community.

*Patricia Hynes, a retired professor of environmental health, directs the Traprock Center for Peace and Justice in western Massachusetts: traprock.org. She lives in Montague.*

## AMHERST DISTRICT from A1

They were there for me in a way I don't think anyone else could have been.” She said she has an 18-month-old daughter and “we've always dreamed of her going to Franklin County Tech.”

Rick Martin, superintendent of the Franklin County Technical School, noted the number of students who come from Leverett and Shutesbury would have to commute a longer distance to Smith, which is in Northampton.

“So we are significantly concerned about the impact this will have on the communities we have been serving for the past 40 years,” Martin said. He said that to tell new applicants who already have family members at the school that Franklin Tech is no longer an option would be “very disingenuous to those families.”

The speakers frequently complained about what they described as a lack of information and communication from Amherst over the decision. One said she “had no idea this was an issue until a couple of hours ago.” Another said she was attending the meeting on “short notice.”

Martin said that he and the Franklin Tech business manager had received “no contact” from Amherst-Pelham officials about the issue, “except when I reached out last week to the Amherst superintendent.” He called this “an appearance of non-transparency.”

The public comment section of the meeting was extended by school committee chair Eric Nakajima by 25 minutes. Nakajima also moved the discussion and vote on the tech school issue up to the next item on the agenda.

## Deal Abandoned

Amherst-Pelham superintendent Dr. Michael Morris led off the discussion by saying that the decision to consider an agreement with Smith was not based on dissatisfaction with Franklin Tech, but was driven by the need to address a budget deficit. “I've been asked to cut \$1.1 million from the regional

school budget,” he said.

Morris also stated that an email had been sent to the Franklin Tech superintendent and business manager on February 5 informing them of the potential agreement with Smith, and noting that there would be a budget hearing on February 13. “As you have always been a great partner,” Morris quoted the email, “we wanted to make sure that you had adequate time to provide input on this proposal.”

Nakajima said there was “no point in assigning blame” over communication with the Franklin Tech, but “I've repeatedly said that I thought it was absolutely astonishing there was no hue and cry about eliminating an agreement about students attending Franklin Tech, and was astonished there weren't people in Shutesbury and Leverett that would be upset.”

Nakajima said he had been “bothered by this from the very beginning,” by the potential agreement with Smith because it changed a long-term relationship between Amherst-Pelham and Franklin Tech. He said it would affect “multi-generational families” that had attended Franklin Tech, while producing relatively little savings. “\$25 thousand on a \$30 million budget sounds almost like a rounding error,” he said.

“We've crossed our T's and dotted our I's,” said Peter Demling of Amherst, “but I'm hearing a lot of honest feedback from the community that they weren't aware of it.”

A motion was made to table the agreement until a future date. There followed a lengthy discussion about how a delay would impact the vote on the total budget and town assessments, which were to be finalized later in the meeting.

Nakajima pointed out that a vote to reject the agreement with Smith would require either cutting an additional \$25,000 elsewhere, or raising assessments above those recommended by the member towns.

Superintendent Morris noted that because

of the time line for local town meetings, an assessment increase voted at a future date “would have to happen on town meeting floors... It's a logistical issue,” he said. Morris also noted that Amherst town meeting would be in May, “and that's a long time to leave students in the lurch” about plans for the following year. (The agreement with Smith would not have applied to students currently at Franklin Tech, but would affect those potentially applying for next year.)

When asked by one committee member what he would do, Nakajima stated that “personally,” he would vote down the agreement with Smith, adding \$25,000 to the budget and assessments.

Demling said he agreed, and urged the Franklin Tech supporters to “please pack those town meetings” to support higher assessments.

After similar comments from those around the table, the committee voted unanimously to reject tabling the motion, and then voted unanimously to reject the proposed agreement with Smith Vocational Tech.

## Funding Unresolved

After this decision, the large crowd of Franklin Tech supporters filed out of the room. Nakajima told those departing that “if you care about the budget, share that with your member towns.” This assumed that the committee was going to raise the budget and assessments later in the meeting.

But before that vote, the committee had a lengthy discussion of the method for assessing the member towns, a very contentious issue over the past five years. The committee unanimously endorsed a phase-in of the “statutory method” recommended by the state. This method relies heavily on a state-calculated local or “minimum” contribution with assessment amounts above that allocated by enrollment. However, Nakajima stressed that the committee was only endorsing the first

year, or 20%, of this phase-in, because the member towns remain divided on the issue.

This discussion, in turn, caused committee members to reconsider adding \$25,000 to the assessments recommended by the towns in their “guidance budget.”

“I think things are very tenuous, and they've been tenuous for a long time,” said Morris. “Will this [potential increase] pit elected officials against the school committee or towns against each other?”

Amherst finance director Sean Mangano said he thought that the regional school district had generally avoided conflicts with town finance committees by staying within the budgets and assessments the towns recommended.

“In Leverett, it would be very challenging to go back and say ‘we had this agreement and now we are changing it,’ even for a small amount of money,” said Leverett representative Audra Goscenski. “I sat through a finance committee meeting where they went through what they were going to do with the \$36,000, and some other money that was over what they had last year, and education was the very last priority that the town had to spend that money. And I mean the last. Only one person recommended that they put any extra money towards education.”

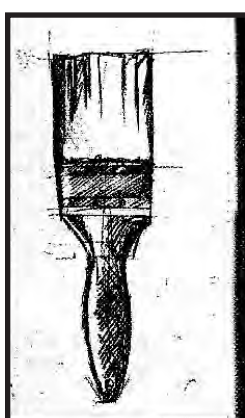
Goscenski said \$25,000 “doesn't seem like a lot” given the size of the total budget, and suggested that the money could come from the district's contingency fund.

Morris said the district had already used up two-thirds of its contingency fund, but that it was possible to take the money from this source. Later he said he would be “comfortable” going to member towns and telling them the district might need more money in the fall to cover a contingency.

In the end, the committee voted for the original “guidance” budget proposed by the member towns, with the source of the \$25,000 reduction to be determined.



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## NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

# Plague Truck Haunts Town Yet

By **GEORGE BRACE**

At its Monday meeting, Gill's selectboard heard again from highway department staff about a controversial used 2009 Sterling dump truck purchased for the department in 2015 that has been plagued by problems with exhaust fumes entering the driver's compartment.

Highway superintendent Mickey LaClaire had department employee John Miner, who has been most affected by the problem, begin the discussion with a presentation on the history of the issue. He said the fumes have made him sick ten times since he began driving the truck. After his most recent illness earlier this year, he decided he would no longer drive it.

Miner reported that on March 14, LaClaire drove the truck and became so sick that after two hours he was forced to pull over and vomit. Among other documents, Miner presented a letter from the end of last winter in which all three members of the highway department stated their refusal to drive the truck at that time.

Miner outlined the history of repair attempts by three different vendors, and said he had "great expectations" at the beginning of this winter that the truck had been repaired, but a month into it, they were still getting sick.

Miner said at the suggestion of Porter's Diesel of Winchester, one of the vendors who has worked on the truck, a carbon monoxide detector with an alarm was installed in the cab, and that the last time he drove it and got sick, he pulled the detector out and saw that it had peaked at 97 parts per million (ppm) without the alarm going off.

He reported that the Environmental Protection Agency limit for carbon monoxide in a truck cab is 35 ppm. He said in researching the detector, he found that due to its configuration and the way the truck is used, the alarm does not sound off when dangerous levels of carbon monoxide are present.

In response to the presentation, all three board members supported the workers' decision not to drive the truck. In regards to the history of repair efforts and frustrations with their failure, John Ward observed that they had been sending it to the best people they could find for repairs and telling them to "Do what it needs."

Miner agreed the vendors used have been the best, but reiterated that the problem has not been fixed.

Selectboard chair Randy Crochier said he might have felt differently in the past, but based on what he'd been able to learn about the truck recently, and what he'd seen and heard from the highway department, he agreed with Miner. "It needs to go," he said.

The discussion turned to the issue of buying used versus new vehicles, with board member Greg Snedeker laying out some of the challenges to a small town in buying large, expensive pieces of equipment. As an example of the difficulty and work involved, he noted the fire truck committee spent two years coming up with a replacement strategy for the fleet of fire trucks.

"None of us want you to be sick," Snedeker told the workers.

"We now have to come together as a group, as a town, and figure out what we're going to do about it."

The board acknowledged that the purchase had been a bad one, but did not feel used vehicles should be excluded from consideration in the future based on one truck. They also agreed that improvements to the town's vehicle procurement strategies are necessary.

On a different but related topic, LaClaire inquired about the status of the machinery committee, noting he had requests pending. John Ward, the selectboard's representative on that committee, replied that the last he'd heard, the chair of the committee, Dan Trenholm, was trying to set up a meeting with member Fred Chase II, but that he did not know the status of that meeting.

Snedeker said Trenholm had spoken to him about LaClaire's requests and had begun looking into them, though he did not know the status of the meeting either.

## Fire Department

Fire chief Gene Beaubien appeared before the board to inquire about next steps in the acquisition of new fire vehicles with funds recently gifted to the town by the Northfield Mount Hermon School, and to inform the board of an offer of ambulance services by Northfield EMS. Many members of the fire department were also in attendance.

During the discussion of the fire truck acquisition, a member of the department referenced the earlier discussion on the dump truck and said he "felt for" the highway guys, with others voicing their agreement. The discussion of next steps also referenced the need for improved vehicle search strategies mentioned earlier.

Beaubien reported that he has been approached by Northfield EMS with the idea of their becoming Gill's full-time ambulance service. Beaubien said with the board's approval, he thought the idea was worth looking into. He said Northfield EMS had also approached Bernardston, which is currently looking into it, and helpful information would probably be generated by that process.

The board agreed it was worth learning more, and told Beaubien to go ahead and come back to the board if he thought it should be pursued further.

## Elementary School Well

Town administrative assistant Ray Purington notified the board of some forward progress on the Gill Elementary School well water treatment project.

He said the well engineer has provided a revised schematic to the equipment supplier to make sure the supplier is confident the changes will do what they need to. The state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has requested changes in the original plan to deal with iron and manganese levels in water samples that it believes to be higher than the equipment specified in the original plan would have been able to handle.

Snedeker asked if there was a timeframe for completion of the project, which has taken longer than expected due to the changes requested by the DEP. Purington re-

plied that he will know more when he hears back from the equipment supplier.

Snedeker responded that he had heard from parents who were frustrated with how long the project was taking, and it was good to hear there was progress. He noted everyone would like to see things happen faster, and the board was doing what they could, but the involvement of the DEP, equipment suppliers, and others is out of their control.

## Other Business

Purington informed the board that the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) sent notice that it's time to put in requests for traffic counts, which measure types and speeds of vehicles at specified locations. Several locations were suggested, including the southern end of Mountain Road and near the new convenience store on Route 2. Purington told the board to let him know if they think of other locations.

There was also an offer from FRCOG of grant-funded, technical assistance available to Gill as a participant in the state's Green Communities program. The assistance is for grant applications, procurement for grant approved projects, and help with Green Communities annual reporting, up to a total of \$5,000. The board accepted the offer.

Purington presented several examples of wording for a potential article to go before town meeting on electricity aggregation. He also presented several articles concerning Public, Educational and Government (PEG) television access funds for the board's consideration.

A discussion was held on hiring an assistant for Purington. The discussion focused on the number of hours that the position should entail, and how best to attract the right person and efficiently make use of their time.

The board denied a sewer abatement request from one resident, due to the request being made past the deadline, which is within 30 days of the bill date.

The board approved a renewal of Turners Falls Schuetzen Verein's seasonal liquor license.

It also reviewed a notification from the State Lottery Commission of a new "Keno To Go" game to be available to some existing lottery agents. "The Mill" convenience store was the only eligible agent in Gill. No action was required, but the board has 21 days to object if they choose to.

The board accepted with regret the resignation of cemetery commission member Carrie Stevens, who has served on the commission since 1994. Purington read her resignation letter aloud. Stevens said she enjoyed her years of service, and thanked those she has worked with. The board thanked her for her service.

The board reviewed a notification of an application made to the DEP for a pier/dock license at 26 Oak Street by Bryan Hobbs. No action was necessary.

An informational gathering on "Re-envisioning Sustainable Rural Schools" will be held from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. this Saturday, March 24 at Greenfield Community College.

## MONTAGUE PLANNING BOARD NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Tuesday, March 27, 2018  
Town Hall - Upstairs Meeting Room  
7:00 PM

The Montague Planning Board will hold a public hearing at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, March 27, 2018 in the second floor meeting room of Town Hall, One Avenue A, Turners Falls on an application by 253 Organic, LLC for a special permit and site plan approval under Montague Zoning Bylaws Section 5.2.6(c) and 8.2(g) to permit a **marijuana cultivation and production establishment with retail** as an accessory use in the Industrial Zoning District.

The property is located at **253 Millers Falls Road** and is identified as Assessors Map 17 Lot 31. All interested persons will be given the opportunity to be heard and to ask questions directly to the project proponents. This hearing is also intended to meet the requirements for a community outreach hearing per the draft regulations of the Cannabis Control Commission. Application and plans describing the project may be examined in the Planning and Conservation Office, One Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA during regular business hours, Mondays to Thursdays.

**Ron Sicard, Chairman**

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## CAUCUS from page A1

them from influencing other voters.

The caucus was quiet for five or so minutes while the remaining attendees filled out their ballots. A malfunction in the voting box prevented the 13 ballots from being automatically counted as they came in.

"Democracy in action," quipped fin com member Jen Audley.

"The paper might be too thin," suggested town clerk Deb Bourbeau.

Bourbeau facilitated the vote, and entertained the crowd waiting for the polls to close with stories of salvaging old voting boxes across Massachusetts for spare parts. Bourbeau had learned that the city of Beverly was disposing of their ballot boxes, apparently with very similar parts. Montague dispatched a DPW truck and picked them all up. "The tall gray ones," she explained, can be used for parts to repair Montague's 1937 originals.

"We'll never have voting machines in Montague," she said defiantly. "Maybe tabulators, if they make us, but never voting machines."

A brief meeting determined a date for the committee's next meeting, which will include a presentation campaigning to change the size of the town selectboard from three to five. Voter registration, door-knocking in New Hampshire for mid-terms, and state legislative races were all considered as possible avenues for activity.

Finally, limited engagement with local politics was acknowledged. "I'm looking at this sheet, and it's pretty blank," Francia Wisnewski, a candidate for state representative, said of the caucus ballot.

No registered Democrats have stepped forward to run this year against incumbent selectboard

member Rich Kuklewicz. "Rich isn't a Democrat, that's what I found out, said Mark Wisnewski. "I put his name on there, and [former committee chair] Jay [Dipucchio] said, 'he's unenrolled.'" (Unenrolled Montague residents are allowed to vote in the caucus, but cannot appear on its ballot.)

"There are a number here that won't have enough people. Library trustees only has one person," warned Wisnewski. "There's three seats."

"I wish there was a way to show people, without making their eyes glaze over, what it's like to join," Audley added. "I was wondering why the other 30-somethings I know aren't flocking to town government. It's like a giant board game."

"The cemetery commission is three members, and it's been one for years," said cemetery commissioner Judith Lorei. "Montague Dems pool party for the next meeting?" she asked, to general applause.

At 7:32 p.m., Boutwell and Cummings reentered the room, and the Wisnewskis counted the votes. Of the 13 ballots submitted, Boutwell won 9-3 against challenger Melanie Zamojski, who was not present at the caucus.

"Mike Nelson has never been to a caucus," said Garry Earles of the selectboard. "It's insulting, in a way."

"I kind of feel that's probably true," Mark Wisnewski replied.

Winners of Tuesday's caucus will appear on the townwide ballot with a "D" next to their names, but there is still opportunity for candidates to throw in their hats. Nomination papers are available at the town clerk's office until Thursday, March 29, and must be returned with 30 signatures by Monday, April 2.



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**CHIEF** from page A1

"I definitely recognize that civil service made our discussions go a certain way during our most recent issue in the police department, that may potentially have gone a different way, had we not had civil service," selectboard member Michael Nelson responded. "There may have been a different form of conversation. I would definitely recommend... that we seriously consider the need for civil service."

Member Chris Boutwell said he agreed with Nelson "wholeheartedly."

Kuklewicz said that the board might want to talk to the town's attorney, Tim Zessin of Kopelman and Paige, to better understand the arguments on "both sides" of the question. He also stated that he would like to know the policies of "other towns in the area" on the question.

"Does it enlarge, or reduce, the candidate pool?" he asked.

Steve Ellis said it would make sense to "bring in other experts" on the issue. "I can begin with some of our law enforcement colleagues," he said. Noting that Greenfield has a civil service chief, Ellis said that he thought "it's becoming less and less common throughout the Commonwealth."

Kuklewicz noted that if the issue were to go before the May annual town meeting, a recommendation by the board would need to be finalized by the second meeting in April. However, in response to a question, he also said that the issue could be placed on the town meeting warrant prior to the selectboard making any final recommendation or endorsement.

Near the end of the meeting, the board approved the public release of official minutes taken during two executive-session meetings, on February 5 and 12, during which the "separation agreement" between Dodge and the town was finalized, following an independent investigation harshly critical of the chief.

Although the minutes are not verbatim transcripts, they provide context for the board's decision to pay Dodge an additional year in salary and benefits. The decision to allow Dodge to negotiate a voluntary resignation has been controversial in light of the release of the report from the internal investigation.

The minutes of the February 5 session state that "if we settle for a reasonable amount that would be better for the community as it puts an end to what's going on."

The controversy began with a state police investigation of Dodge's handling of a prescription drug drop box in June 2016. That investigation was closed without charges filed, but the town was barred from participation in a regional anti-crime task force, and Dodge would later publicly admit that the investigation was initiated because he is in recovery from addiction to opioid painkillers.

The February 5 minutes also state that "if we don't come to a settlement, there are concerns about legal proceedings and looking for a new chief..." Finally, they note that the town would have to pay Dodge for six months of severance pay in any case, "as that is in his contract."

According to the minutes, Dodge requested that the selectboard delay its final decision by a week because he had "been in discussion with a neighboring town" about a chief's position. "Dodge has asked to get the years of service higher; to next birthday," the minutes also read.

Montague's initial offer was to pay Dodge through the end of his

current contract in November 2018. Dodge countered with two years of pay, which "the Selectboard is against." By the next meeting, the February 12 minutes show, Dodge had "come down considerably from the two years," and was willing to resign as of that day, as long as he remained on administrative leave with full pay for a year.

The board decided at that meeting to accept Dodge's offer. The February 12 minutes also note that Zessin, prior to Dodge joining the meeting, gave the selectboard an "[e]xplanation... regarding uncertainty with Civil Service and how long the process could take."

Ellis said that the town would need to review the minutes of other executive sessions dealing with Dodge before any more could be released.

**Cannabis Farm**

At Monday's meeting, the selectboard heard a presentation by the firm 253 Organic about their plans to create a marijuana cultivation, production, and retail sale facility at a building formerly occupied by Hallmark Imaging at 253 Millers Falls Road. The discussion focused on a "host community agreement" with the town, which is required for a state license.

253 Organic will go before the planning board on March 27, seeking approval for a special permit and site plan review, as required by the town's new zoning rules for cannabis facilities.

While 253 Organic executives Seth Rutherford and Christopher Gallant sat at the front table, Lee Olesen, who has experience in the legal cannabis industry in Colorado, did virtually all of the talking. He reviewed elements of the company's business plan, and expressed a willingness to work with the town to finalize an agreement as quickly as possible.

"My experience has been that the companies that present whole packages in the early phases usually get licenses," Olesen said. "That's why we are going to try to get into the first group of applications, which will happen in the first week of April."

Town planner Walter Ramsey said that the former photography lab had previously been approved by the planning board and selectboard for use as a medical marijuana dispensary, but the license application had been rejected by the state, which had reached its quota.

"It's been a long time coming," he said, noting that the building had not been occupied "for over a decade."

Ramsey said that the applicants were required to hold a "community outreach hearing," which he said would coincide with the March 27 planning board hearing.

The board discussed a draft of the "host community agreement" which had been prepared by town counsel. Ramsey said the most important part of the agreement was a 3% "community host fee," which will be assessed in addition to the 3% cannabis sales tax approved this spring by town meeting, and 17% state sales and excise taxes. Olesen said a combination of the sales tax and host fee could generate "around half a million dollars" in revenue for Montague by 2020.

The host agreement also requires the company to coordinate its activities closely with the police and fire departments, as well as fund a "charitable foundation."

Jen Audley, coordinator of the

**STORY SLAM** from page A1

making it on time to your own wedding, via Machu Picchu; subverting the dominant paradigm and dancing with Baby Jesus; a family of practical jokers; Buffalo band blues; a chance encounter with a tin man at Dunkirk; and honestly, by the end of one story, the whole room was intimately comfortable with Ada the cow.

Most of the stories told on Sunday are not easily encapsulated by a brief report. For instance, the story about Dunkirk started in a bar on a ferry in the 1960s, yet entangled the whole of WWII and a love story, in a 14-minute span.

Tellers and audience members alike expressed finding great value in sitting up close and in person, listening to someone's best story, the "one that they have honed for retelling" and that "lends insight to the way they walk in this world."

"This town is filled with lots of interesting people with interesting stories," Blais said. "We hoped for about 12 storytellers, for the event to be at least an hour, and with some active recruitment we had enough storytellers for more than 2 hours of stories, and a packed house there to listen. Feedback has been positive, and there is chatter about making this an annual event."

Host Bruce Watson made the point that with so much divisiveness in the news and information airspace, people seem to draw away from one another. Story events like this one give folks a chance to connect through shared lived experiences.

"To paraphrase Franz Kafka," Watson said, "a story should be an axe to break up the frozen sea inside us." There was a strong consensus in the room that good stories well told may be the very best remedy for cabin fever and March snowstorms.



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Gill-Montague Community School Partnership, expressed concern about combining the community outreach meeting with the planning board hearing. "This is a high interest topic," she said. "Some people are excited, some people are scared.... There's lots of feeling and passion about it."

Audley also handed out a press release from the state Cannabis Control Commission that seemed to revise the schedule for applications, and suggested that 253 Organic and the town might have more time for public input. The memo said that marijuana cultivators could begin applying to the state by May 1, while retailers and product manufacturers could apply June 1.

"It's a confusing timeline," said Olesen "We've asked for a meeting with the [state commission] to clarify this."

The board voted to authorize Kuklewicz to work with Ellis to finalize the host community agreement.

**Other Business**

The board voted to "forgive" a loan the town gave to the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority (FCRHRA) in 1991. With interest, the loan now totals \$126,275.

FCRHRA executive director Fran Pheeny said the loan, which was used to acquire and renovate a portion of the authority's current building on Canal Road, was never expected to be repaid. She said the money was given in the form of a "loan" to avoid speculation with Community Development Block Grant funds, the source of the funding.

A somewhat confused Michael Nelson questioned the rationale behind a loan that did not need to be repaid. Pheeny repeated that it had been necessary to comply with federal regulations designed to prevent speculation.

"I got you," said Nelson.

Pheeny also requested that the board negotiate a "payment in lieu of taxes" (PILOT) agreement for the

new property her agency plans to purchase at 241 Millers Falls Road. Kuklewicz said that the town assessors' office needed to be involved in that discussion. Ellis agreed and added that a PILOT agreement would also need to be approved by Montague town meeting. The board did not take a vote on the issue.

It did vote to approve changes in the request for an additional liquor license for the cidery that will occupy the FCRHRA's current Canal Road building. The request will take the form of a petition to the state legislature.

Finally, the board reviewed a new "communication plan" with the town's trash and recycling collector, Republic Services. The plan addresses communication breakdowns that occurred during the cold spell this past December and early January.

The selectboard's next meeting will take place at 7 p.m. on March 26 at the town hall.



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## NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

## Sawicki Resigns, Bancroft Promoted

By ROB SKELTON

Police chief Scott Minckler sought Leverett selectboard approval to appoint officer Jill Bancroft to temporary full-time status, to replace resigning officer Sean Sawicki, at its Tuesday meeting. Sawicki has moved to other employment. A motion to approve the request passed unanimously.

Ken Kahn and two of his fellow planning board members, Steve Freedman and Richard Nathhorst, came to touch base with the selectboard. Citing his past appearance in May of last year when he checked in with the board "to keep avenues of communication open," Kahn stated that "very little has come in."

One reason for that is the zoning board of appeals, whose purview this year shifted and took on some planning board functions. Meanwhile, "everybody's got the same problems," Kahn said, "except ours might be exacerbated due to infrastructural investments" – a new library, and town broadband.

Freedman noted that processing and packaging of marijuana might be a niche business ideal for Leverett, "not that I would know a lot about it."

"It's up to you guys to set the regs," Kahn said to the selectboard, adding that "loosening" the regulations might spur growth, which could be something to look at.

Leverett's historically tight zoning has resulted in high building costs, hence slow growth. The town's late-to-the-game softening of rules for solar arrays and accessory apartments may have also slowed growth.

While Leverett is not an ideal milieu for development, due to its having "no town water and sewer, no natural gas," according to se-

lectwoman Julie Shively, the town seems poised to welcome growth, cannabis and otherwise.

To that end, the selectboard indicated openness to a "host agreement" for a medicinal marijuana growing facility proposed by a bunch of "suits" calling themselves New England Agricultural Technologies, headed by a lawyer named Rob Wolf.

DBA applications have doubled as more people engage in home businesses, according to town clerk Lisa Stratford.

Denzel Hankinson, brother of selectman Tom, appeared before the selectboard to clarify access road issues involving transmission lines near his Depot Road property. For forty years, he said, Eversource has used a swampy right of way through his land, and now it is planning to install "floater boards" to get across open water, which falls under the conservation commission's purview.

Denzel Hankinson said he was not trying to change the rules of the game, but just wants the company to use an existing woods road, which has a couple of wet spots, rather than deploying corduroy across open wetland. The selectboard discussed this "right of way to a right of way," and punted it to the con com.

Health agent Stephen Ball has resigned as of March 19, required by his state pension, and wants to be re-hired as a non-benefited employee, with a raise from his previous \$38.34 hourly rate to \$40.17, which is what he gets from the town of Sunderland.

"I don't think we can go up," said Shively, citing the budget-busting each town department has undergone during this fiscal season.

"The guy quits and comes back with a special thing that works out well for him," said board chair Peter

d'Errico. The board agreed to re-appoint Ball at his previous salary.

Complaints about plowing should be directed to the road boss David Finn, the board indicated. Finn has agreed to add sand to the salt mix – something he never did at his previous job. He disagrees with adding sand, but the police department has leaned in on him as statistics bear out an increase in icy road accidents, and the selectboard agreed.

A query from Jim Field about an uninhabited island in Leverett Pond set off a discussion regarding its unknown ownership. Tom Hankinson expressed interest, on behalf of the Friends of Leverett Pond, to do maintenance should the town come to own it.

Discussed was eminent domain and land-takings, camping and picnicking on Leverett's only island.

"You can wake a sleeping dog with this," said d'Errico. "Some guy from Wendell could wake up and realize he owns an island."

School committee members Craig Cohen, Tara Acker, and Bethany Seeger came to discuss the budget, but the fin com was not present, due to the lack of public posting regarding the meeting. The selectboard was hesitant to do anything which might violate meeting law, so little was said and some clarifications were made, but that was it.

WolfTree, a summer camp, wants to use the Leverett Elementary School if it decides to expand its program. It already runs an after-school program there, and has a good track record, including insurance. The board okayed it.

The dedicatee for this year's town annual report has been decided, and Tom Hankinson was authorized to make a phone call to the honoree, with the caveat that he keep it secret.



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LEGAL NOTICE of PUBLIC MEETING  
Leverett Conservation Commission

The Leverett Conservation Commission, in accordance with the Wetlands Protection Act (MGL c.131 §40), will hold a public meeting on April 2, 2018 at a meeting beginning at 7:15 p.m. at the Leverett Town Hall, 9 Montague Road, Leverett, MA to review a Request for Determination of Applicability submitted by Tighe & Bond for Eversource Energy. The RDA proposes improvement/expansion of a work pad for the replacement of a transmission structure in Line 1044-1632 off of Depot Road.

The application is on file and is available for public inspection in the Conservation Commission Office on Mondays, 2:30 to 5:30 p.m., or by appointment at (413) 548-1022 ext. 3. This notice is also available at [masspublicnotices.org](http://masspublicnotices.org).

## SCHOOL POLICE from page A1

help prevent things.... The things the SRO learns about through the relationships they have [with students] are really important to diverting, and averting, things that could be really serious."

"I would rather vote to have an unsustainable budget, and have to explain that, than to have my vote the other way and have to live with it," school committee member Timmie Smith told the officials.

The proposal would split the officer's cost, and working time, 75% to 25% between the district and the town.

But Bonnett explained that due to the difference between the "four on, two off" schedule negotiated with the police union and the schools' 5-day week, the officer would be likely to rack up "an inordinate amount of comp time" during the school year and spend it during the summer break, making the arrangement unlikely to provide his department much relief from overtime expenses.

"I guess it somewhat puts the lie to the notion that we're getting 25% of an officer's time to use at our disposal," said Montague town administrator Steve Ellis. "It's just a reality, I guess."

Bonnett said that the officer would visit Hillcrest and Sheffield Elementary schools, but that it would be "logistically reasonable to say that the majority of their time would be spent in the high school." Visiting Gill Elementary "would pose issues that we would have to further explore," he said. "Being an officer of the district doesn't empower you in another jurisdiction, legally."

At Tuesday night's school committee meeting, Sullivan added that Bonnett "has ex-

pressed support, clearly, for having the SRO be a district truancy officer." He clarified that the officer would be able to search for truant students in Montague, but not Gill.

Turners Falls High School principal Annie Leonard also expressed her support for the police position.

"The connection-making and outreach parts of a role like this are important," she said. "But it would be equally important to me to know we would get assistance working with students and families who have chronic attendance challenges."

## Montague Reactions

"Unfortunately, we live in a world that a lot of us sitting around this table never thought would happen," said Fred Bowman of the Montague finance committee. "We grew up in the '50s and '60s and '70s. We didn't have these type of instances, or very few of them."

"The school district, and the middle school and high school particularly, don't have a lot of ways to add more caring adults and role models to the scene," said Montague fin com member Jen Audley, also the coordinator of the Gill-Montague Community School Partnership. "This is a way to have another person who has a particular skill set to the mix, and it may be a person that some students feel comfortable talking to."

Her fellow committee member Richard Widmer expressed a note of caution. "I think that there's the potential for that firearm, that power, to antagonize a student, who may have experienced other trauma in his or her life," he said, adding that he hoped an SRO would have sufficient training to recognize the range of student experiences.

"The face of policing, on its own, is changing," Bonnett replied, adding that hundreds of area police officers have recently undergone "procedural justice" training. "A paradigm shift is occurring. It really is."

Finance committee chair John Hanold said he was "still wrestling" with "some philosophical problems" with the SRO position – "if they were performing something which ought to be done by somebody else, and whether it is overreaction" – but said he felt "the fact that the [district] is coming up with three-quarters of it is a step in the right direction."

"How do you know it's working?" Michael Naughton asked the chief, regarding how an SRO's efficacy would be measured.

"You know by asking any other district," Bonnett told him. "Every district says, 'we wouldn't want to give it up.'"

The Montague boards did not vote on whether to recommend the position, but indicated to town accountant Carolyn Olsen that she could include the expenses in the town's working FY'19 budget.

## Gill SB Opposition

The following night, Thursday March 15, Sullivan met with a joint meeting of the finance committee and selectboard in Gill to repeat his pitch. Gill is not being asked to contribute directly to the cost of the officer, but the town's assessment to the school district, which must be approved by town meeting, would contribute toward the 75% of the position the district has offered to fund.

The reception in that town was less positive, and last Friday, Gill administrative assistant Ray Purington wrote a letter to the school

committee explaining that "[t]he Gill Selectboard is against including this new position in the FY'19 budget."

"The SRO position is being created at the same time four other teaching and support positions are being cut," the letter read. "We would choose to prioritize available funds toward preserving teachers in classrooms..."

It went on to express concern that the district is "making a multi-year financial commitment when there is no clear funding source to sustain this position beyond the first year," and that the position "was not part of the budget presented at the public hearing on the budget" held a month ago.

The school committee read the letter aloud on Tuesday.

"The selectboard's concerns are very well justified," Sullivan said. "It's just very difficult, and from where I sit, it seems to be something we should do."

"I do understand what they're saying. I think there's so many things to consider," said school committee member Jane Oakes of Gill. "But I think I still feel that at this point it's really something that we should do."

"I think we need to be vigilant about the money," said Montague member Mike Langknecht. "It would be really counterproductive to bring someone on for a year and a half, or two years, and then decide not to go through with it."

"I'll just reiterate that the best way we can support our kids is through mental health," said Heather Katsoulis, who had cast one of two dissenting votes two weeks earlier against funding the position.



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NOTES FROM THE GILL-MONTAGUE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

# Committee Passes Final \$19.2 Million Budget For FY'19

By MIKE JACKSON

**GILL-MONTAGUE** – At their meeting Tuesday night, which had been postponed since the previous week due to a forecast snowstorm, the Gill-Montague school committee approved a final FY'19 general funds budget of \$19,185,344.

Combined with expenditures from revolving funds, next year's "all funds budget" totals \$21,748,890, and of that, the district is assessing \$9,612,618 to the town of Montague and another \$1,619,622 to the town of Gill. Montague's assessment represents a 4.99% increase over the current school year.

The budget passed by a 6-0 vote, with Shawn Hubert, Christina Postera, and April Reipold absent.

Balancing the budget this year has involved cuts to textbooks, transportation, technology, and training line items, as well as the elimination of four educator positions. \$50,250 is set aside to fund a school resource officer who would work for the Montague police department, contingent on that town agreeing to fund the final quarter of the position.

The school committee read aloud a letter from the Gill selectboard criticizing the decision in light of the cuts (see story, A1).

Superintendent Michael Sullivan announced that food service manager Mistelle Hannah would be moving on to other opportunities, and broached the possibility of sharing the position with the Pioneer Valley Regional district, which encompasses Northfield, Leyden, Bernardston, and Warwick.

That district's assistant superintendent is currently serving as its food service manager, Sullivan said, and along with Gill-Montague and Franklin County Tech is participating in a state-funded "regionalization and efficiency" study.

Sullivan said that business manager Joanne Blier was looking at busing contracts and routes for the three districts in an effort to consolidate routes. An expected \$10,000 reduction in transportation expenditures helped make possible the planned spending on the school resource officer.

The committee discussed its process of updating its own goals, and read a proposed update to the New School Committee Member Orientation policy brought by the policy subcommittee.

Montague member Mike Langknecht proposed a "new committee orientation" be held each year to discuss how the committee would like to conduct meetings. "There's

some real blank spaces in our understanding of how we do things, when we do things, and it's just a practical matter," he said.

Sullivan suggested that each incoming member could be assigned a "buddy."

"Anything that we can provide new members to help them understand their roles and responsibilities," said Cassie Damkoehler, elected last spring. "I don't know who the new members are going to be, but there are going to be at least one, or two," she pointed out.

So far Montague member Lesley Cogswell, one of four members whose terms expire this spring, has announced she will not seek reelection.

During the meeting's public comment section, a Turners Falls resident named Jennifer Lively introduced herself to the committee, and announced she would be running.

"I grew up here, and went to school, and my kids are going to become part of the community going to the schools as well," Lively said.

The committee gave a first reading to a proposed 2018-19 school calendar, which led to a discussion of the merits of making Friday, December 21 a half day.

"I've got feedback from teachers about that," Lesley Cogswell said,



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"that kids are checked out – the learning that takes place is not valuable learning." There are already 17 half-days on the draft calendar.

The committee discussed snow days, and the difficulties they create. Damkoehler said she had "heard grumbles" suggesting they revisit the idea of establishing a "blizzard bags" policy to continue learning time at home on snow days.

Sullivan said he had asked the teachers' union to form a committee to discuss the idea, but that it "hasn't come together." "I can ask again about that," he said.

The committee approved payment of a \$1,493.90 invoice from Bulkley, Richardson and Gelinas, LLP, a specialty law firm the district

has retained to help it try to recuperate funds from New England Medical Billing, the firm that processed its Medicaid reimbursement claims over a decade-long period.

Those claims were discovered to have been overbilled, and the state has determined the district owes it over \$900,000. The billing company took a flat percentage of the reimbursements as its fee.

Bulkley, Richardson attorney Jodi Miller has been invited to the committee's April 27 meeting to discuss progress toward a settlement.

The committee watched an animated presentation promoting the Gill-Montague Education Fund's annual fundraising gala on April 28, featuring the music of John Denver.

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# MoRe

YEAR 16 – NO. 22

B1

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OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER

MARCH 22, 2018

ARCHITECTURE CRITICISM

FOOD REVIEW

## Grist for the Mill... and a Gas Station Dinner

By PETE WACKERNAGEL

GILL – “We want to go way beyond what a standard gas station looks like,” says Tom Frawley, explaining the theory for his bright and voluminous gas station on the corner of Route 2 and Main Road in Gill, which recently opened as “The Mill.”

According to Frawley, who is the president of Lebanon, New Hampshire-based Summit Distributing, the structure is supposedly designed to resemble the water-wheel-powered industrial buildings that were built through the 19<sup>th</sup> century, until they were replaced by turbine-powered mills. “We duplicated an old grist mill. We designed it ourselves,” he says.

Summit endeavors to build narrative gas stations that respond to, and honor, their place. “We thought it fit into the historical context of what happened over the last couple centuries,” says Frawley. In addition to the gas station’s shape being derived from an emblematic building type from a celebrated time period, the store interior features historic photos of Franklin County made into wallpaper.

Frawley believes that people respond positively to this contemporary vernacular approach to the gas



WACKERNAGEL PHOTO

station. “We get a lot of people who really appreciate the look of it,” he says.

However, The Mill does not actually resemble a grist mill at all. According to Gill carpenter Toby Briggs, “Calling it that is preposterous.”

This writer believes that the new store has all of the architectural signifiers of a barn – The Mill is a barn with a vestigial overshot wheel. It has the two main characteristics of a gambrel barn: a gambrel, or “Dutch” roof, and its wide, horizontal proportions.

“That kind of roof is for hay storage, like in a barn,” says carpenter Hank Silver of Montague. “A grist mill would have a gable roof.” Gable roofs are the most common roof, the single-pitched two-piece roofs, like the one on the Book Mill.

The profile of The Mill resembles a barn, not a grist mill. As buildings, grist mills are characterized by verticality, while barns have a low, horizontal countenance. Oliver Evans’ book *The Young Mill-Wright and Miller’s Guide*, the most influential source for mill construction in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, shows plans for four-story gable-roofed mills. Their height to length ratio is 0.79 : 1, making them much more vertical than The Mill.

According to Phil Watson of Northfield, “They were more vertical, especially in New England – they were built in tight places.” Grist mills were usually sited on

*Above: The Mill, the newly built gas station convenience store at Route 2 and Main Road in Gill is fitted out with a non-functioning water wheel in an effort to reference colonial-era grist mills. Below: The store’s front entrance.*



WACKERNAGEL PHOTO

small rivers or large brooks, the kind of streams that have steep-walled valleys and only very small floodplains with which to provide flat ground.

One of the problems with contemporary construction is that forms that previously served specific, functional purposes are made unnecessary by technologies like structural steel. For example, the ancients used columns as necessary, functional pieces of buildings, because they bore weight and held the roof up. Today, columns are often simply a stylistic choice,

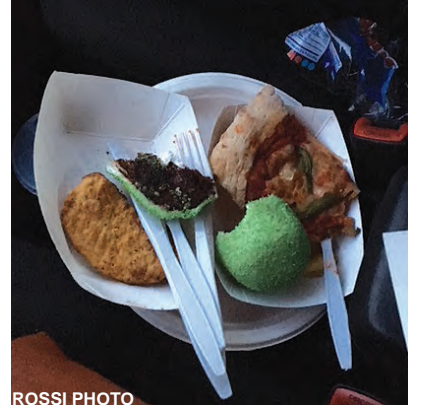
see GRIST page B8

By NINA ROSSI

GILL – I was just coming out of a hard Provincetown winter subsisting on vodka, cabbage, fish and Newport cigarettes, and heading south on Amtrak with an ill-suited, co-dependent companion on our way to Florida. We were as unprepared for a long train ride as we were for any other thing in life, and were squabbling through a mild detoxification experience, much to the annoyance of our fellow travelers.

On the second day we were sober enough to realize that our few dollars were better spent in the dining car than the club car, and that’s where I had a fruit salad and cottage cheese plate that was truly unforgettable.

Maybe Amtrak food was superior in that era, because it was far,



ROSSI PHOTO

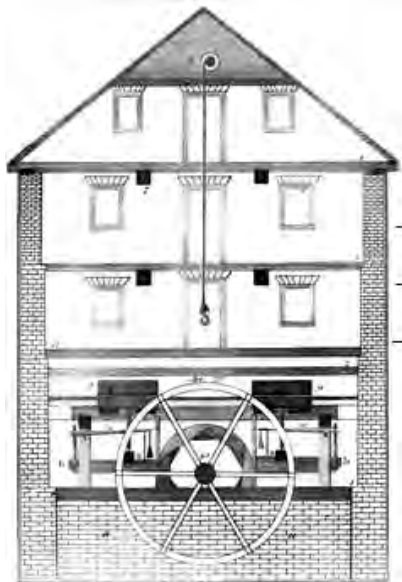
*Second course: chicken tenders, a slice of pizza, and a green Snowball.*

better than any I have tasted on the rails since that 1980 trip. Coming as I was from the land of partial unemployment and boiled fish and cabbage, well, it tasted like the food of the gods to me, and I have never had such a delicious fruit salad since.

For tired and hungry travelers navigating the lanes of Route 2, who have gone west far enough to run out of exit numbers, does the new Mill gas station serve up a “food of the gods” situation?

There are not very many opportunities to obtain food on the side of the road heading west on Route 2, if one happens to snooze through the land of Erving, with its Freight House cafe, Crooked Tap and sweets shop, and wake up around the rumble strips of that hideous curve after the turn-off to Millers Falls. Maybe you don’t think about

see DINNER page B4



*Plans for a grist mill, as drawn by Oliver Evans, the young mill-wright and miller’s guide, in 1795.*

## NEW PROMOTER TAKES THE REINS AT THE VOO

By DK KNAUER

TURNERS FALLS – Recently, I went to the Rendezvous restaurant and bar in Turners Falls to meet with their new music promoter, to see what performers would be on the bill this spring. The owners of the Rendezvous (known locally as “the Voo”), Mark Wisnewski, Emily Brewster and Chris Janke, have hired James Sullivan to take on booking all the musical talent for the tavern.

James had been doing the same job for the Underdogs Lounge in Shelburne Falls, where he resides. When the Underdogs closed, it became an opportunity for the Voo to use James’s expertise and networking ability to revitalize their music scene.

Mark Wisnewski told me that the Voo has a history of hosting talented musicians early in their careers. *Lake Street Dive* and *The Sweetback Sisters* have performed at the Voo.

Sullivan sees the Voo offering a venue where local bands can be seen, bands that are made up of new musicians just starting out as well as bands with seasoned veterans who play for the sheer joy of performing.



KNAUER PHOTO

*Rendezvous co-owner Mark Wisnewski (left) and music promoter James Sullivan (right).*

He says he likes the setting: with a patron capacity of around eighty, it allows for enough room for a band and their supporters to enjoy each other’s company. And by offering a variety of talent, James believes the Voo can appeal to a wide demographic of musical tastes from around the Pioneer Valley. Another

draw is that the entertainment is free as there is, generally, no cover charge to listen to the music.

While it may be true that local bands do draw their nearby followers, James is not hesitant to book music from out of state or even out of the country. He bases his

see PROMOTER page B2

THE GARDENER’S COMPANION

## Winter’s Grip



MARY AZARIAN WOODBLOCK PRINT

By LESLIE BROWN

*... O Wind,  
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?*

– Percy Bysshe Shelley

MONTAGUE CITY – Poetic optimism, or slightly delusional view?

These words sound a bit like those who keep begging us to give the President another chance. How’s that working out? Revolving Cabinet doors with no time to get traction or make policy. As one commentator said: he’s running the country like he was still on *The Apprentice*.

We are generally optimistic folks. It has been refreshing to see the growth of pushback from the “kids.” These young people are our future and it is theirs to define.

But we have also been wondering if our idyllic get-away for the month of February was a good idea. We returned refreshed, lightly tanned and ready to watch the gradual unfolding of New England spring.

Well, I can say we are grateful we don’t live on the Eastern sea coast.

We’ve gotten a good dose of poor man’s fertilizer: wet, heavy snow which sinks into the garden carrying nitrogen, an essential nutrient for plant growth, development and reproduction.

The sap buckets are hanging from the maples and steam is rising from the sugar shacks.

The resident robin is indeed back, along with the song sparrow and the red-wings.

We can see the tips of the first daffodils at the edge of the hedge.

The tomato plants have emerged in their cozy sunroom growing box.

But the winds are brisk and chilling, the woodpile sinks, the temperatures are downright cold, and the excitable forecasters on the Weather Channel are yapping about the possibility of a third nor’easter this month. In too-far northern Vermont where my sister lives, they already have twenty-two inches of snow in the backyard.

We are declaring a moratorium.

We are tired of eating the rib-sticking soups, stews and casseroles of the winter table and long to grill fresh fish, eat greens to filling, and make the spring tonic of a rhubarb pie.

Okay, if we need one more dose of poor man’s fertilizer, bring it on and let it melt in, softening the soil in the raised beds so we can sow salad greens and chard and even a few radishes for spice. We’d like to gently lift the dirt with the broadfork and spread in another layer of lovely compost where the corn, squash and tomatoes will go.

We have sweet pepper seeds to start in the sunroom as well as cucumber and squash, but that would be rushing this reluctant season.

Ever since we began visiting the see GARDENERS page B4



# Pet of the Week

Hello, I'm Mr. Raccoon! I am a beautiful and mighty hunter. I have the spirit of a lion in my heart and it makes me want to roam and hunt.

If you're looking for a lap cat, I'm not the cat for you. I need more adventure and activity than an indoor cat will get. I'll play too rough for young kids, but would be fine with teenage kids or adults. No dogs!

I may pet myself by rubbing on your legs, but that's as far as it goes. Maybe someday that will change, but maybe not. Are you OK with that? You better be, or I will make you.

Take me home with you this week! Contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at (413) 548-9898 or at [info@dpvhs.org](mailto:info@dpvhs.org).



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## "MR. RACCOON"

### Senior Center Activities MARCH 26 to 30

#### GILL and MONTAGUE

The Gill Montague Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Congregate meals are served Tuesday through Thursday at noon. Meal reservations must be made one day in advance by 11 a.m. All fitness classes are supported by a grant from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. Voluntary donations are accepted.

Council on Aging Director is Roberta Potter. Kitchen Manager is Jeff Suprenant. For more information, to make meal reservations, or to sign up for programs call 863-9357. Messages can be left on our machine when the center is not open.

**Tues-Thurs Noon Lunch**  
**M, W, F** 10:10 a.m. Aerobics;  
10:50 a.m. Chair Exercise

**Monday 3/26:**  
1 p.m. Pot Luck & Bingo

**Tuesday 3/27:**  
10:15 a.m. Chair Yoga w/Andrea  
1 p.m. Knitting Circle

**Wednesday 3/28:**  
9 a.m. Veterans' Outreach  
12:30 p.m. Bingo

**Thursday 3/29:**  
9 a.m. Tai Chi  
10:15 a.m. Chair Yoga  
1 p.m. Cards & Games

**Friday 3/30:**  
1 p.m. Writing Group

**Friday 3/30:**  
1 p.m. Writing Group

#### LEVERETT

For information, contact the Leverett COA at (413) 548-1022, ext. 5, or [coa@leverett.ma.us](mailto:coa@leverett.ma.us).

Flexibility and Balance Chair Yoga - Wednesdays at 10 a.m. at the Town Hall. Drop-in \$6 (first class free).

Senior Lunch - Fridays at noon. Call (413) 367-2694 by

Wednesday for a reservation.

#### ERVING

Erving Senior Center, 1 Care Drive, Erving, is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. for activities and congregate meals.

Lunch is at 11:30 a.m., with reservations required 2 days in advance. Call (413) 423-3649 for meal information and reservations.

For information, call Paula Betters, Senior Center Director, at (413) 423-3649. Transportation can be provided for meals, shopping, or medical necessity.

Call to confirm activities, schedule a ride, or find out about the next blood pressure clinic.

**Monday 3/26:** No Lunch Served  
9:30 a.m. Healthy Bones  
10:30 a.m. Tai Chi

**Tuesday 3/27:**  
8:45 a.m. Chair Aerobics  
10 a.m. Stretching & Balance  
12 p.m. Homemade Lunch

**Wednesday 3/28:**  
8:45 a.m. Line Dancing  
10 a.m. Chair Yoga  
11:30 a.m. Congregate Lunch

**Thursday 3/29:**  
8:45 a.m. Aerobics  
10 a.m. Healthy Bones  
11:30 a.m. Congregate Lunch

**Friday 3/30:**  
9 a.m. Quilting Workshop  
9:30 a.m. Fun Bowling  
11:15 Music, Movement, Mayhem!

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#### WENDELL

Wendell Senior Center is at 2 Lockes Village Road. Call Nancy Spittle, (978) 544-6760, for hours and upcoming programs. Call the Center for a ride.

#### PROMOTER from page B1

selections on the performers' abilities, which he discerns by listening to their music either in person or online, and also on what he knows the people in the Valley want to hear.

Some examples of the broad spectrum of talent James has arranged to perform include two rock bands from Brooklyn: *Fixtures* and *The Forms*, playing this Friday night. In May a band from Canada, *Rose Cora Perry and the Truth Untold* will be bringing their form of rock to the venue.

The music of the other bands playing just in March range from bluegrass, Irish, folk and pop to zydeco. For a complete list of the bands, dates and times, go to [thevoo.net](http://thevoo.net). While there, you can check out all the other events the Voo offers and look over their menu too, which I found went way beyond my usual expectations for pub food.

The Voo is also committed to being a supportive member of their community. On Sunday, March 25, there will be a brunch and open

house party for the Northeast Heritage Music Camp from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. You can go to the Rendezvous site on Facebook for details about this, listed under Events.

The Voo is open every day from 11 a.m. to 1 a.m., with the exception of Sundays, when it opens at 10:30 a.m. for brunch.

If you are a performer or band interested in playing at the Voo, go to their website and click on "booking" for information on how to apply.



## The Writing on the Wall

By NINA ROSSI

**HADLEY** - Chris Janke of Greenfield, one of the co-owners of the Rendezvous and owner of Suzee's laundromat in Turners Falls, has been hard at work pulling together his MFA thesis in time to install the art at the Goodwin Memorial Library in Hadley.

Called *transit*, the work has been two years in the making, and uses text that reflects or casts shadows on various parts of library at certain times of day, dependent on the position of the sun and reflections from traffic on the street. Janke explores "the interaction of words and material, of sun and idea" within the duration of a day, and invites the viewer to meditate on what he calls "the mystery of knowledge."

This site-specific installation is only up from March 19 through March 24, viewable whenever the library is open. There will be a reception this Saturday the 24th from 3 to 6 p.m. with the artist to close the show.



ROSSI PHOTOS



Left: One of the words mounted in the Goodwin library stairway, from the phrase "word moves inside." Top right: Some of the dates positioned to reflect on the south wall. Bottom right: Janke looks at one of the artifacts he has etched into plexiglass for the exhibit: a mortgage from *Quanquan*, executed in 1663, for land in Hadley. "In a powerful way, the creation of Hadley from what was once called Nonotuck was a movement of one knowledge nearly destroying another," Janke says.

### Women Business Owners Alliance's Comedy Fundraiser to Benefit Girls Inc.; Loan Fund

**EASTHAMPTON** - The 25th Annual Women's Night of Comedy will be held on Thursday, April 5 at the Log Cabin at 500 Easthampton Road, Holyoke. This uplifting event draws 300 to 400 women from across the Valley, for a night celebrating sisterhood, with shopping, great food, and happy, humorous entertainment.

The doors open at 5 p.m., where guests are treated to a shopping extravaganza of local vendors offering products and services especially for women.

Tickets are \$60 for standard admission, and include a cocktail hour with vendors and a basket raffle, a plated dinner, and the comedy performance. VIP tickets are also available for \$100, and include an additional pre-event reception.

Enjoy scrumptious hors d'oeuvres and signature cocktails, and try your luck in winning one of the dozens of donated local business gift baskets on display.

The comedy begins after a gorgeous Log Cabin dinner with a night of improv & local hilarity by "The Ha Has" whose mission is "to bring more laughter, joy, and ease to

western Massachusetts." (See [www.happievalley.com/the-ha-has.html](http://www.happievalley.com/the-ha-has.html))

A themed table contest includes a VIP reception preceding the event, offering a fun way to showcase your business, reward employees or have fun with your best friends. Sponsorship opportunities are available at all levels; see [wboa.org/get-involved/support](http://wboa.org/get-involved/support) for more information.

The popular event is organized by the Women Business Owners Alliance, and is a major fundraiser for the organization whose mission is to support and empower women. This year's beneficiaries are Girls Inc. of Holyoke, an organization whose mission is to inspire all girls to be strong, smart, and bold by providing them the opportunity to develop and achieve their full potential, and the Cheryl Reed Memorial Loan Fund of Easthampton, which is affiliated with the WBOA, providing financial support for women in business.

"We're doing something very different, for our 25th WNOC Celebration. Our entertainment has always been standup comedy, but this year we've changed it to improvisation, with the freshness of a dif-

ferent show every time," says event chair Shelley Hines.

"Partnering with local improv group The Ha-Ha's is sure to be an 'edge of your seat' blast. These folks are brilliant and fast on their feet, so the entertainment is sure to be top drawer. It's such a privilege to make a difference and support women, because when we stand together, amazing things happen!"

Established in 1982, the mission of WBOA is to provide education and enlightenment to support the social and economic power of women in business and to promote entrepreneurship. Its purpose is to empower women entrepreneurs by helping to build their business skills and confidence to succeed in their careers. This is accomplished through professional development seminars and meetings, teaching networking/interaction skills, leadership opportunities, and interactive technology. WBOA values and seeks a diverse and inclusive membership.

For more information about the 25th Annual Women's Night of Comedy, please visit [wboa.org/wnoc2018](http://wboa.org/wnoc2018).

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# Turners Falls High School Basketball: Season Stats

## WINTER 2017-18

### Girls Team:

| Player           | Season | Career |
|------------------|--------|--------|
| Maddy Chmyzinski | 236    | 1223   |
| Aliyah Sanders   | 136    | 539    |
| Chloe Ellis      | 213    | 452    |
| Abby Loynd       | 152    | 404    |
| Dabney Rollins   | 126    | 173    |
| Emma Miner       | 15     | 164    |
| Taylor Murphy    | 70     | 95     |
| Hailey Bogosz    | 23     | 81     |
| Sarah Waldron    | 21     | 38     |
| Karissa Fleming  | 16     | 16     |
| Eliza Johnson    | 6      | 6      |



### Boys Team:

| Player           | Season | Career |
|------------------|--------|--------|
| Anthony Peterson | 267    | 448    |
| Tyler Lavin      | 172    | 427    |
| Jimmy Vaughn     | 206    | 378    |
| Chace Novak      | 183    | 195    |
| Javoni Williams  | 94     | 171    |
| Jon Fritz        | 53     | 53     |
| Jovanni Ruggiano | 42     | 42     |
| Kyle Dodge       | 25     | 33     |
| Ryan Kucenski    | 25     | 25     |
| Jake Dodge       | 12     | 12     |
| Jaden Whiting    | 5      | 5      |
| Avias Politas    | 2      | 2      |
| David Tricolici  | 0      | 0      |



### CONCERT REVIEW

## The "Good Luck Charm" Benefit At Greenfield HS

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

**GREENFIELD**—Travis LeDoyt is an Elvis impersonator, called "the best young Elvis in the world" in an issue of the *New York Times Magazine*. He's from Greenfield and was born, ironically, in 1977, which was the year Elvis died.

He decided to do a show called "The Good Luck Charm Benefit" at his old high school, Greenfield High School, as a fundraiser for their music department, and he played Elvis's hits from the '50s and '60s with his Nashville band.

Besides thinking it was a cool topic for an article, I also like some of Elvis's music, and decided to go on March 17. When I first saw the auditorium, I thought, "I guess people in this town really like Elvis impersonators." Quite a large number of people outside were still trying to buy tickets to get in, and someone said, "I don't think we can let anyone else in!" That's how packed it was.

His band consists of two guitarists, a drummer, and a piano which Travis played. He sang the song called "Blue Suede Shoes" all right while playing his guitar and swinging his hips like Elvis at the same time. I know some of Elvis's music, but not that song. For that song and the next, his guitar playing was good. The third song was "Don't Be Cruel," and his singing of that was good, along with the two guitarists and drummer accompanying him.

It was a nice thing when he greeted the audience by walking among them. There, he was given flowers by a lady.

I know Elvis performed some gospel songs. It wasn't a surprise when he did one. He walked again among the audience for the gospel piece. At one point, he was very

close to me singing. It was like having front row seats. Others must have found that very enjoyable like I did. Something similar happened when I saw David Copperfield.

His continued singing of each song was good. I say that because at times he really sounded like Elvis singing. I think "Return to Sender" was another rock n' roll song by Elvis that he did a good job with.

At one point, we heard Travis play the piano well. He played a song by Jerry Lee Lewis. He played the only song I know by Lewis on the piano, which was "Great Balls of Fire." Another one he did was called "All Shook Up."

Another aspect that I am familiar with Elvis doing was love songs. LeDoyt sang Elvis's "Love me Tender." I once went to see a Terri Clark concert, and she let a fan perform with her. Travis basically did the same thing, which was cool. We also heard a female Greenfield High School student's singing accompanied by a guitarist, and a GHS male student also named Travis sang "Puppy Love."

I am very familiar with Elvis's "Jail House Rock." Travis's performance of that I liked very much. The people's enthusiasm remained strong for him during the show. During Elvis's "Blue Hawaii", he handed out Hawaiian leis to people.

Travis also sang original pieces, including one called "Latest Flame," and a ballad that I really liked the sound of. During intermission, his pictures were available to have signed after the concert.

Elvis might have been pleased with how well Travis sang Elvis's "Viva La Vegas," a song I know.

People wanted more, and he gave them two more songs for a finish. It's fair to say I liked him reasonably well!

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

## Man In Black; Hammer Bangs; Gun Threat; Golf Club Vandals; Meat Price Switcher

#### Monday, 3/12

9:27 a.m. Walk-in from Meadow Road wanted to report that last night around 9:30 p.m., there were two very loud bangs coming from a neighboring home.

2:08 p.m. Caller wants to speak to an officer about an incident that happened on Sunday at Our Lady of Peace Church involving a man in black.

2:49 p.m. Walk-in reports getting a strange phone call from a female claiming to be from the United Arc.

3:40 p.m. Walk-in requesting to speak with officer re: ongoing threats/harassment via social media. While officer was speaking with reporting party in lobby, second party arrived in lobby. Officer spoke with both parties about this ongoing issue.

7:35 p.m. Report of loud music being played in the garage of a house on Crocker Avenue since approximately 5:30 p.m. Ongoing issue. Music was not very loud upon officer's arrival. Parties were asked to turn it down.

8:18 p.m. Two reports of gunshots in area of Meadow Road. Officer spoke with resident in area; parties were working on a vehicle doing a repair that required periodic use of a ball-peen hammer. Work is almost complete; may require using the tool one more time tonight, but will be done after that.

9:36 p.m. Officer spoke with male who was being loud and causing a disturbance on Avenue A. Subject was advised and moved along.

#### Tuesday, 3/13

9:37 a.m. Report of tractor-trailer unit stuck in the middle of the road on the base of the hill on South Prospect Street, just up from the bridge. TT unit was sliding backwards at one point and almost collided with the caller's vehicle. Officer and DPW advised. TT unit was able to back down to the flat portion of the street. Upon arrival, DPW went ahead of the TT unit to sand from that point until the town line. Officer followed in case the TT unit got stuck again.

4:19 p.m. 911 hangup call from Millers Pub. Upon callback, the bartender said that a customer she was refusing to serve wouldn't leave. When she picked up the phone to call the police, he left. Officer spoke with bar owner and advised her to call if he comes back. She will advise her staff to do the same.

9:29 p.m. Caller reporting that his car was vandal-

ized at work at Hillside Plastics. Report taken.

#### Wednesday, 3/14

1:01 p.m. Caller reports that around 11:30 this morning, someone came to her residence looking for a male who does not reside there. Party did not believe the caller's assertion that the male does not, in fact, reside there. Advised caller that this would be on record and that she should call back immediately if this person returns.

2:30 p.m. Vehicle off road into a field on Federal Street. Second caller reports that vehicle struck several trees and that the operator is still inside the vehicle, possibly intoxicated or otherwise impaired. MedCare, MCFD, and PD units sent. Under investigation.

2:42 p.m. Report of possible breaking and entering in progress at Thomas Country Club. Caller can see two bicycles beside the building and can hear someone banging something behind the building, as if they are trying to break in. While caller was on the line, two youths emerged from behind the building. Caller spoke with them and will be waiting with them until officers arrive. Officers spoke with parents on scene. Parents will make restitution with club for all damage. Superintendent called advising additional damage was discovered beyond that found during the initial call. Officer assessed new damage and followed up with parents of one of the youths. Youth admitted to the additional damage. Report taken.

3:30 p.m. Report of hit and run accident at Sheffield Elementary School sometime after noon today. Vehicle appears to have been vandalized rather than struck by another vehicle. Report taken.

4:50 p.m. Report of a threat that was just made at A.H. Rist Insurance. Male was yelling and acting

erratically inside the business, and as he was leaving he made a comment to the effect of taking a loaded gun to the RMV to get his vehicles registered. Greenfield PD and Shelburne Control advised. Greenfield officer spoke with party via phone. Male advised he made those statements out of anger but does not plan to act on them.

#### Thursday, 3/15

12:26 p.m. Caller reporting that she was just jumped by three black males at F.L. Roberts. Officer spoke with caller and caller's boyfriend. Incident actually took place behind an L Street address. Ongoing issues between involved parties escalated into violence today. Report taken.

2:55 p.m. Two-vehicle accident on the Montague side of the Sunderland town line on Route 47. No injuries, smoke, fluids, or airbag deployment. Transport refused.

5:54 p.m. Anonymous caller states that some kids are throwing snowballs at cars on Third Street. Unable to locate.

6:28 p.m. Caller from Winthrop Street wants it on record that someone has thrown her mail into a snowbank. Her mail has been tampered with in the past.

#### Friday, 3/16

10:38 a.m. Caller from Food City requesting to speak with an officer re: a customer who has been switching prices on meat products before paying for them. Report taken.

11:52 a.m. Report of four youths throwing snowballs at passing vehicles at Prospect and Third streets. One of the snowballs struck the caller's vehicle. Area search negative.

1:05 p.m. Received two calls reporting a disturbance outside an East Main Street address. First caller reports three subjects involved. Second caller (off-duty officer) received call from property manager reporting same altercation

involving females from earlier call. Parties spoken to and advised of options.

#### Saturday, 3/17

6:10 a.m. Employee of Republic Trash Services into lobby reporting again low-hanging wires on Randall Road. Party advises that his trash truck at full height (with forks in driving position) would hit the lines. Party advises that he has reported this to MPD twice before. Previous call notes that Ever-source identified these lines as phone and Verizon was notified. Call placed to Verizon; same generating report and will dispatch someone to check.

8:07 p.m. Clerk from Scotty's Convenience Store states that a male party walked in stating he was struck by a motor vehicle that left the area right afterward. Male is complaining of leg pain. MedCare and TFFD started. Officer providing courtesy transport to male party's residence.

#### Sunday, 3/18

12:53 a.m. Officer requesting another unit to Walnut Street and Montague City Road, where two intoxicated individuals are fighting on the ground. Officers en route. Officer advises this is not what it appeared to be at first; female had fallen and male was attempting to help her. Courtesy transport provided; parties made it safely inside.

3:58 p.m. Caller states that an older, heavy-set, balding white male is aggressively begging for change outside of Rite Aid. Unable to locate. Officer advised store manager to call if male party returns.

4:21 p.m. 911 caller reporting a two-car accident on Federal Street. Unknown injuries/fluids. MCFD toned out. Med-Care started to scene. All vehicles towed.

4:49 p.m. 911 caller states that she was rear-ended while pulling into her driveway on Montague City Road. Citation issued.

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**GARDENERS** from page B1

Smith College greenhouses, we've admired the huge pots of camellias which they raise successfully indoors. We once grew a gardenia in our sunroom and it flourished for years in a corner of bright yet indirect light, heat in the daytime and cool air at night.

Recently we ordered a camellia. This plant too likes strong, indirect light, good humidity and cool nights. There's no humidity in the winter greenhouse, but we can simulate some by putting the pot into a tray of rocks, keeping the rocks watered and misting the plant regularly. It prefers the soil to be evenly moist but not wet.

To keep the plant a manageable size for indoors, we will need to prune it after blooming, making a sharp cut at 45 degrees above the node (the point at which a leaf or branch attaches to the stem). You can also grow a camellia as a bonsai, pruning it aggressively.

It is recommended that repotting should be done every two-three years, using a lime-free, peat moss-based soil and graduating the pot one size up each time. Camellias should be fed every two weeks once budded and until the blossoming is over. Use a high potassium fertilizer that contains iron and dilute it by half.

Because the sunroom gets too hot in the midday of summer, it will be best to set our plant out in the summer in indirect light but be sure to bring it in before frost.

The camellia is an exotic in New England with its glossy leaves and go-to-prom blossoms, although it is not as fragrant as the gorgeous gardenia.

We live in New England partly because we are risk takers as the weather requires and the gardening season is short. But that's part of the challenge, trying new plants of vegetables and flowers.

Like the camellia, we miss the moisture in the air which is a balm to the skin and which tames the recalcitrant gray locks.

But we wouldn't live there. We thrive on the changes of the seasons, watching the spring come on, working the soil, tasting the harvest fruits, seeing the amazing palette of the fall. We feel like soil-born New Englanders; maybe they'll adopt us yet.

*Cold in the earth – and fifteen wild Decembers.*

*From those brown hills, have melted into spring.*

–Emily Bronte



**MCTV NEWS**

**This Week on MCTV**

By ABIGAIL TATARIAN

Here we are at the cusp of springtime. On March 14, students at Turners Falls High School and Great Falls Middle School participated in National School Walkout Day to raise awareness of safety and gun violence in schools across the country.

A video documenting the event is now available for viewing at our website, [MontagueTV.org](http://MontagueTV.org).

Is there something going on you'd like others to see? If you get in touch, we can show you how easy it is to use a camera and capture the moment. Contact us at (413) 863-9200, [infomontaguetv@gmail.com](mailto:infomontaguetv@gmail.com), or stop by 34 Second Street between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., Mondays through Fridays. We're excited to work with you!

**DINNER** from page B1

stopping at that Dunkin Donuts because you want something more fried or pizza-like; maybe you need some gas for the car so you skip the Wagon Wheel, too.

And there it is, looming large and peculiar, with that big red wheel poised to churn up gravel and snow on one end of the building: The Mill.

I usually avoid processed gas station food, but in the interest of providing a companion piece to Pete Wackernagel's architectural review in this issue, I threw myself under the wheels of this assignment and volunteered to get Sunday night dinner at The Mill.

I prepared my system by eating half a bag of baby carrots and lots of broccoli slaw during the afternoon. This amount of roughage would hopefully move whatever comes in on top of it right along, and also I wouldn't be really hungry when I dined. I picked up my dinner companion, and we drove out over the Turners Falls-Gill bridge to our dining destiny.

On entering the Mill, our impression was, *Wow, this is actually kind of nice.* The lighting is subdued, and the high ceilings are ringed with reproductions of local 19th-century river, factory and village photographs.

Kiosks positioned at different angles on the floor offer a wide variety of household things like lightbulbs, writing paper and pens, toys and cleaning products, as well as an impressive array of snacks. There are the usual beef jerky and candy selections as well as big bags of various trail mixes, nuts and seeds, and protein bars.

You can also get prosciutto and mozzarella, hummus, salsa, fruit, cheese, and other appetizers to go with the beer, wine, and soft drinks that they sell.

There is a food window behind which two young men were coaxing hot food-like things in and out of a machine. There was a menu at the top of the window, so it looks like you order it there, but the food is available as grab-and-go at a nearby island.

We questioned them about the provenance of the shrink-wrapped donuts set out in the sparkly plexiglass cases. They readily admitted that all the baked stuff came frozen and that they just thawed and wrapped and dated them before setting them out.

Like children, we were distracted by and drawn to the brightly colored frozen drink displays: dazzling! There was a frappe machine of some kind, looping a mesmerizing cartoon of strawberries and coconuts and cookies swirling around

and exploding.

My friend chose from some healthy looking "evolution" brand iced teas that were on tap next to a decidedly unhealthy-looking row of colored drinks called "Frazils." (She also found some ballpoint pens she liked but hadn't seen outside of Africa, and bought those, too.) This was an opportunity for me to go abnormal, so I went all the way by getting the cyan blue raspberry frazil.

While there were also some healthy prepackaged salads and sandwiches in the deli case, I was fortified for hazardous dining and decided we would share some chicken tenders, pizza, chili and clam chowder. While we were getting these, one of the servers came out with half an order of fries for us, "on the house." That was nice of them!

To top off the meal, I picked out a package of St. Patty's day bright green Sno-Ball treats. Very faux-food: the most plastic-looking dessert in the place, like two tennis balls.

We could have eaten inside The Mill at a long shiny counter equipped with electrical outlets and stools facing the gas pumps, but for authenticity we ate in the car, where we could also gag on a cigarette and it wouldn't matter if we puked. After spilling my bag and retrieving our utensils from the gravel on the floor mat, we balanced the food between us and cautiously partook.

The french fries, according to my friend, "had lovely shapes and crispy outsides," but neither of us cared for the pizza or chili, which both tasted sugary. The fries were the kind that have a coating on them, and were just sort of C+. They were not greasy; maybe they were not fried?

The chicken pieces were really chicken: you could see the grain of the meat, and it was not greasy. It was pretty good. I was very skeptical about the clam chowder but there was something about it that I really liked: sort of a lemony flavor, instead of the pasty flour taste I expected. Thumbs up on the chicken and clams.

The blue Frazil: two thumbs down. Extremely sweet dish soap is what it tasted like. I knew it would be horrible, just like my drag on the cigarette was; like the big red wheel on the side of the building, it was a super fake.

But there are other, better choices for food and drink inside the Mill, and as my friend observed, biting into her bright green marshmallow dessert, "It's good to know this is here."

No mouth-gasming food of the gods, but it's clean, safe, friendly, and warm – and you don't need a key for the restrooms.



ROSSI PHOTOS

Our reviewer takes a puff on a cigarette to dull the palate before diving in to an array of gas station victuals, including clam chowder that got a "thumbs up" (left) and a drink that she felt, despite the preparation, tasted like "extremely sweet dish soap."



The Mill offers oven-fresh hot pizza, chicken, and fries, prepackaged healthier foods like this crispy chicken salad (top left), smoothies and Frazils (top right), trail mix and dried fruit (middle right), toys, office supplies, cleaning products (lower right), a large assortment of jerky (lower left), and pastries such as these donuts (middle left).

**T-RUMP**

by denis f. bordeaux



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## MEMOIR

## The Storm of '96, or '97

By JOE R. PARZYCH

**GILL** – It was a nice day at my school with the kids in Gill, in the simple and good days before the smartphone and Facebook. We had just gotten home from Gill Elementary School. I was at the family farm, where I still live part time in Gill, down the dirt road.

I was watching an old '80s JC Penney TV – we only had three channels and a TV antenna. You had to get up to change the channel, and also we had a VCR. I was watching one of my fave TV shows, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. (The actor from that show was Patrick Stewart, who looked just like my grandfather; my grandmother and my grandfather would laugh about that.) This was before we had cable, and during the time that I was in the Cub Scouts, before I joined the Boy Scouts.

I was outside playing with my Tonka Toys, like my “Hopto truck mountain backhoe” which looked like the real one my grandfather owned, but different, a toy version. It started to get cold, and the snow was coming down. I came inside the house, and dusk settled, just as the power went out. (At the time, before Eversource, it was Western Mass Electric Company.)

The snow lasted and got heavier, and school was cancelled. They had to send the highway superintendent, Ernie Hastings, who was in the position before LaClaire. Hastings called his workers to get the bucket loaded and the trucks out to plow.

I had to help my dad out shoveling. Then I went to my grandparents' house on the Main Road: the blue house.

My grandfather had just retired from construction in 1990, and he was still writing freelance with many publications like *Greenfield Town Crier*, *Farming Magazine*, or some trade journal that's maybe not printed anymore, and the *Local Color* book – long before the *Montague Reporter* started in 2002.

It was in the days before digital photography was the format for layout. Digital cameras back then were not very good, and were also experimental, not like today's standards. The 35mm photograph was the format back then for the printing press. And early email was dial-up: that was a hook-up from the phone to your computer; you couldn't make phone calls while you were online, like you can today. And if all that fails, you would print-paper-typewrite the story from a computer or typewriter, and send it along with 35mm prints, photos fresh from the dark room, with sticky notes with info on the back, and mail it in the mail.

My grandfather still uses a typewriter. Did you know it belonged to the WHAI local radio station before him? He still writes for the *MR*, and for Lee Publications in New York, and *Country Editor*. He also writes with the writers' group at the Gill-Montague senior center, with local senior citizens such as two wonderful and unique writers,

the late Rosalie Bolton and Frances Hemond, who I got to meet while I was filming their readings for MCTV and GCTV.

It was a pleasure and honor to meet them, along with my great friend, the local historian Ed Gregory, who grew up in Turners Falls. He is a heck of a great person, and gives great advice when you get to know him. A go-to guy on local history!

My grandfather had the Case bucket loader that he once used to plow during the Blizzard of '78. However, the Case's backhoe battery needed to be charged.

After that, my dad and I checked on my aunt Christine, my grandmother who was retired from book-keeping from the family construction business and other jobs, and was in hospice and a United Arc volunteer, to make sure she was okay. My mother was working for nursing homes then, and my dad worked at UMass.

My grandmother told me stories about growing up in Vermont on a farm. She told me a story about how her mother, my great-grandmother, gave her a lantern to see while walking to school, when she couldn't see because the snow was coming down so hard. “You will be all right,” she said she was told.

Other New England states were affected, too. I had to go down to Connecticut to stay with my other grandparents. You should've seen the highway! The cars, traffic on Route 91 from Springfield to Connecticut.

My grandparents were retired. My grandfather had a career in the military and the Air Force. A college grad, he served in World War II, the Korean War, and Vietnam. He also worked other jobs, including Hamilton Standard, down the road near Bradley Airport in Connecticut. He worked as a mechanical drafter, designing parts for airplanes, and little parts for NASA. It closed back in the late '80s.

My grandmother also worked a variety of different jobs, including as a seamstress and using big industrial sewing machines at a military factory during World War II. And they had three kids: my mother was born in the '50s, and my four aunts born in the '40s and '50s. They were all French Canadian. They traveled to a



A younger Joe R. Parzych on the 1950s Case bucket loader once used by his grandfather to plow for the state during the Blizzard of '78.

lot of different parts of the world and the US as an Air Force family before moving to Enfield in the '60s.

After the storm, I came back to Gill. We had a family tradition that goes back 50 years: my grandfather and my grandmother will get the books out, like *National Geographic* or an encyclopedia, and tell us to pick an animal out. He would then get his retired green Case bucket loader out that he once used snowplowing for the state and also working for himself.

I would sit with him while he drove. I got to hold the steering wheel, and to drive while he was holding my hands. He was driving to scoop out the snow with his front loader. He'd pile up the snow, and we would make different snow sculptures of the animals we chose.

We had fun. Just like back in the '60s, when a lady from the *Greenfield Recorder* stopped by the house with her camera. She took a picture of my late Aunt Joann, my dad, my Aunt Christine, and my late Aunt Deb when they were kids. It was interesting, because the snow sculpture was an elephant – a great form of art. It is a great memory, and one that I cherished when I was little, building a sculpture of a bunny.

The sculpture I made (pictured at left) was a bunny with whiskers. It was about 3' by 6', a foot and a half high, and everyone could see it from the road. Everyone in the neighborhood knew whose house it was, since there was construction equipment.

When we took breaks, we would have hot chocolate and a wood fire with hot dogs and burgers. We would also go to the Gill Store.

Susie and Phill Maddern owned and ran the Gill Store in those days. They pumped Mobil gas at the store,

and Susie would tell everyone local about great things going on locally, and Red Sox games. Now they live in Greenfield instead of in Gill, but they still visit their friends in Gill. We got soda and snacks, or penny candy, or rented a VHS at their store. Now the store is a tavern. This year, in 2018, it will be part of the town of Gill's 225th anniversary celebration.

I was known in the neighborhood as the kid who you went to for advice, etc. I made good friends with the other kids in the neighborhood because I was so unique. All the kids' grandparents called my grandparents for different advice about a variety of things.

My childhood was very cool. I am of Polish-American descent and am proud of my roots, all the way onto my great-great-grandparents, who lived on a farm in Gill with 13 kids, and farmed, and worked in a paper mill. It was a different world back then.

My dad always said, “Every boy or girl should pick up a shovel.” I lived by his advice as a kid, and in conclusion, I went on to high school and college and other schools to become a scholar and a jack-of-all-trades.

Joe has been a volunteer photo essay contributor to the *Montague Reporter* since 2004, was a former *Greenfield Town Crier* contributor, and works part-time at Riff's North. He is part of the United Arc, along with other great artists.

He lives part time in Gill and full time in Greenfield, and he is interested in local history. He is a Boston Red Sox and New England Patriots fan. To learn more, check out “Joe r Parzych photography and ect.” on Facebook.



Joe with the snow bunny he and his grandfather sculpted during the storm.

## Leverett Alliance Letter-Writing Campaign Supports Release of Lucio Perez

By SHARON DUNN

**LEVERETT** – Twenty-five members of the Leverett Alliance met March 15 to write letters of support for Lucio Perez, who has been in sanctuary at the First Church in Amherst since October.

The letters are collected as part of Pioneer Valley Workers Center's effort to send one thousand letters on Perez' behalf to immigration authorities. Alliance members committed to gathering more letters from neighbors and friends. (Readers interested in writing a letter can contact [Janine@educ.umass.edu](mailto:Janine@educ.umass.edu).)

Perez, facing imminent deportation to Guatemala, has lived in the US for nineteen years, has a wife and four children, and has worked most recently as a landscaper in Springfield. He has no felony record.

Russ Vernon-Jones, a leader of First Church, told how the church became involved, and of the many faith communities in the area that are supporting this effort with meals and shifts. Leverett Alliance members Winkworth, Davis, and Wolff talked of their own experiences volunteering for shifts, and they recruited four more Alliance members to take orientation and start taking shifts. (Contact [tom@tomwolff.com](mailto:tom@tomwolff.com) for more information.)

This evening's program was created by the Sanctuary committee of the Leverett Alliance, one of several action groups formed after the 2016 election.

Upcoming events sponsored by the Alliance include:

March 25: **Sing Along**. The Leverett Alliance partnering with recreation commission. 2 to 5 p.m. at the

town hall.

April 19 to 24: **Hands Across the Hills to Kentucky**. Fifteen Alliance members will travel to eastern Kentucky to continue dialogue and cultural exchange with the Kentuckians who visited Leverett in October 2017. The Pulitzer Foundation is now providing support for some activities relating to Hands Across the Hills. Visit [handsacrossthehills.org](http://handsacrossthehills.org) to see the seven-minute trailer about the October visit of Kentuckians.

May 5: **“Pop up” Pub**. At Leverett Crafts & Arts, open hours to come.

May 15: **Public Meeting** to discuss Hands Across the Hills' April visit to Kentucky. 7 p.m. at the Leverett Elementary School.

Sharon Dunn is a member of the Leverett Alliance.



Leverett Alliance members write letters to support Lucio Perez, in sanctuary at First Church in Amherst. He faces imminent deportation to Guatemala.

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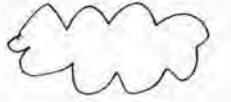
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# The Children's Page

YONDERNOD ILLUSTRATION

## Lovelights *continued from last month...*



"Well," said Chella, "I do wonder what is going on."

Suddenly she felt an irresistible urge to bring the baby out to the yard. There they stood as three flashing and whirring miniature spaceships landed with a mysterious musical sound. Chella placed little Zenith in the seat of the tiny space ship.



All four Infanterons smiled and looked with great interest around the yard. Chella and Viola looked delightedly at the sight of the cheerful little beings, and just as they



wondered what might happen next, their minds went blank, and they robotically entered the house and came out with toys in each hand.



As they passed them to the Infanterons, their minds returned to normal. The force-fields of the space ships went up with a twinkle and the space babies disappeared into the sky with the toys.

"Maybe I will start work on a mind control resistance device," said Viola.



"Yes, we needed those toys for next month's children's page," said Chella. Figaro was resting on the picnic table in his strange hat. "I guess we could learn a lot from Figaro."

*The End*



Words by BEVERLY KETCH

Illustrations by HANNAH BROOKMAN

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# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

## ONGOING EVENTS: EVERY SUNDAY

McCusker's Co-op Market, Shelburne Falls: *Celtic Sessions*. Musicians, all levels, traditional Irish music. 10:30 a.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *TNT Karaoke*. 9 p.m.

## FIRST SUNDAY MONTHLY

Green Fields Market, Greenfield: *Co-op Straight-Ahead Jazz*. Balcony. Afternoons.

## EVERY MONDAY

Greenfield Harmony Spring Session. No auditions. 6:45 p.m. Contact [mcb Brass@vermontel.net](mailto:mcb Brass@vermontel.net) for location and details.

## 2ND AND 4TH MONDAYS

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Scotty K's Open Mic*. 8 p.m.

## EVERY WEDNESDAY

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls: *Story Time*: Stories, projects, and snacks for young children and their caretakers. 10:15 a.m.

Leverett Library, Leverett: *Tales and Tunes Story Hour*. Ages 0 to 5 and caregivers. 10:30 a.m.

## 1ST AND 3RD WEDNESDAYS

The Perch (4th floor), Greenfield: *Creacion Latin Big Band & Late Night Open Mic Jam*. 20 piece ensemble play son, salsa, chacha and much more. 8 p.m. Free.

## EVERY THURSDAY

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls: *Music and Movement with Tom Carroll & Laurie Davidson*. Children and their caregivers. 10 to 10:45 a.m.

## 1ST AND 3RD THURSDAYS

Hubie's Tavern, Turners Falls: *Open Mic Night*, 7 p.m.

## 2ND AND 4TH THURSDAYS

Hubie's Tavern, Turners Falls: *Karaoke Night*, 8 p.m.

## EVERY THIRD THURSDAY

Tilton Library, S. Deerfield: *Book Discussion*. 6:30 p.m.

## EVERY FRIDAY

Hubie's Tavern, Turners Falls: *Acoustic Country with Heath Lewis*, 9 p.m.

## EVERY THIRD FRIDAY

Arms Library, Shelburne Falls: *Open Prose and Poetry Reading*. Arrive early to sign up for 5 to 10 minute slots. 7 p.m.

Element Brewing Company, Millers Falls: *Brule's Irish Band*. 6 p.m.

## EXHIBITS:

Art Garden, Shelburne Falls: *Great and Small*. Community art exhibit about the creatures we love. Closing Reception April 14 at 6 p.m. Through April.

Brattleboro Museum & Art Cen-

ter, Brattleboro: Six new Spring exhibits: *Best of Springs, Sprockets and Pulleys; 100 Views Along the Road; Bottle in the River; We Walk in Their Shadows; Gloria Garfinkel; Susan Calabria*.

Deerfield Valley Center for the Arts, Northfield: *DVAA Members Winter Show*. Painting, sculpture, photography. Through April 1.

Greenfield Gallery, Greenfield: *"Green Houses in the Connecticut River Valley of Massachusetts,"* by Peter Alan Monroe.

*Pastel Studio*. Artists from Rebecca Clark's pastel studio exhibit work with their mentor in the pastel medium. Through April.

Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne: *Our Vanishing Wild*. Watercolor portraits by Maureen Moore of endangered species. Through April.

Shelburne Arts Coop, Shelburne Falls: *Heavenly Bodies*. New multi-media work by Nina Rossi featuring back lit clouds and flying figures. March 28 through April 30. Reception April 8, 2 p.m. with music by *Uncle Hal's Crabgrass Band*.



*Bread and Puppet Theater is one of the oldest, nonprofit, self-supporting theatrical companies in the country. They are presenting The Basic Bye-bye Show at Hawks & Reed in Greenfield on Sunday, March 25 at 6 p.m. The show is a manifesto on transformation, inspired by Albrecht Dürer's apocalyptic woodcuts, birch branches lost during an ice storm, and the daily news. Bread and Puppet director Peter Schumann says of the show: "Our show proclaims the Possibilitarian's basic bye-bye to capitalism in order to welcome the 1,000 alternatives to this rotten system."*

Photographs of houses by Monroe, who grew up in Queens, NY and moved to western Massachusetts in the 1970s. Through March 31.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Rodney Madison*. Recent work by local painter with an exuberant style. Through April.

Historic Northampton, Northampton: *Single Room Occupancy: Portraits and Stories from Northampton Lodging, 1976-2016*. Northampton Lodging was demolished in 2016. Cassandra Holden interviewed residents and Paul Shoul took portraits of them just before they were relocated. Tracing the waning years of boarding houses in Northampton and existence at the edge of the community. Through June 10.

Hope and Feathers Gallery, Amherst. *Spring in the City: Urban Landscapes* by painter Mishael Coggeshall-Burr of Montague. Through March.

Leverett Library: *Potpourri* Paintings by artist Louise Minks of Leverett. Through March.

Nina's Nook, Turners Falls: *Slice of Humanity*. Five artists depicting the human figure in unique portraits: Robert Bent, Suzanne Conway, Lauren Paradise, Nina Rossi and Jeff Wrench. Through March.

Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne Falls: *Recent Work: Artspace*

## EVENTS:

### THURSDAY, MARCH 22

Leverett Library. *Ukulele Play-Along* with Julie Stepanek. Ukuleles available to borrow for the program and even a uke to check out and take home. 7 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Matt Stamell CD Release Party*. 7 p.m. \$

Root Cellar, Greenfield: *Howlin Thursday*. Rock-n-roll, blues and soul. 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Hilary Chase*. Songs from the soul. 8:30 p.m.

### FRIDAY, MARCH 23

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Josie's Magical Flute*. Improv comedy troupe with Julie Waggoner, Sally Ekus, and Mandy Anderson. 7:30 p.m. \$

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield. *Tribute to the Cranberries*. A benefit for The People's Fund, featuring *Bourquensweeno*, Steve Koziol, Haley Morgan, Christopher Cleveland, Vanessa Brewster, and more. 8 p.m. \$

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Fixtures and The Forms*, two indie-rock bands from Brooklyn. 9:30 p.m.

### SATURDAY, MARCH 24

Deja Brew, Wendell: *2 The Moon*. Enjoy a great night of singing along with Shelley Hines & Carrie Ferguson as they sing

all the great songs that you know and love. 7 p.m.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *All Cooped Up Concert*. Featuring folk, country, blues, bluegrass, singer/songwriter, comedy, pop and Americana. Described as "festive and upbeat" with "yummy refreshments." Co-sponsored by the Friends of the Great Falls Discovery Center and the Franklin County Musicians Cooperative, presenters of Coop Concerts, a series of free community concerts, Thursday evenings, spring and summer since 2004 at The Energy Park, Miles Street, in Greenfield. Suggested donation: \$5 to 15. 7 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Trailerpark*. Rock and roll machine and Valley favorite. 7 p.m. \$

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Japanese Breakfast, Modern Lives and Emily Reo*. Singer-songwriter, indie-rock band, and pop-musician from Brooklyn lined up. 9 p.m. \$

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Gol-dilocks and The 3 Bears*. Acoustic folk. 9:30 p.m.

### SUNDAY, MARCH 25

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Bread & Puppet* presents *The Basic Bye-Bye* show. A manifesto on transformation using theater and puppets. 6 p.m. \$

The Brick House, Turners Falls: *Wandering Shade, Willie Lane, Head of Wantastiquet*. Psychedelic and experimental guitar music with folk references. 8 p.m. \$

### TUESDAY, MARCH 27

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Comedy in the Wheelhouse with John Ross*. Award-winning comedian and writer Jon Ross (*Not Necessarily the News, Cat-Dog, Lucky Louie*) presents a showcase of the Valley's best comedic talent. 8 p.m. \$

Smith College Alumni House, Northampton: Poetry reading with *Ocean Vuong*. Born on a rice farm near Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, Ocean Vuong came with family to live in Hartford as a toddler, and before turning 30 was hailed by BuzzFeed Books as one of "32 Essential Asian American Writers." He recently joined the faculty of the UMass MFA creative writing program. 7:30 p.m.

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Jim Eagan and Dennis Avery*. Vocals, guitar and dobro; folk and originals. 6:30 p.m.

### THURSDAY, MARCH 29

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Cecilia Zabala Trio*. Zabala is a guitarist, singer, composer and songwriter drawing on a rich mixture of influences, from Argentinian folklore, jazz, tango, and Brazilian music. 7 p.m. \$

Turners Falls: *Shad Ladder Radio Hour*. Monthly live-recorded radio hour with music, skits, readings. 7:30 p.m. \$

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GRIST from page B1

functional purpose.

"It's common in modern architecture for people to get all the details completely wrong, especially in neo-classical styles," says Silver. The main function of columns today is no longer architectural, but rather cultural – they communicate associations like a classical sense of taste, wealth, power, and stateliness.

Similarly, gas stations like The Mill use borrowed form and ornament to associate themselves with their version of an idealized Olde New England, which often includes values like

craftsmanship, thrift, self-reliance, and a connection to the land.

Unfortunately, selection and propagation of images like these contributes to the narrative that the land here has been inevitably, naturally, and forever begotten to European settlers. In its memorialization and interpretation of the landscape, The Mill performs the same act of one-sided story-telling as the monument to the genocidal Captain William Turner across the street does.

Whether or not The Mill is supposed to evoke a grist mill or a barn, it is neither of these – it is a gas station, deli, and market. Its symbolic associations with a nostalgic early New England industry or agriculture are being used as part of a branding strategy to sell gas and food products not produced in Franklin County.

While appropriation of agricultural livelihoods, promotion of the colonial narrative, and coercive sales tactics like these are nothing new and not necessarily even blameworthy, Summit Distributing should rectify the confusion. In using ornamental vernacular symbols on a building of modern construction and modern materials, a builder should strive to create an image of highest clarity.

If Summit wished to build a gas station that fits into the historical context of Riverside, either a barn or a mill would have been acceptable, but not a chimera of the two. The Mill should either be a building immediately recognizable as a mill, or be renamed as The Barn.



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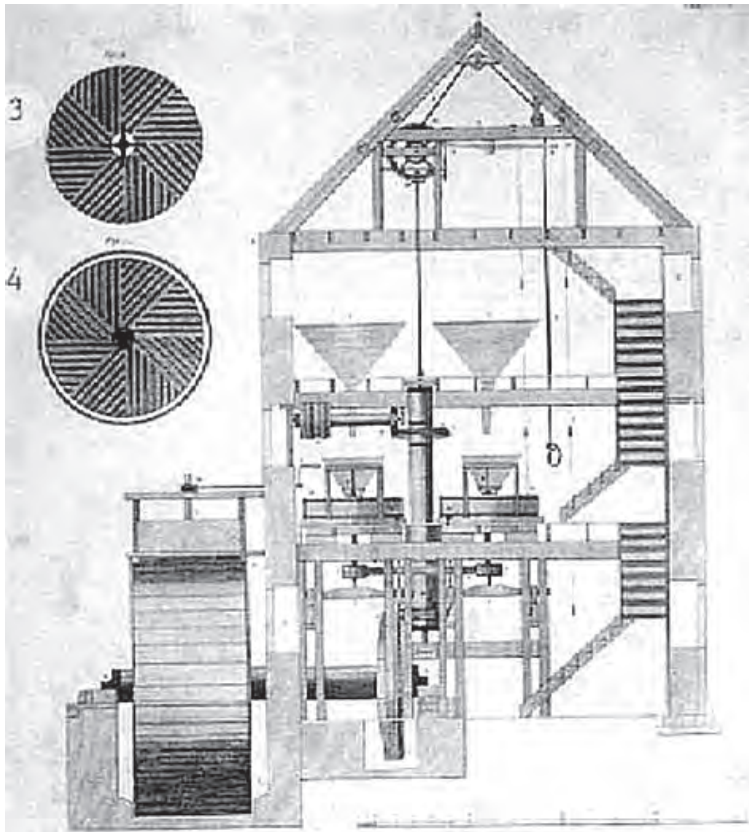
Top: Alex Peterkin browses the paper at Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area outside Las Vegas, NV.



Bottom: Monte Belmonte takes us to the beach in San Juan, PR.

ON THE ROAD

Going somewhere? Take us with you! Send photos to editor@montaguereporter.org.



Drawing of a mill plan, front view, from The Experienced Millwright by Andrew Gray, Archibald Constable, Edinburgh, 1804.

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Turners Falls Pizza House advertisement featuring a pizza image and contact information.

About-Face Computer Solutions advertisement with a circular logo and contact details.

Spring Tune-up Time advertisement for lawn and garden equipment servicing.

Bob's Home Pros advertisement with a house graphic and contact information.

Richie Richardson FAB advertisement featuring fashion models and contact details.

Cruise & Travel Company advertisement with an anchor logo and contact information.

A Beautiful Smile Starts With Healthy Teeth advertisement for a dental practice.

Diemand Farm advertisement listing local products and catering services.

MUSIC & MOVIES advertisement for a local entertainment venue.

Follow the Sun into the Future advertisement for AllEarth Solar and Greenfield Solar Store.

The Gill Tavern advertisement with a brick border and contact information.

Reward Yourself advertisement for Greenfield Savings Bank's Buzz Points program.

Serving Home Grown Farm-inspired Food & Drink advertisement for Hope and Live.