

# The Montague Reporter

YEAR 17 – NO. 18

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EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

FEBRUARY 28, 2019

## Public Health Director to Retire in June; Town Considers Shared Nurse, Inspector

By MIKE JACKSON

**MONTAGUE** – Gina McNeely, who has served since April 2000 as the town's director of public health, has announced that she will retire in June. Last week, McNeely and the board of health presented the town finance committee with a proposal

to restaff the health department – which has been without a public health nurse since 2016, and without a health inspector since November – by seeking staff-sharing arrangements for both positions with neighboring towns.

The plan came under scrutiny during its first hearing before the fin

com February 20, and the board of health was encouraged to return on March 6 with a firmer proposal.

"If you were going to be in the position for another 5 or 10 years, then this would have a whole different flavor for me," finance committee vice chair Michael Naughton told McNeely. "Here's a plan that you have, that you're excited about, that you're going to expect someone you don't even know who they are to make work. Trying to make recommendations... for the FY'20 budget is premature."

"You wonder why I'm leaving," a frustrated McNeely shot back.

While the department's current budget allots a salary for a 25-hour-a-week health inspector, Montague eliminated its 20-hour-a-week public health nurse position in the midst of a major budget crisis in 2008. Since then, McNeely has hired three nurses at 5 hours a week, but was unable to retain any for long.

see **HEALTH** page A4

*Clockwise from left: Montague finance committee members Jen Audley and Fred Bowman, board of health members Mike Nelson, Chris Boutwell, and Al Cummings, and health director Gina McNeely discuss health department staffing proposals.*

### GILL-MONTAGUE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

## Dismay Over Negative "Powertown" Verdict

By MIKE JACKSON

**GILL-MONTAGUE** – The group charged with studying Turners Falls High School over an 18-month period and devising a plan to restructure the school around competency-based education (CBE) principles reported this week that it did not believe the district was ready to focus on making such a change.

"Recent concerns about equity in the schools have led us to revisit this," Rebecca Mazur, project director of Powertown in the 21st Century (PT21), told the Gill-Montague school committee Tuesday night. "Sufficient support does not currently exist to carry this project forward in the way we had originally planned."

Mazur added that the medical leave and planned departure of principal Annie Leonard was another contributing factor. "Whole-school transformation is primarily a leadership-level challenge," she said.

Around 30 people from the school and partner organizations – including Greenfield Community College, the Franklin-Hampshire Regional Employment Board, and the Gill-Montague Community School Partnership – have been working on several teams in the planning project, which is funded by a grant from the Boston-based Barr Foundation.

see **GMRSD** page A5

### MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

## Third Federal Grant Will Allow Study of English Retreat Route

By JEFF SINGLETON

When the project to study the "Battle of Turners Falls" was first proposed, questions were raised about whether the 1676 event to be studied was really a battle, or only a massacre at a Native encampment on the Connecticut River that turned the tide of King Philip's War. But after several years of archaeological research funded by the National Park Service, the event seems more like a battle that Native forces won, David Brule, who chairs the project's advisory committee, told the Montague selectboard at its February 25 meeting.

Researchers from Mashantucket Pequot Museum Research Center discovered a trail of musket balls leading from what is now the Wagon Wheel restaurant on the northeast side of the Connecticut River and Route 2, west though Greenfield's Factory Hollow and beyond. The majority appear to be from Indian firearms, and indicate a well-organized counterattack on retreating English troops.

Researchers have estimated that the casualty rate on the English side, which committed the massacre, may have been above 40%.

see **RETREAT** page A7

## Erving Pushes Back on Requested Elementary School Budget Growth

By KATIE NOLAN

On Monday night, the Erving selectboard and finance committee gave tentative approval of a draft \$10 million budget for FY'20. The board and fin com reviewed budget requests department by department, with most departments level-funded with FY'19. However, the school committee requested an increase of \$186,000 (6.1%) over last year in the elementary school budget. The board and fin com decided to ask the school committee to reduce the request to \$92,000, a 3% increase.

The town budget will be finalized on March 11.

The board recommended increases to several line items: an-

nual physicals for firefighters, now required under health and safety regulations; support counseling for public safety employees; a period of overlap between hiring a new library director and the retirement of the current director; a new staff member for the police department; seasonal decorations on town properties; and employee benefits.

The board has not yet decided on the cost of living adjustment for town employee salaries.

Selectboard chair Scott Bastarache, who served as school committee chair before being elected to the selectboard, said he had discussed the elementary budget with financial officer Bruce Turner.

see **ERVING** page A5

## A ROUTE RESTORED



*The state Department of Transportation announced Wednesday morning that the so-called "Green" bridge across the Turners Falls power canal had reopened to traffic. The bridge had been closed for repairs since early January. Its bump has been reduced.*

## The End-Of-Life Web: Building Peer Support For Death Workers

By ANNABEL LEVINE

**SHUTESBURY** – Dina Stander wants to talk about death.

Standar, whose titles include funeral celebrant and end-of-life doula, is looking to break the taboos around talking about mortality. Although death is one of humankind's only guarantees, the cultural conversation is often centered on fear and avoidance, rather than acceptance. We fight disease like it's a war, and we rate the health of our activities by how many years they keep us away from death. Death is a part of life, yet talking about this everyday occurrence in a positive light is considered morbid, and discouraged.

Standar never planned to be someone fostering conversations about death, but life gave her a nudge when she experienced a season of loss a decade ago, losing two mentors and her mother-in-law in the span of 30 days.

With a heavy heart, Standar found herself in an airport on the way to California to preside over her first funeral. A minister in the Universal Life Church since 1978, she had presided over weddings before, but this would be the first time presiding over someone's end-of-life celebration. As she made her way across the country, Standar asked strangers in the airport to tell her their funeral stories for inspiration.

One stranger was a handsome



*Shutesbury's Dina Stander helped found the Northeast Death Care Collaborative.*

flower farmer from Oregon, on his way to buy tulip bulbs in Amsterdam. Standar and the man struck up a conversation while waiting for their respective flights.

He told her about his industry, where many of the flower farmers were confirmed bachelors. In his experience he thought his colleagues to be an introverted and quiet bunch, so when a colleague died and he was asked to speak at the funeral, he was surprised to find he was able to make these men laugh.

The idea of this room full of serious men sharing a laugh in grief made Standar also laugh in grief. When she arrived in California, she used his story and others to inform

see **DEATH** page A8

## The Week in Turners Falls Sports



*Standing tall: the Turners Falls High School Cheer Team, shown at a recent practice. The squad placed third at the Holyoke High School Cheerleading Competition last Saturday. Their exceptional program received no penalty point deductions.*

By MATT ROBINSON

The sun set this week on the winter sports season for both Franklin Tech and Turners Falls. The two post-season hopefuls, the Tech Girls' basketball team and the Turners Boys' basketball team, both lost in the playoffs.

Meanwhile, the Turners Falls Cheer Team ended the season with a third-place finish in Holyoke.

### Girls' Basketball

Palmer 59 – TFHS 31  
Ware 67 – FCTS 47

On Wednesday, February 20, the Turners Girls lost to the Palmer Blue Panthers, 59-31. The Lady Thunder could only muster 1 point in the first quarter, and despite outscoring Palmer in the second, were unable to make up the deficit. The loss spoiled Turners' 1-game winning streak.

Five Powertown ladies scored: Dabney Rollins (13), Lily Spera (9), Hailey Bogosz (5), and Eliza Johnson and Lucy Spera (2 each).

And on Tuesday February 26, the Franklin Tech Lady Eagles were knocked out of the D-IV playoffs by the Ware Indians.

Tech overcame a 9-point first period deficit to pull

see **SPORTS** page A7



# The Montague Reporter

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## How Best To Grow?

In recent memory, much of the work of public administration – including that of towns and school districts – has been in managing austerity: how to stunt growth, cut corners, squeeze staff and cut their jobs into part-time roles, replace retirees by spreading their work around, and scan the horizon for unrelated sources of revenue.

Stunting human institutions to grow within the miserly means the market provides for without utterly breaking them is a special skillset. And it isn't the root problem.

But when it goes on too long, management becomes *synonymous* with austerity, and managers may not know what to do with good news. If the "economic recovery" that began in 2011-12 is finally washing up on Franklin County's shores, we'd better make good use

of it, because we don't know how long it will last.

Maybe the best thing to do in a growth year is to ask the workers who've stuck it out what *they* most need. We thought of this when we heard the Montague finance committee say they didn't know how to weigh a request for a new public health nurse against staffing requests from other departments.

At Great Falls Middle School and Turners Falls High School, where years of measured cuts and tough decisions seem to have created a tragic confluence of problems that blew up this year, it's hard to know just where the fixing needs to start, but there's still an opportunity.

Rebuilding healthy institutions will require an open, participatory process, and deserves the support and encouragement of the public.



*Lauralyn Brown poses with Jada, her 6-year-old Bernese Mountain Dog, in her new suite of offices on Millers Falls Road.*

*Dr. Brown has operated a veterinary practice in Turners Falls since 1994.*

*She got her undergraduate degree at Hampshire College – the only college, she says, that would let her bring her dog to school.*

## The Teachers' Wish List

*The following document was submitted to the Gill-Montague school committee this week by the Gill-Montague Education Fund, the teachers' union. District policy recommends that communication between staff and the committee is filtered through the administration, which also draws up a staffing plan and budget for the committee's approval. We have no reason to doubt the teachers' recommendations would be taken seriously, but are sharing this document here because we think their insights can help the public understand what is happening at our schools.*

Dear School Committee Members,

As you consider the budget and how the district will spend this year's surplus and the overall increase in Chapter 70 funds in the annual budget, please review these needs identified by educators throughout the district.

*From Sheffield Elementary:*

Additional SPED teachers/paras, additional ELL support (another Spanish speaker, in particular), and CPR training for paras and/or teaching staff.

*From Hillcrest Elementary:*

Full time SPED teacher with skills to serve a growing population of students on the autism spectrum and life skills students. Both Sheffield and the HS/MS have such a position.

Full time adjustment counselor. Currently the school has one 3 days per week, with no crisis support for two days per week.

Full time COTA; full time SLPA; first grade para; part-time early childhood education coordinator; more levelled texts; playground revitalization.

*From Great Falls Middle School:*

In recent years, budget cuts have left the middle school with a skeletal staff, critically depleting student supports. Our students need addi-

tional resources in two key areas: counseling and tier two supports.

As a high-needs district, many of our students have experienced significant trauma, and are unable to function in classes without emotional support during the day.

We have less than two full-time counselors shared between middle and high school, plus one middle school guidance counselor, to meet these needs.

This means that over a dozen students each week do not get the therapeutic check-ins that they need, greatly impacting their educational performance as well as personal well-being (this impacts the high school and middle school).

The middle school needs at least one additional adjustment counselor to address this shortage.

Until the 2018-2019 school year, the middle school had tier two reading and math intervention classes, structured into the Related Arts portion of the schedule. About one third of our students rely on this type of small group support to succeed with grade-level curriculum.

However, with the Math Apps position cut this past year, math support is completely gone, and as a result the Reading Apps classes are up to 25 students, a scale at which tier two support is impossible for reading as well.

In other words, cutting one position effectively removed the

available interventions for two subject areas.

The lack of support has led to more students struggling in their core classes, as well as in the remaining RA classes, such as theater and Health, in which larger class sizes prevent teachers from adequately supporting students whose reading ability hinders their access to the curriculum.

Staff and the public were notified that math teachers would absorb these tier two interventions into the Study Skills period – but this is not a feasible solution, since all teachers are fully occupied with facilitating the other safety nets that occur during this time.

It is an insult to our professional dedication to assume that we are not already using every opportunity, including after school time, to help our students in every way we can. It is unacceptable to fully eviscerate tier two supports that so many of our students rely on.

At the bare minimum, we need Math Apps reinstated.

*From Turners Falls High School:*

At least one more full time adjustment counselor.

A new 16-person van to serve expanding life-skills community activities and service district-wide field trip demand.

Restore the separation of honors and non-honors classes.

## Letters to the Editors

### From the Desk of a Shotgun Survivor

Drop your weapons, America! And make your country great again.

The increase of recurring incidents of gun violence in America today is a symptom of a sick society's dependency on weapons. A gun, a mechanism designed to cause harm, has become a central figure in the lives of too many Americans. And we are all paying the price for it.

More and more of our citizens are worshipping a piece of steel above God, family, or vocation. I do understand why this has happened: in essence really, God, family and vocation have eluded these forsaken people... and after all, we all need something to lean on.

For many, a gun is no longer a tool, but a "crutch". It is used primarily to alleviate one's insecurities, while falsely boosting confidence, self-esteem and personal power.

Guns are the next "opiate" to hit the scene. And gun advocates and gun manufacturers are as irresponsible and as greedy as some doctors and the pharmaceutical industry are in this country.

Today, in hospital emergency rooms all over America, sick people are being convinced: "You have the right to control your pain." And in bars and at dinner tables around our nation, that same propaganda is

pushed out sounding something like this: "You have a right to defend yourself." Which translates: You have the right to use any method available to you to avoid dealing with challenging issues.

Too many Americans are using their weapon as a placebo. The outcome? Men (and women) who are in spiritual and emotional pain are turning to their guns for relief, and that relief comes in the form of the threat of violence or unspeakable acts of slaughter.

Guns do not support a person's personal growth. It is like giving a child who can't swim a life jacket instead of teaching the child the skills he needs not to drown.

A gun doesn't make a person stronger, it makes him predisposed to solve problems with violence. And violence is a plague that is creeping across our nation at a rapid rate.

I know how to make America great again: Let's give up our "crutches," and challenge ourselves to be stronger. Or encourage the people we love to be the best versions of themselves without their guns.

Do the unthinkable: drop your weapon.

**Evelyn Augusto**  
**Turners Falls**

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Compiled by CHRIS PELLERIN

I think I speak for most people when I say that I’m ready to be done with February’s weather. I’m looking forward to March and **maple syrup season**.

I’ve been in contact with some local sugar houses to see if they have any public events in March, and will let you know if I hear of anything sweet going on here in Montague.

On the first Friday of each month (March 1, this month), children eight and older are invited to the Carnegie Library for a **mystery activity** from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Some possibilities are crafts, science experiments, and tech-tools. Each month there will be something different!

On Saturday, March 2, the library will also hold a **book sale** from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

The Turners Falls branch of Greenfield Savings Bank hosts Carolyn Saltman from 10 to 11 a.m. on Saturday, March 2 in the Community Room. Ms. Saltman brings her expertise as a leader, communicator, and career coach to this interactive presentation designed to give women a lively taste of a **Speaker Sisterhood** meeting.

The Speaker Sisterhood is a growing national network of public speaking clubs that help women of all ages develop more clear and confident voices in their professional and personal lives, all while having

fun with a small group of supportive, motivated women. Clubs currently exist all over the Pioneer Valley, meeting twice a month. Check out the site [www.SpeakerSisterhood.com](http://www.SpeakerSisterhood.com) and bring your questions.

Coffee and light refreshments will be provided by Greenfield Savings Bank; no reservations are required.

Planning ahead, you will need reservations if you’d like to play **Bingo** at Greenfield Savings Bank next Saturday, March 9. These games are hugely popular and so much fun, so call now to reserve your place at (413) 863-4316. Seating is on a first call, first reserved basis. Due to limited space, no one will be admitted without a reservation, so don’t say I didn’t warn you!

The details: 10 to 11:30 a.m., Deb Fritz will be the guest caller, and the bank will provide cards, gag prizes, and some light refreshments.

The Montague Elks wanted me to let you know that they will be hosting a public **Family Fun Night** with pizza, music, and dancing with DJ Bobby C, raffles, and lots of fun on Saturday, March 2 at 6 p.m. There will be a cash bar for the adults. Children are free, and a \$5 donation per adult is requested to benefit the Elks’ activities committee.

Also, on Saturday, March 16, in celebration of **St. Patrick’s Day**, the Elks will host a traditional corned beef dinner for only \$11 per person! Stop in to prepay and sign up in the

lounge by March 9. Dinner will be served from 4:45 to 7 p.m. in the hall. Eat in or take it to go!

Call (413) 863-2521 with questions. The Montague Elks Lodge is located at 1 Elks Avenue (off L Street), Turners Falls.

The **Great Falls Discovery Center** is open five days a week in March, Wednesdays through Sundays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., but will be closed Sunday, March 17 and Sunday, March 24.

Gill-Montague students get a half day off on Wednesday, March 6. Students are invited to join Olivia and Sam from the Student Conservation Association for a fun-filled hour on Precipitation from 1 to 2 p.m. Learn all about **the flow of the water cycle** and the different forms that water takes. For ages six to 12, accompanied by an adult, but all are welcome for stories, activities, and crafts!

At 5 p.m. on Thursday, March 7, Full Circle Elementary School, located at 21 Parmenter Road, Bernardston, will be presenting a **History of American Music Fair**. Full Circle School students in grades one through six will take on the roles of famous American musicians like Duke Ellington, Patsy Cline, Jimi Hendrix, BB King, Woody Guthrie, and many more. The Fair is free and open to the public.

The event will give prospective families a chance to see the school in action. A small, independent elementary school now in its 45th year, Full Circle uses a one-room schoolhouse approach to foster a love of learning. It emphasizes project-based learning, problem-solving skills, as well as independent and small-group work. For more information, contact John Friends at (413) 648-9468 or [fullcircleschool1973@gmail.com](mailto:fullcircleschool1973@gmail.com).

Piti Theatre’s 10th annual **SYR-UP: One Sweet Performing Arts Festival**, will take place in Shelburne Falls. Experience a unique Hilltown tradition where the joy of performing arts meets the sweetness of sap!

This celebration of spring for family audiences starts Saturday, March 9 at Shelburne-Buckland Community Center, 53 Main Street with a Pancake Party at 11 a.m. Piti’s musical “Olde Coleraine” will be performed at 2:30 p.m. Award-winning physical comedian Alex the Jester headlines at 3:30 p.m., followed by his teen/adult workshop *Primal Talk: Non-Verbal Stuff Made Fun*. There will be free Real Pickles, and a Red Sox raffle. Tickets are \$12, \$10 for students and seniors, and \$5 for children.

The festival continues for a second day on Saturday, March 23. Piti Theatre’s Jonathan Mirin, clown-dancer Narieka Masla, pianist Laura Josephs and vocalist Christian Schwedbler share their works-in-progress at The Barn at 31 Water Street in Shelburne Falls; this event is free but reservations are strongly suggested. Get more information at [www.ptco.org/syrup](http://www.ptco.org/syrup) or call (800) 838-3006.

Non-perishable food products from Franklin County farms will be available for purchase in connection with the new exhibit, “**From Fields to Table**,” at the Deerfield Valley Art Association Gallery and Gift Shop, 105 Main Street in Northfield.

Local farmers will have their products – including dill pickles, bread and butter pickles, tomato sauce, jam, and maybe even maple syrup – in the gallery through March 31, when the exhibit ends. The gallery’s winter hours are Friday and Saturday, 12 to 5 p.m., and Sunday 12 to 4 p.m., but they may be closed if the weather is bad.

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

## GUEST EDITORIAL Why Run for Montague Town Meeting?

By JEN AUDLEY

Around this time last year, I wrote an article for this newspaper encouraging people who live in Montague to run for town meeting. My thinking was that it was a logical first step for someone interested in local politics – town meeting member is an elected office that’s easy to run for (only 10 signatures needed to get on the ballot), a modest time commitment (just a few meetings a year), and an important role (town meeting approval is required for many big decisions about the town’s budget, borrowing, and rules for land use, among other things).

Most small towns in Massachusetts have open town meetings, and places that are bigger have mayors and city councils. Municipalities in Montague’s size range can elect to have a representative town meeting, which is what we have. 126 elected members represent the town’s 8400+ residents – twenty-one individuals from each of six equally populous precincts.

This year, at least seven seats will be in the running for each precinct. Nomination papers for those seats are available now at Town Hall.

However, after seeing and hearing comments like these after last week’s Special Town Meeting, I’ve been doing some reflecting about whether I should continue encouraging my friends and neighbors to run.

*“Town meeting was a special kind of excruciating and mostly pointless tonight.”*

*“The same old white men bicker every time over little stuff no one else cares about.”*

*“The whole format is designed to entertain this kind of thing super-politely even when the whole room is quite uncomfortable.”*

The observations above are not inaccurate, and it is difficult for me to suggest that people volunteer to be a captive audience for an experience that may not feel respectful or relevant.

At last week’s town meeting, the people who had the most to say were similar in some ways: they are white, male, and over 50, and they have all been actively involved in civic life in Montague for decades. The moderator knows them all – in fact, he called on several of them by their first names.

These guys have been riding the rollercoaster of local politics together for years, and they have each contributed a lot. While I don’t always agree with them, and I do wish they could be more succinct, they’ve taught me a lot.

I worry about the impression people get about town meetings from remarks like those above, or from Jeff Singleton’s reporting in last week’s issue, which included quotes from eight men and just one woman. Listening to and sitting through what those “same old white men” have to say is a big part of what Montague town meeting is about right now. But it doesn’t have to stay that way.

For one thing, women are not as underrepresented at town meeting as you might think. In terms of air time, we’re still a long way from parity: Mike Jackson reviewed the video of the meeting on MCTV’s Vimeo channel, and noted that women spoke for less than 11 minutes of the two-plus hours we were in session!

But I have been keeping track of how many women speak in each town meeting for several years now, and by that measure, participation by women is rising.

Also, because I’m a member of the Finance Committee, I have the opportunity to sit onstage and I can see who’s actually in the room at town meetings. I can tell you that the group I see from that vantage point is more diverse than you may think.

I verified the accuracy of my impressions by reviewing the sign-in sheets from special and annual town meetings going back to FY’14 last weekend. One thing I learned is that at each of

those meetings, at least 40% of elected town meeting members had feminine first names.

I also verified that the composition of Montague’s town meeting is getting closer to reflecting the diversity of our community. For instance, Precincts 5 (downtown Turners) and 6 (Montague City, the Patch, and Greenfield Road) are filling more of their seats more consistently, resulting in more equitable geographic representation.

And while the numbers are still small, in the past few years the elected body that represents our citizenry has gained more members who are people of color, people whose first language was not English, LGBTQI and non-binary people, people who are tenants, people in their twenties and thirties, people who are caregivers for small children, and people who do not own vehicles.

So there are reasons to be hopeful! Here are some of my specific hopes for the coming year:

- I hope those who are newly elected to town meeting will stick around for a while, come to meetings prepared, and do what they can to make a positive impression.
  - Members who are feeling ready to be done – including those who occupy seats but rarely attend meetings – should consider stepping down and making space for someone new to have a turn.
  - Members who talk a lot – you know who you are! – could reach out to newer members before the annual town meeting in May and help them learn the ropes.
  - The moderator should think about what he can do to make our town meetings feel more inclusive and less like a performance by the old boys’ club.
- If you are a registered voter in Montague, I hope you will consider joining us!

Jen Audley is a town meeting member for Precinct 4.

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OPEN STUDIO SUNDAYS in Leyden Come with an idea or picture, or just a creative spirit. 2 to 5 p.m., \$35. Bring a friend or family member, get \$5 off. RSVP a week ahead.

KIDS AND TEENS' HAND BUILDING & THROWING CLASS In Leyden, Tuesdays, 4 to 5:30 p.m. Starting March 26. Six weeks for \$175.

Rhonda Wainshilbaum has taught art in schools for 30 years and is a potter and mosaic artist. (413) 624-5175, [rhondawain@verizon.net](mailto:rhondawain@verizon.net)

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GUEST EDITORIAL

By H. PATRICIA HYNES

MONTAGUE – *Hope and US Aid at the Border*, the title of a recent *New York Times* video deodorizes the US attempt to overthrow President Maduro of socialist Venezuela and replace him with a hand-picked member of the Venezuelan elite, capitalist class.

As the major media presents it, the US is altruistically rushing to feed a people in economic crisis. And, of course, our government knows what is best for the Venezuelan people – just as we did for Afghani, Iraqi and Vietnamese peoples.

Yet, photos of mass rallies reveal that millions of darker-skinned – indigenous and mixed-race – Venezuelans of poorer classes support their elected president, while smaller numbers of white descendants of early Spanish colonizers back the US-selected and designated new president, a legislator named Juan Guaidó. Our troops and aid anywhere near Venezuela smell like *regime change*.

How to make sense of this? First, let’s acknowledge a major contradiction at the heart of our Trojan horse of “humanitarian aid” at the Venezuelan border. Trump has fixated on pulling the US out of UN treaties, UN agencies, maybe NATO, Syria and Afghanistan, with the mantra that we need to stop fixing the world. Why, then, stir up a new conflict in South America? If we want to give aid, we should give it through the Red Cross, already in Venezuela.

HEALTH from page A1

“It just wasn’t worth coming in for five hours,” she explained to the *Reporter*.

The proposal would add a full-time nurse to the department, and largely offset the cost by contracting the majority of their time to two or more nearby towns. McNeely said this Wednesday that she had spoken with one town that may be interested, and had been told of a second. She compared the arrangement to the animal control officer position shared with Deerfield and Greenfield.

Additionally, the department hopes to increase the hours for the incoming inspector – who would be hired by the incoming director – from 25 to 35, and contract the additional hours to a partner town.

McNeely said that she has been covering inspections, “and I’m behind, for sure – and I’m doing the best I can, but I definitely need some help.... I’m just really, really busy.” She said a significant amount of her time is taken up with “housing complaints, nuisance complaints, food establishments, the swimming pool at the high school, [and] all the septic system plan review tests....”

“When I started here,” she added, “downtown Turners was pretty quiet, and it’s grown. “It’s beautiful – I love to see it – [but] we have a lot

Second, what menace is Venezuela to us? None at all, but as with Cuba, the US government is struck apoplectic by socialism, as if it is a threat to our national security.

Well maybe it is, if we consider national security in its truest sense of human well-being and security. Venezuela, like Cuba and the social democrat countries of Europe, dramatically lowered child poverty, infant mortality, illiteracy, and homelessness when compared to the wealthier US. Here youth poverty, infant mortality, incarceration, income inequality and obesity are highest of all the developed countries.

Further, if the Trump administration cares so about the looming economic crisis in Venezuela and the growing need for food and medications, why has it assisted Saudi Arabia in its war on Yemen, which has generated the worst humanitarian crisis in the world? Why has it left Puerto Rico to wither and waste away from the devastation of Hurricane Maria? Why has it callously separated migrant children fleeing violence in Central America01 from their parents?

And why has our government compounded its crushing economic sanctions on Venezuela, while offering crumbs in humanitarian aid?

Finally, it’s not possible to dissociate our intrusion into Venezuelan politics from oil, given that country has the largest proven oil reserves in the world. Have we learned nothing from our war in Iraq and the CIA-induced overthrow in 1953 of the democratically elected prime minis-

more restaurants,” as well as multiple large events every year that require vendor inspections.

Board of health member Mike Nelson said the department had “at least one community in mind” for the shared inspector arrangement, which he described as “a neighboring community that Gina’s working with right now.”

The fin com did not take a vote at the February 20 meeting, and its six members present expressed a range of reaction. But more than one wondered why the new staffing proposal seemed to be drawn up so late into the FY’20 budget season.

“This is an aggressive plan,” fin com chair John Hanold said.

“You guys told us to think big – we thought big,” Nelson replied.

“I think we asked if you *had* thought big,” Naughton interjected.

Fin com member Jen Audley said she felt it could pose “a lot of risk” to allocate money toward expanding town staff without a guarantee of the revenue that would offset it.

“When you come back in a couple weeks,” she told board of health members Nelson, Chris Boutwell, and Al Cummings, “I think you should be prepared to explain, why now – why do we need to do all these things right now?”

“It’s partly the rushed nature

ter Mohammad Mosaddeq, after he nationalized Iran’s oil?”

The arc of US militarism across the 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the 21<sup>st</sup> is neither moral nor does it bend toward justice. At each end of this ongoing arc, the words of two military veterans of US foreign wars distill and corroborate the US history of imperial reach.

Brigadier General Smedley Butler, born in 1881, began his career as a teenage Marine combat soldier assigned to Cuba and Puerto Rico during the US invasion of those islands. He fought next in the US war in the Philippines, ostensibly against Spanish imperialism but ultimately against the Philippine revolution for independence. He gained the highest rank and a host of medals during subsequent US occupations and military interventions in Central America and the Caribbean, popularly known as the Banana Wars.

As Butler confessed in his iconoclastic book *War Is a Racket*, he was “a bully boy for American corporations,” making countries safe for US capitalism. More an isolationist than anti-war, he nonetheless nailed the war profiteers – racketeers, in his unsparing lexicon – for the blood on their hands. War is the oldest, most profitable racket, he wrote – one in which billions of dollars are made for millions of lives destroyed.

Making the world “safe for democracy” was, at its core, making the world safe for war profits. Of diplomacy Butler wrote, “The State Department...is always talking about peace but thinking about

of this,” Naughton said. “I don’t blame you for being frustrated, but I don’t see the sudden urgency to move ahead with this – and I’d also like to hear from the personnel committee, at some point, on the bigger picture of possible needs for other people in town.”

The finance committee has also heard from the highway and police departments that staff increases would be welcome, he said. “We’ve gotta make a budget recommendation within a couple months, at most.”

Nelson asked to take a “quick pulse” of the fin com on the nurse idea. “I’m hesitant to have Gina be reaching out to other communities, and getting them excited and thinking something’s happening, if it sounds like we’re leaning towards that being a FY’21 or beyond item,” he explained.

“I’m feeling this is very sudden, frankly,” Naughton replied.

“It is sudden, Mike, because this department has been understaffed, under-respected, misunderstood for 20 years,” Gina told him. “The reason it looks like a big change is because nobody will stay at the health department except me, and I’m going. Because the 25 hour a week inspector quit, because it’s not full-time. No nurse will work here for 5 crummy hours a week. So when you

war.” He proposed an “Amendment for Peace”: In essence, keep military (Army, Navy, Air Force) on the continental US for purpose of defense against military invasions here.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Major Danny Sjursen, who served tours with reconnaissance units in Iraq and Afghanistan, proposes that the Department of Defense should be renamed the Department of Offense. His reasons: American troops are deployed in 70% of the world’s countries; American pilots are currently bombing 7 countries; and the US, alone among nations, has divided the six inhabited continents into six military commands. Our military operations, Sjursen concludes, exceed US national interests and are “unmoored” from reasoned strategy – and from our society’s needs.

The enlightenment of another Iraq and Afghanistan veteran, Kevin Tillman, pierces the benighted world of Washington.

“As one of the soldiers who illegally invaded Iraq...I know an illegal coup/invasion when I see one,” he writes. “If Venezuelans believe [their president] Maduro has mismanaged the nation’s most valuable asset [oil], it is their right to seek change, but this is not a right enjoyed by Donald Trump, Nancy Pelosi or Elliot Abrams.”

Pat Hynes, a retired Professor of Environmental Health and Boston University, directs the Traprock Center for Peace and Justice in western Massachusetts. She lives in Montague.

talk about all this upset, it’s an upset that is made by your financial decisions: to have an un-runnable department. And I am not retiring because I want to – I’m retiring because I can’t take it anymore.”

“We clearly need all three positions,” Hanold said.

“The public health nurse is actually really needed in town,” said Fred Bowman. “The population is getting older – do you want to go and have your blood pressure checked at \$200 an hour, or do you have a nurse that could do it for you?”

“Once you’re able to do your due diligence and provide us a little bit more information,” Greg Garrison added, “I’ll have a better opinion.”

“I want you to come up with a plan that people will feel excited about,” Audley added. “I don’t want this to feel adversarial.... We’re trying to work something out that will be for the best interests of the town.”

The director position has been publicly posted since earlier this month, and McNeely said that one candidate is under consideration so far. All sides agree that the incoming director would ideally overlap with McNeely’s final weeks or months on the job, and then hire an inspector.

The board of health and finance committee will meet again next Wednesday, March 6.



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NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

# Firefighters May Train On Moldy House

By JEFF SINGLETON

Wendell Town Treasurer Carolyn Manley came before the town’s selectboard on January 20 to suggest that a structure on 120 Wendell Depot Road be used for a “fire department training.”

Selectboard chair Dan Keller said he was not clear what is meant by “training.” Town administrator Nancy Aldrich said the fire department might start a “small fire” in the structure to give members of the mostly volunteer department the opportunity to put it out. Then the structure would be burned down and the property sold.

The lot – and the structure on it – was taken over by the town a number of years ago for back taxes. Manley said she was concerned that someone might purchase the lot and attempt to refurbish the structure, which she called “pretty moldy” and “not a legal structure.” “We will never recoup the years of back taxes, but we can sell it as a buildable lot,” she said.

“Sounds good to me,” said Keller, and the other members of the board appeared to agree. The selectboard’s approval allows the town fire chief to begin the process of obtaining permits for the training.

### Contested Dam

The board briefly discussed the town’s role in the current debate over the future of Bowens Pond

Dam. The owners of the dam do not want responsibility for it, and the state Department of Fish and Game has designated the dam’s removal as one of 12 wetlands restoration projects eligible for state funds. The state says the structure’s removal will benefit wild eastern brook trout and other species threatened by climate change.

However, two abutters to the dam and the pond it has created, who also happen to be biology professors at the University of Massachusetts, oppose its removal. They say the 100-year-old dam is part of an “ecological corridor” for a variety of species, and that removing it might attract invasive plants.

The dam’s status was discussed at a November 28 selectboard meeting. Aldrich said she put the topic on the recent selectboard agenda because there had been questions about the role of town boards in resolving the issue. She said it was not a selectboard issue unless the town decided to consider placing a conservation restriction on the dam and pond.

Selectboard member Laurie DiDonato said the process for creating a conservation restriction could take two or three years, and would involve the town conservation commission.

### Other Business

Aldrich gave an update on the solar credits the town was scheduled

to obtain from a company called C2 Energy Capital. Apparently the company is not giving the town the credits it has negotiated for a project formerly owned by Seaboard Solar.

Aldrich said, with a weary tone, that she would continue to follow up to resolve the ongoing problem.

On the bright side, Aldrich said the town had received a \$6,250 payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) for a solar project on Wendell Depot Road. This was one of two installments the town will receive this year.

The board endorsed legislation being proposed by state senator Adam Hinds (D-Pittsfield) to increase funding for rural school districts. Aldrich said the legislation would potentially increase state aid to the Swift River elementary school in New Salem, which Wendell students attend, by \$25,380 and to Mahar Regional School, which Wendell middle and high school students attend, by \$142,410.

The board agreed to recommend to the Mahar Regional School district that eighth graders be allowed to participate in an essay contest sponsored by the Massachusetts Municipal Association. It also approved the disposal of “old printers” at the town transfer station.

The board approved a request from Village Neighbors to hold a raffle at the Blue Moon Coffeehouse.

The next selectboard meeting will be on Wednesday, March 6 at 7 p.m.

### ERVING from page A1

According to Bastarache, Turner could find “some wiggle room” in the elementary school budget.

Bastarache said he would contact the school committee with the board’s recommendation for a lower request. “They have the ability to do the work they need to do within the means they have,” he said.

### More Nursing

After a discussion with the board of health, senior center director Paula Betters, Eastern Franklin County Health District health agents Claudia Lucas and Charlie Kaniecki, and Franklin Regional Council of Governments regional public health nurse Lisa White, the selectboard decided to increase the “nursing” line item in the board of health budget from \$2,000 to \$9,500.

White explained that a town public health nurse coordinates services, such as flu vaccination clinics at senior centers and schools, pneumonia vaccination, blood pressure clinics and referrals, and tuberculosis testing, and would also keep the town up to date with the Massachusetts Virtual Epidemiologic Network (MAVEN), the state’s communicable disease reporting and monitoring system.

“Tying in to MAVEN is a win,” Kaniecki said, “because you share what’s going on with other towns

in the region.”

Betters said that, in previous years, she had provided monthly blood pressure clinics and annual flu vaccination clinics at the senior center at low or no cost, but the low- or no-cost resources are no longer available.

Bastarache noted that White’s services were “not just senior-based, but town-wide.”

Kaniecki agreed, saying that it was “holistic public health – the whole town gets the service.”

### Lump Sum

The board discussed the best way to fund the capital improvement stabilization fund: building it up over a number of years, or using one large transfer from the general stabilization account. The fund was started in FY’19 with a starting balance of \$500,000. In creating the capital improvement committee and capital improvement stabilization fund, the board’s intention was that, once the fund was well established, all capital improvement expenditures would be paid from the fund.

Finance committee member Arthur Johnson said that moving a large sum from general stabilization to the capital improvement fund would look as if it weren’t transparent.

Selectboard member Jacob Smith said that “a large influx” into the fund “may put a negative feeling

for what we’re trying to do.”

Fin com member Debra Smith recommended the town “do it in one year... The sooner we get it operating, the better.” She said she felt that if the action was explained clearly, voters would not object.

The board decided that they needed to finalize the full budget before deciding how to add money to the capital improvement fund.

### Other Business

In presenting their budget request in January, the library trustees asked for an increase in their stipend. At Monday’s meeting, Debra Smith said she had researched town stipends and found “our stipends are all over the place,” but the trustees’ stipend is the lowest in Erving.

She recommended establishing a process for setting stipends. “Is there a way to make all stipends the same?” she asked.

Jacob Smith suggested a tiered system, considering that some boards and committees have more work to do than others. The board made no decision on the matter.

The selectboard members, acting as water commissioners, granted a special permit for the construction of the new library building on Northfield Road. The special permit is required because the property is located in the town’s water protection district.



### GMRSD from page A1

A “competency-based” model involves devising individual learning plans for each student, often involving opportunities beyond the school walls, and replaces standardized assessment with setting proficiency goals for each student and supporting them in reaching those goals at their own pace.

William Diehl of the Collaborative for Educational Services, who accompanied Mazur in delivering the news Tuesday night, told the school committee that Massachusetts lags behind many other states in support for CBE initiatives.

Mazur explained that while the group no longer aimed to produce a “plan” to transition the high school to a new model, it would still leave the district with “products” of its work that could be useful in the future, if a new principal were eager to lead the process and the school community ready to support it.

But she warned that in under-resourced school districts, CBE projects, “when implemented poorly,” can intensify existing disparity among students.

Committee members reacted to the news – and the recommendation that the drastic rethinking of secondary education touted by the PT21 project should be delayed by the need to address issues around student behavior, discrimination, and discipline – with frustration.

“The inequities are a cause *and* effect of the problems we’re having now,” said Montague member Mike Langknecht, “and I strongly believe that change is necessary to solve that problem.... It’s hard for kids to buy in to how education works.”

“Kids that feel disenfranchised will create social problems,” said Heather Katsoulis.

Karl Dziura, president of the Gill-Montague Education Association, read a statement on behalf of the teacher’s union condemning PT21’s lack of engagement with teachers.

“The change to a competency-based assessment, and individualized student learning plans, seems likely to involve a change in working conditions for the school staff,” he said. “The general staff in this building really doesn’t know what’s going on in this project, and it’s been going on for 18 months!”

The committee expressed sympathy and frustration at this criticism.

“It was clearly stated that nothing could go forward without union approval, without teacher input,” said Langknecht, who was on the “transformation” team. “Our conclusion was that’s the group that needs to be driving and leading the transition.”

“I appreciate people being wary about something new, and maybe not jumping right in,” said Cassie Damkoehler of Montague. “But if you have concerns, get involved.... This is a planning grant – this is where we drop ideas and investigate whether they’re going to work.”

“Annie Leonard and I were the only district employees who were part of the steering committee,” said Jen Audley of the Community-

School Partnership. “As a group we concluded that to have the leadership team not have more representation from the high school... meant that we were starting without the assets that we needed to be able to succeed.”

### Civil Rights, and Counselors

Safire DeJong and Keisha Green, consultants brought in from the Collaborative to conduct “listening” forums in the wake of allegations of a culture of racism and harassment at the middle school and high school, reported on what they had heard from students, parents, and faculty.

Noting that the forums were a self-selected sample – about one in five staff members, and one in ten students and family members participated – they identified five “themes” that they heard echoed across all stakeholder groups’ perceptions: that a culture of racism persists at the schools; that the institution is not truly committed to eliminating it; that policies concerning discipline are vague and unfairly applied; that staff and administrators need more training around the issues; and that racism in the schools is connected to that in the broader community.

They recommended the district build a “facilitated steering committee” to work on the issues over a longer time horizon.

“You always see the same faces showing up to the committee meetings, and you always see the same people volunteering – how do you heal the community, and change the community?” asked Damkoehler.

“The voices captured here are folks who elected to come to the listening sessions,” Green acknowledged, and suggested that they could form a core of an ongoing group.

“It’s a heavy report to read,” said Thomasina Hall, a parent who helped raise the concerns in December and was now sitting in her first meeting as a committee member. She noted that some of the input included perception that “students of color [were] being disproportionately targeted” for discipline and searches. “That’s racial profiling,” she said.

The committee reviewed a proposal from superintendent Michael Sullivan to create a 15-hour-a-week “family involvement and diversity coordinator” position, but were mostly critical. Hall said much of the job description included “things that should be done by the administrator of a building.”

“The scope of the position is huge for 15 hours,” said Haley Anderson, and Timmie Smith pointed out that it amounted to three hours per district school per week.

A moderate surplus this year will allow for staffing growth next year, and a second dean of students at the middle and high school is proposed. The committee acknowledged, but did not discuss in any detail, a recently received memorandum from the GMEA recommending staffing priorities at each school, including “at least one” adjustment counselor at the middle school to keep up with a high caseload of therapeutic check-ins (*see page A2*).



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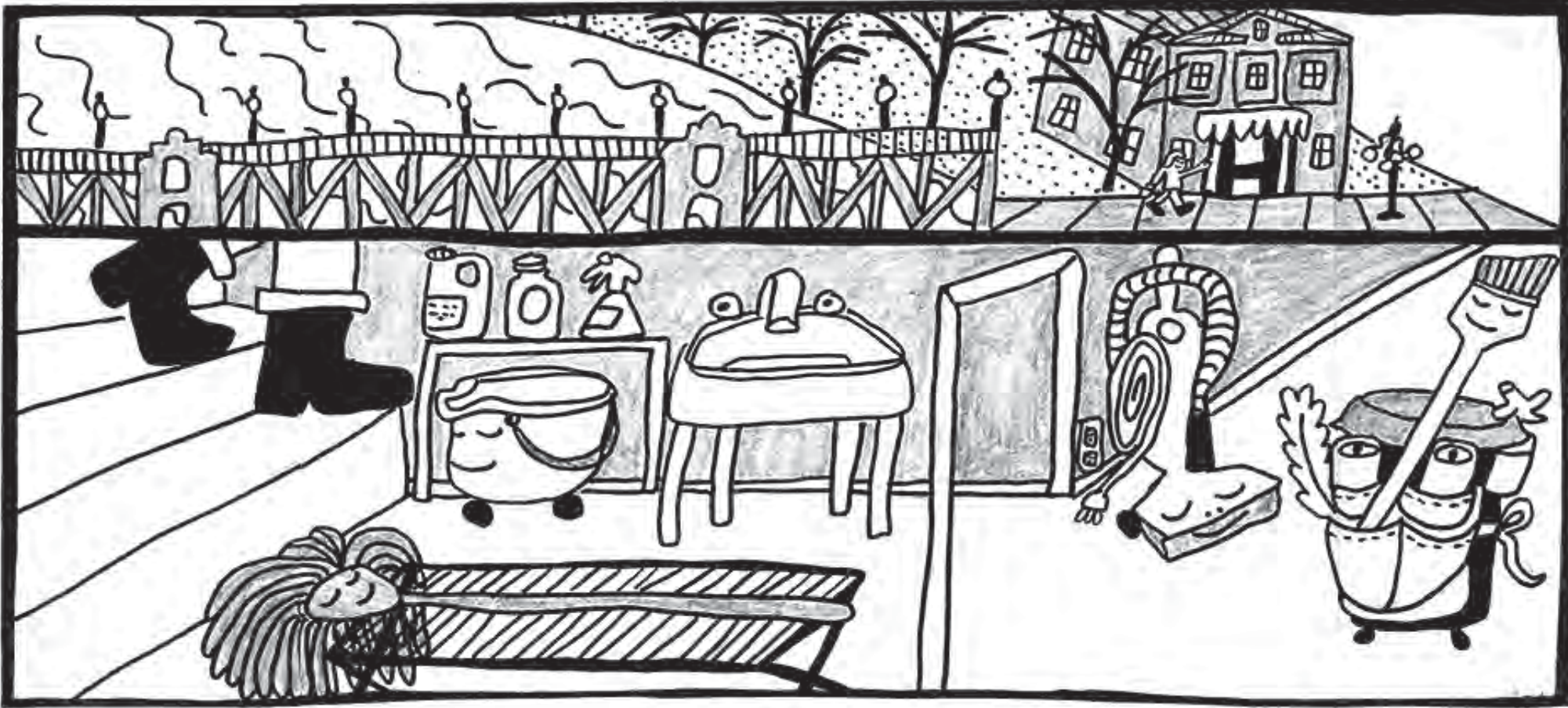
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# The Children's Page

## Mrs. Mop Cleans Town Hall

Words by BEVERLY KETCH  
Images by HANNAH BROOKMAN



Mrs. Mop has her own bed in the town hall basement. She has her own room, with a sink and a bucket. Her best friend Mr. Broom lives in the hall in his own special holder in the caddy bag. Very early in the morning before the sun comes up, DPW Bev, the Janitor, comes and wakes them up.



"Good morning Mrs. Mop! Now I will fill your bucket with sudsy water! Good morning Mr. Broom, how do you do?" Then DPW Bev says good morning to Vic Vac, and they all get in the elevator and head up to the large meeting room on the second floor.



Mr. Broom sweeps up all the dirt from a big town meeting, and Mrs. Mop is so impressed! Then she mops up all the footprints and coffee spills. Oh, how it shines now! says Mr. Broom. Then it's time for Vic Vac to clean the door mat. Whenever he works he sings at the top of his lungs!



Mr. Broom and Mrs. Mop exchange a look and roll their eyes. What a racket! They don't know what to think of Vic Vac. Mr. Broom and Mrs. Mop clean the break room in blessed silence.

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RETREAT from page A1

On the other hand, evidence from the encampment on the Connecticut River where the massacre occurred has been hard to come by. Brule said the Riverside district of Gill, the location of the slaughter of mostly women, children and the elderly by the English, “has been so exploited and used over 300 years. You see photographs of the area and there’s been sawmills and factories, all kinds of stuff. [The research team] found so much junk in the ground with their metal detectors that it was really hard to sort out anything from that day [of the massacre].”

The sense of a partial Native American victory may be partly a product of the limitations of archaeology confronted by economic development. But, Brule told the selectboard, it has certainly created an important new dimension to the story of the massacre – or battle – and its aftermath.

The research has certainly impressed the National Park Service: the agency has awarded the battlefield project another \$57,300 this year to continue the research. Brule came before the board on Monday to obtain its approval for a new contract with the researchers, who have moved from the Pequot Museum Research Center in eastern Connecticut to the University of Connecticut, for a continuation of “Phase II” of the project.

According to the proposal submitted by lead researcher Kevin McBride, this second round of Phase II archaeological research will focus on the south side of Cherry Rum Brook and the west bank of the Green River in Greenfield, as well as an area south of the Deerfield River in Deerfield where musket balls have been found.

Ramsey told the selectboard that the current work will not only extend the previous Phase II research, but also prepare a National Historic Register nomination form, which “provides the boundaries of the battlefield and everything you would need to submit for a Historic Register district, should the town

choose to.”

Ramsey also told the board a third phase of the project is “contemplated,” which would involve “how to preserve and develop interpretive elements of the district – signage, historical narratives and curriculum. That’s where it really starts to get interesting.” Brule said Phase III might be funded “by a number of small grants from different places, and not necessarily the National Park Service.”

The selectboard approved the contract with the University of Connecticut, where McBride’s research team is now located, as well as memoranda of understanding with four Native American tribes in the region.

Splitting and Stacking

Sean Mahoney of the tree advisory committee came before the board to announce an “Urban and Community Forestry Grant” from the state. The grant will be used to purchase a log splitter and “associated tools” for the committee’s wood bank.

Mahoney also announced that a “kickoff event for the whole state program” had been delayed “a little bit.” He did not have a new date for the event.

Selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz asked if the wood bank “is going OK.”

“Well, so far,” replied Mahoney. “We’ve been splitting wood and everyone’s happy, and we have three or four cords in bins so far and keep on chugging away at it.”

One Small Bridge

Department of public works (DPW) Superintendent Tom Bergeron told the board that the town has received a grant from the state Small Bridge Program to fix a bridge on Chestnut Hill Loop Road. Bergeron said his application for bridge funds, filed two years ago, had been rejected twice.

But, he said, “apparently their bridge program did not take off as well as they thought it would, so we’ve been approved for a \$450,000 grant to fix that bridge.”

“Could we transfer that money

to the Center Street bridge?” asked Kuklewicz, referring to one of two partially closed bridges in Montague Center.

“You’re not kidding,” said Bergeron, noting that if the state increased the length of qualifying bridges, “a lot of towns would be jumping in on that.” The funding under the Small Bridge Program is limited to bridges 10 to 20 feet long.

Change In Plans

Kuklewicz announced that the town’s supplier of electricity, Great Eastern Energy Corporation, had filed for bankruptcy on February 15. He said the town’s supplier has shifted to Eversource Energy.

However, while the rate with Great Eastern was approximately 8.5 cents per kilowatt-hour, Eversource’s “winter rate” is 15 cents per kWh. According to Kuklewicz, town administrator Steve Ellis has been “working with the individual that helps us with our energy procurement,” who has presented the board with a short-term contract with a company called Constellation Energy at 9.65 cents per kWh.

The board voted to approve the eight-month contract. Neither Ellis nor the individual helping the town procure electricity was present for the vote.

Canal District

Town planner Walter Ramsey reported on a state grant called District Improvement Financing (DIF), which gives localities “technical assistance” for development projects. He said the grant could be used to evaluate the six abandoned mill sites, which the town now calls the “canal district,” along the Turners Falls power canal.

Ramsey said the grant would establish a “base value” for all the properties in the district and allow the town to apply for funding for “infrastructure and access improvements.” He went on to say that the “cost of those repairs would be financed through new growth within the district itself.”

Ramsey said the grant would send a message to developers that “the

town has skin in the game, and is willing to look at creative solutions to finance the district itself.”

The board authorized the chair to sign a letter of support for the DIF application.

Other Business

The selectboard, in the guise of the personnel board, approved a request by Bergeron to hire Barrett Rogaleski as a DPW truck driver, and Michael Williams as a reserve police officer.

At the request of police chief Chris Williams, the board also approved the transfer of reserve officer John Ollari to the Greenfield

Police Department.

The board approved a cover letter for the Montague’s 2019 Community Development Block Grant application, being submitted to the state by the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority, which oversees the grant program for the town.

It also heard a brief “update” from executive assistant Wendy Bogusz on the work of the DPW building committee.

The meeting adjourned after less than forty minutes. The next board meeting will be on Monday, March 4 at 7 p.m.



# LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

*Here’s the way it was February 26, 2009: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.*

## Kicked to The Curb? Recycling May Be Cut

For many years, Montague has provided curbside recycling pickup for its residents. For three days a week, two recycling trucks travel the highways and byways of town – all 108 miles of them – picking up five tons of paper and cardboard and three tons of bottles and cans a day.

With the highway department perpetually short staffed, on snow days, recycling routes are cancelled and drivers pulled off to handle the priority plowing and sanding, doubling the amount of recycling to be picked up the following week.

It is backbreaking work for the drivers, and, with all the stopping and starting, hard on the recycling vehicles as well. Now, with budgets also at the breaking point, the town is looking seriously at privatizing, reducing or eliminating curbside recycling altogether.

Montague and Greenfield are the only two municipalities in Franklin County that provide their residents with a curbside recycling program in addition to a recycling center at the town transfer station. With the introduction of pay-per-throw trash 17 years ago, the percentage of trash Montague residents recycle has steadily increased, to its recent level of 38%, above the 35% average for the 19 towns in the 21-town Franklin County Solid Waste Management District that provide some form of recycling for their residents.

The town has drawn \$20,000 annually from this program for the last three years, up from \$5,757 ten years ago.

At current market rates and current tonnage, the town’s reimbursement funds may drop to \$16,000 this year, down from \$30,000 when the market was at its peak just a year ago.

The cost of running the town’s recycling program on a yearly basis – without including labor costs – equals about \$74,500.

## Montague Presents Budget To School Committee

Town officials from Montague presented their budget projections for FY’10 to the school committee on Tuesday night. Based on

the town’s financial situation as it stands now, Montague officials estimate they can afford to add only an \$11,000 (0.1%) increase over last year’s \$7,190,683 assessment for the regional schools.

Jeff Singleton of the Montague finance committee advanced the position that the school committee should use the amount the towns can afford as the basis for their FY’10 assessment figure.

Interim superintendent Ken Rocke stated this is not how the schools develop a budget. “You start with the budget you need, not an assessment,” he said, adding that “it’s in the policy, in the statutes.” A needs-based budget should be the beginning of the negotiations with the towns, he said.

Chair Mary Kociela promised town officials there would be multiple opportunities to meet on the budget in the months to come.

## Tomahawk Chop

Kociela stated the school committee’s goal regarding the issue of the moratorium of the high school band’s use of the Tomahawk Chop fight song is to make a decision by May 1, or at least by May 12, their last meeting before reorganizing after the May 18 town elections.

Kociela said she’s talked to TFHS Principal Kenny about having discussion sessions with the students sometime in March, and perhaps a presentation in April with Marisa Vanesse of the Springfield Renaissance School, on the history surrounding the issue. The discussions could take place in afternoon assemblies.

Committee member Michael Langknecht said it was important for students to discuss the Tomahawk Chop issue among themselves. He suggested school committee representatives could be present to listen and answer any questions the students might have.

Student council president Josh Gammon stated, “There definitely needs to be an opportunity for students to be heard.”

Committee member Joyce Phillips said, “If we could try not to talk about who’s for and who’s against,” suggesting other ways be found to talk about the issue.

Gammon agreed, saying that would be better than having students feel there’s only one position being presented, where adults are telling students what they should feel about “the Chop.”

SPORTS from page A1

within 2 points at the half, 23-21. But Ware scored an amazing 30 points in the third, and Tech was unable to keep pace, dropping the game 67-47.

Jocelyn Crowningshield led the Franks with 24 points, followed by Jordan Herbert (11), Desiree Doane (8), and Germanaia Cruz and Isabelle Duga (2 each).

Boys Basketball

Lee 69 – TFHS 59

On Monday, February 25, the Turners Falls Boys Basketball Team lost to the Lee Wildcats, 69-59, also in the opening round of the D-IV playoffs. The game was played in Lee, which was experiencing snow squalls and a wind advisory so driving through town was like navigating a slalom track.

On the court, Turners shot out to a 22-10 lead with 6:18 left in the first half. But that’s when the Cats woke up. Wild went on a 20-3 run to make it 30-25. Then, with no seconds on the clock, Lee hit a 3-pointer from way, way outside to take a 33-25 lead into the locker room.

Lee then scored the first 7 points of the third to increase their lead to 40-25. Blue narrowed that lead to 6, 45-39, halfway through the quarter, but Lee again finished the period strong and led 54-41 after three. Powertown made a last push to again pull within 6 points, 54-48, but the Wildcats held on to win it 69-59.

Chace Novak led Powertown with 18 points. Anthony Peterson also hit double digits with 14. Also scoring points for Blue were Tyler Lavin (8), Kyle Dodge and Jeremy Russell (6 each), Ryan Campbell (4), and Jaden Whiting (3).

Cheer Squad

The Eye of the Tiger Invitational was held on Sunday, February 17 in South Hadley. Thirty-five different

cheer squads competed in eight divisions. The teams were graded on difficulty of routine, coordination of the squad, and individual participation.

As in other high school tournaments, spectators and athletes were decked out in color splash ensembles. But unlike other competitions, the Lions, Tigers and Brownies emblazoned on the tees and sweats seemed less confrontational. The mascots were still fierce, but less aggressive. Even the Purple Knights were disarming with sparkling bows in their hair.

During the competitions, as the teams ran their rowdy routines of kicks and flips, the crowd spontaneously joined in. Groups of spectators and rival cheerleaders jumped to their feet, clapping, chanting, and dancing along with the athletes on the floor.

And at half time – intermission – hundreds and hundreds of multicolored cheerleaders sat on the gym floor. That is, until the music cued up. Then they all got up and danced, and the gym became a giant mosh pit. And on sidelines and in the stands, many younger kids and parents joined in.

The Oscars could take a page from the organizers of this invitational. The routines were timed to the second, and the event ended exactly on time.

As far as the Turners Falls Cheer Team, they competed in D-IV. Murdock High School won the division, and the Abbey Kelley Foster charter school took second.

The Ladies had one final competition before they hung up their pompoms, and last Saturday, February 23, they competed at Holyoke High.

The team took third place in their division at Holyoke. It was the third week in a row that they improved, and the first time they took home a trophy.

Next: Winter sports stats.



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DEATH from page A1

what would be her first end-of-life celebration. Stander has many stories about how her practice is informed by her experiences, and those of others.

Another of her own experiences led to the creation of her small business called Last Dance Shrouds. (See our May 12, 2016 profile on her business in our archives at [montaguereporter.org](http://montaguereporter.org), or find out more at [lastdanceshrouds.com](http://lastdanceshrouds.com).) While working as a hospital chaplain, Stander witnessed a family standing by the body of a recently deceased loved one. She watched as the mother reached out and rubbed her dead daughter’s ear, like a mother would touch a newborn. Afterwards the mother said that her daughter had normally bristled from contact like that, and she had not been able to touch her in that way for years.

The weight of that moment of touch in the grieving process brought forth the idea of the shrouds. Shrouds are traditional fabric wrappings for a dead body, and shrouding, the ceremony of wrapping the body, is a traditional part of a home funeral. Their use declined as death moved out of the family home and into the funeral home.

Just as home birth is seeing a cultural renewal, so is the concept of a home funeral and shrouding. The use of a shroud is another way to bring a physical element back into the grieving process. By selling pre-made and custom shrouds on her website, Stander hopes that her business can help griever slow down and reinstate touch into their grieving process.

Stander says she knows that people come to end-of-life care from all walks of life, and aims to make her services affordable and fair. Her fees are on a sliding scale, and because her mission is to foster personal connections with death, she is a fierce advocate for the Do-It-Yourself aesthetic. While pre-made shrouds are available for purchase on her website, there are also free sewing patterns for those who wish to make their own.

The Death Collaborative

This DIY attitude is evident in Stander’s latest endeavor, the creation of the Northeast Death Care Collaborative (NEDC). Stander hopes the NEDC, which exists primarily online through a Facebook group and newly launched website ([dina5928.wixsite.com/nedeathcare](http://dina5928.wixsite.com/nedeathcare)), will serve as a resource hub to facilitate a flow of conversation about end-of-life care and practices in our region.

The group aims to foster connections between local businesses, artisans, and those en-



gaged in caregiving and other end-of-life work. While groups like the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Western Massachusetts are a great help to people navigating legal issues and consumer protection, they are still focused on the conventional business of death. Stander said she hopes that the NEDC will be able to provide resources for alternative practices, like shrouding, home funerals, and green burials.

Alternative burial practices are just one part of a larger “death positive” movement that seeks to re-examine how we think about death. The term was coined in 2013 on Twitter by Los Angeles mortician Caitlin Doughty, who initially became internet-famous with her “Ask a Mortician” webseries. Doughty is also the founder of the Order of the Good Death ([orderofthegooddeath.com](http://orderofthegooddeath.com)), a group and website for “funeral industry professionals, academics, and artists exploring ways to prepare a death phobic culture for their inevitable mortality.”

Doughty’s Tweet asked whether there was a societal conversation around death positivity, like there was for sex positivity. The idea caught on, and a movement received its name.

The Modern Industry

The tenets and practices of the death-positive movement existed long before the term’s inception in 2013, and perhaps ironically, at its core, the movement is not actually a push forward at all. Most death-positive activism calls instead for a return to older traditions gone by the wayside in today’s highly commercialized funeral business.

It is no wonder that the United States funeral industry rakes in billions of dollars in profit each year: when we are taught to fear death, it becomes logical to pay for others to take care of our dead.

Up until the mid-nineteenth century it was common practice in the United States for the dead to be dealt with by the family in their own home. Family members, often women, would be in charge of dressing the body in preparation for burial.

The preservation of bodies was something done only for educational purposes in medical schools. Before the 1860s, embalming fluid was toxic, containing poisons like creosote and mercury, and medical students died due to exposure. New York physician Dr. Thomas Holmes saw the toxicity of embalming fluids and sought to create a safer solution. He deemed himself successful, and although his new solution contained arsenic, it was touted as safe.

Dr. Holmes set off for Washington at the advent of the American Civil War. Upon hearing about the death of Colonel Elmer Ellsworth, a close friend of Abraham Lincoln and the first Union officer to die in the war, Dr. Holmes sought out an audience with the president and offered to embalm his friend for free. According to Holmes’ account, Lincoln had not heard of the practice, but ended up giving his permission anyway.

Col. Ellsworth was embalmed and laid in state, and the success of this public display resulted in a high demand for the Holmes’ services. The doctor claimed to have been paid to embalm over 4,000 fallen soldiers during the course of the war – and he was not the only embalmer making money from the battlefield deaths, for it is estimated that by the end of the conflict, over 40,000 Union soldiers had been embalmed and sent back North.

Embalmers were a common sight at soldiers’ camps, some allowing soldiers to pre-pay for their own embalming, others scavenging the fields after battle for the bodies of officers to embalm and sell back to their grieving families.

After Lincoln was shot, his body was embalmed and put on a train for a funerary tour. With his assassination, embalming officially left the dissection table and battlefield tents and was thrust into the public consciousness.

The rise in popularity of embalming the dead would set the stage for the modern American funeral industry. Those bodies from the Civil War, embalmed with arsenic, are still leaking their poison into the soil and groundwater.

Every year in the US, enough modern embalming fluid containing formaldehyde, a known carcinogen, is buried in the earth to fill eight Olympic-sized swimming pools. More steel is buried in caskets than is needed to build another Golden Gate Bridge, and enough reinforced concrete is buried in cemeteries to build a two-lane road from New York to Detroit.

All of these resources need to be mined, made, bought, and buried, and they spend the rest of their material lives polluting their surroundings.

What’s Next?

With climate change and the Green New Deal at the forefront of national dialogue, it seems only pertinent that we try to lift some of society’s death phobia in the name of the environment.

Green burial is gaining popularity, and each day brings more official opportunities for a “greener” death. Montague does not currently offer green burial, but is looking into the possibility of establishing a new cemetery dedicated to green burials. In the meantime, both Shutesbury and Chesterfield offer green burial options for non-residents.

To learn more about green burial, Stander recommends the National Home Funeral Alliance, [homefuneralalliance.org](http://homefuneralalliance.org), as well local resource Green Burial Massachusetts, [green-burialma.org](http://green-burialma.org).

Stander wrote that she founded the Death Care Collaborative to “encourage professional networking and development, resource sharing, event coordination, client referral, and mutual aid among individual practitioners and organizations providing services at end of life in communities in the northeast US (and beyond).”

To serve this mission, the collaborative is hosting its first event, entitled “Mortality & Me,” at the Mt. Toby Friends Meetinghouse in Leverett on Friday, April 26 and Saturday, April 27. This two-day workshop seeks to facilitate conversation and contemplation around death.

On Friday night Stander will host a Death Café, a type of event held around the world that seeks to “increase awareness of death with a view to helping people make the most of their (finite) lives.”

On Saturday there will be a variety of workshops, including the western Massachusetts premiere of “The Ultimate Shavasana,” a guided meditation designed to “explore our cultural fears around death and dying.” Saturday will also feature sessions on writing obituaries and legacy projects. Space is limited, and the fee is on a sliding scale. You can register for the event on the NEDC’s website.

Stander can be reached through Facebook, and encourages anyone interested to request to join the NEDC Facebook group and help her to continue the conversation.

Many people put off thinking about death out of fear, but as she says, it’s important to find a way to start the conversation – “because it always seems too early, until it’s not.”



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# Jinx: Rainy Chores, Blueberry Maestro, and a Stinky Sib

By JERRY “JINX” COLLINS

*This excerpt from “Jinx: A New England Mill Town Urchin’s Life, the Depression through 1952” was written by Jerry “Jinx” Collins about his youth growing up in Turners Falls. Collins prefers to write in the third person, and in his memoir seeks to present “not just the pleasant memories showing him in a glowing light but also those that aren’t so favorable.” A copy of his book is available at the Carnegie Library.*

**TURNERS FALLS** – By the time he was twelve, Jinx had been charged with the responsibility for the care and maintenance of “The Castle’s” yard – under his dad’s explicit directions of course. Had he heard that old Gene Kelly movie version of the song “Singin’ in the Rain,” he might have thought that the word “perfectionist” fit Kelly to a T, but it wouldn’t even come close to describing Jinx’s dad. He had always told the four boys that anything worth doing was to be done well, and set that example for them in the way he meticulously built the quaint cottage in New England for the family during World War II. Jinx’s family considered it their “Castle” – after having spent the Great Depression living in a very small apartment in a row of mill block tenements, in a poor part of town. The “Castle” had, without a doubt, the nicest, greenest, weed-free lawn in the neighborhood. When those times of the year came to fertilize it, Jinx’s dad would wait until it started to rain – which happens quite frequently in New England in spring and summer. He opined that applying fertilizer in the rain would allow it to melt in to the warm soil quicker, and thus not chemically burn the

precious green blades. “It’s time! Get your rain gear on,” came the edict, after which Jinx donned his protective rain-wear, proceeded outside, and spread the “elixir of green” while his dad would, with great stealth, pull aside the curtain and peek out to ensure that he was tossing it, by hand, evenly. Another of his “idiosyncrasies” (in Jinx’s opinion) regarded his pride and joy, a brand new 1950 Nash Ambassador. Because of its shape, the Ambassador was laughingly called the “Upside-Down Bathtub.” His dad rarely drove the car except for an occasional Sunday afternoon drive which included a stop at the ice cream parlor. However, whenever it would rain in the spring, summer, and fall – too cold and snowy in winter – he would back it out of the one-car attached garage, and guess what? Yup! Jinx would slip into his rain gear, if the unpredictable weather was chilly; or in his bathing suit, in the hot, humid, dog days of summer; and “scrub-a-dub-dub” the Upside-Down Bathtub. Jinx’s dad believed a better, more thorough cleaning resulted when using what he termed, “soft rain water.” Even though Jinx considered it picayune, he does have to admit that it sparkled as he’d imagined the highest quality emerald would. Jinx expects that, unlike Kelly, had that song been written at that time in his life, he would definitely not have even contained the thought of “Singin’ in the Rain.”

**The Maestro**  
After they moved to The Hill, in the early evenings after Jinx came home from work on the tobacco farm, when blueberries were ready to harvest, he and his mom would each grab a gallon

see JINX page B3



An “Upside-Down Bathtub”: A Nash Ambassador like the one Jinx’s dad wanted him to wash in the rain. (Andrew Bone photo, under Creative Commons License.)

Joe Kopera shared this sunset photograph with us. He took it last week in the hills in eastern Montague and North Leverett.

# Dancing in the Trees

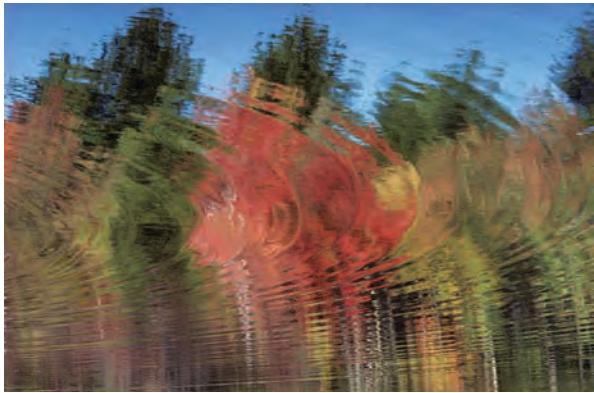


The Joffrey Ballet dancers performing at Jacob’s Pillow, one of Steven Schmidt’s photographs of dancers in his slideshow this Sunday at the Leverett Library.

By NINA ROSSI

**LEVERETT** – Stephen Schmidt started seeing figures in among the limbs of the trees he liked to photograph, and he followed his imagination, as artists do, into a new theme in his work that he has explored for the last ten years. The Shutesbury photographer will present a slideshow of this work called “How the Trees Taught Us to Dance” this Sunday, March 3, at the Leverett Library at 2 pm. It is one of the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust’s monthly educational presentations on the first Sunday of each month at the library, and it is free. Schmidt has found a correlation between the dancing limbs of the forest, and the limbs of dancers on various stages and spaces he has visited. “A lot of my work,” said Schmidt, “was reflections of trees and water, and I started imagining figures in there. There’s a group of trees I call my dancers, and I thought maybe I should try doing figure photography and dance photography.” Unlike trees and water, which are available to the eye and lens at all times, the photographer had to seek out dancers. “Modern dance is something I have been interested in for a number of years,” he admitted. “I’ve been going to performances for quite a while, and with

the five colleges there are lots of free or inexpensive dance performances.” He took a workshop in dance photography at Jacob’s Pillow about five years ago, and was able to capture the Joffrey Ballet while there. He has also photographed performances within the A.P.E. gallery space in Northampton, and visited the Turn Park in West Stockbridge to capture a roving dance troupe performing within the sculpture park there. To create this slide show, the artist has had to invest in digitizing his presentation, since the last one he gave was done using carousels filled with slides, and the soundtrack was on cassette tapes. “I thought, I’ve got to get with the 21st century here,” laughed Schmidt. “I got a digital projector and the software to do a digital slideshow; I scanned in my old slides, and of course, I have new digital images, too.” The show is a stand alone event and not part of an exhibit of his work. Unlike the typical artist talk and slide show, Schmidt will save the talk for after the slides. Instead, there will be background music he has selected playing as the images are displayed. “I wanted each slide to be connected to the one before see SCHMIDT page B3



Schmidt does not digitally alter his photographs, but he does invert his reflection photos so that the trees in them are right side up. Wind across a local pond creates rippling trees in this picture.

## THE GARDENER’S COMPANION

# In The Southland



By LESLIE BROWN

**CRESCENT BEACH, FL** – February 1. We drive east from Palatka, arriving in Saint Augustine Beach just in time for a celebratory lunch on the second floor of the Oasis, where we toast the official vacation start. We pick up some staples at our local Winn Dixie, and move in at the Hawksbill Suite around 3:30. We are but a short walk to Crescent Beach and have a full kitchen and bath, a living area, and a large bedroom for the month. So passes a quiet weekend walking the beach, reading, and relaxing. We soon become known as “the outdoor peo-

ple,” as we spend more time out front on our chairs than inside. Even at fifty degrees we sit out with coffee in the morning, as this is what we miss most at home: being out in our yard. Sometimes, winter leaves us feeling cooped up, as we are not much for winter sports and pass our work-out times inside the house or at the Y. While it has just started to warm up here in Florida, near 60 degrees feels great, and we have brought long-sleeved garb and lightweight vests. It is often 70 downtown, but here at the beach it is usually breezy. Spring has come to north Florida, though. The birds sound territorial, many things are in bloom, the tortoise and black snake are out in the sun, and the tree pollen is high. This is such a quiet beach. We are a mile or so down from the large hotels and condos. We see mostly our own locals on the beach, although there is also the occasional vehicle as they now allow a channel

in the sand for cars and trucks. It is only a short span of driving space, though, and it seems a foolish way to explore the beach but, to each his own. Ironically, most of the vehicular traffic is driven by young people; it is the older snowbirds who march up and down, picking up shells and taking in the salt air. On Sunday we connect with friends and family by email or phone. We arrange to meet up with Ken’s nephew Keith who has lived in Florida most of his life. In a few days we will meet up in Saint Augustine, share a leisurely meal at Scarlett O’Hara’s, and walk our legs off on the stone passageways as Keith gives us the tour of his favorite watering holes. It is much warmer in Saint Augustine by nearly ten degrees, and even though it borders on the great Saint John River, there is little breeze away from the water. February 8. We make plans to see GARDENER’S B4



# Pet of the Week



CHRISTOPHER CARMODY COLLAGE

## “BEEFCAKE”

No need to make room on the couch for movie night: in my last home, I'd lay on my person's stomach while he watched TV.

I love leafy greens, cucumbers, carrots, and apples.

I was lucky my family played with me and let me explore outside my habitat, so I'm a social fellow

who enjoys handling and hanging out with my people.

Guinea pigs are relatively easy to care for. Talk to an adoption counselor about what I'll need, and then let's be couch potatoes together!

Contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at (413) 548-9898 or at [info@dpvhs.org](mailto:info@dpvhs.org).

## Senior Center Activities

### MARCH 4 THROUGH 8

**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 machine when the center is not open.

**M, W, F:** 10 a.m. Aerobics; 10:45 a.m. Chair Exercise

**T, W, Th:** 12 p.m. Lunch

**Monday 3/4**  
1 p.m. Knitting Circle

**Tuesday 3/5**  
10:15 a.m. Chair Yoga  
1 p.m. Healthy Eating Session 3

**Wednesday 3/6**  
9 a.m. Veterans' Outreach  
12:30 p.m. Bingo

**Thursday 3/7**  
9 a.m. Tai Chi  
10:15 a.m. NO Chair Yoga  
1 p.m. Cards & Games  
4 p.m. NO Mat Yoga

**Friday 3/8**  
AARP Tax Prep by Appointment  
NO Classes or programs

**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.

**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 12 p.m., with reservations required two days in advance. Call (413) 423-3649 for meal information and reservations.

For information, call Paula Better, 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 3/4**  
8:45 a.m. Step & Sculpt  
10 a.m. Healthy Bones & Balance  
11:30 a.m. Breakfast Brunch  
1 p.m. Pitch/Bridge Game

**Tuesday 3/5**  
8:45 a.m. S.W.A.P. Exercise  
10 a.m. Stretch & Balance  
12 p.m. Soup & Sandwich  
1 p.m. Create to Donate Blankets

**Wednesday 3/6**  
8:45 a.m. Line Dancing  
10 a.m. Chair Yoga  
12 p.m. Homemade Lunch  
12:15 p.m. Bingo and Snacks  
6 p.m. Pitch XClu

**Thursday 3/7**  
8 a.m. Foot Clinic  
8:45 a.m. Aerobics  
10 a.m. Healthy Bones  
12 p.m. Congregate Lunch  
12:30 p.m. Brown Bag Pickup

**Friday 3/8**  
9 a.m. Quilting Workshop  
9:15 a.m. Flex & Stretch  
9:30 a.m. Bowling Fun  
10:30 a.m. M3 Exercise Games  
12 p.m. Lunch

**LEVERETT**

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

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

Friday 12 p.m. Senior Lunch. Call (413) 367-2694 by Wednesday for a reservation.

## MARCH LIBRARY LISTING

Weather, etc., sometimes causes changes in library events; you may want to call ahead to confirm.

<b>Montague Public Libraries</b> Turners Falls: Carnegie (413) 863-3214 Montague Center (413) 367-2852 Millers Falls (413) 659-3801	<b>Erving Public Library</b> (413) 423-3348 <b>Gill:</b> Slate Library (413) 863-2591 <b>Leverett Public Library</b> (413) 548-9220 <b>Wendell Free Library</b> (978) 544-3559 <b>Northfield:</b> Dickinson Library (413) 498-2455
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Ten local libraries, including Northfield, Leverett, Erving, and Wendell are sponsoring a Community Read of *The Stranger in the Woods: The Extraordinary Story of the Last True Hermit* by Michael Finkel. Several events listed below are in conjunction with this event. More are scheduled for April.

### ONGOING EVENTS

**EVERY SUNDAY**

Wendell Free Library: *Sunday Morning Yoga*, taught at an advanced/beginner/intermediate level. In March the instructor is Janice Doubleday. 10 a.m. \$ AA Open Meeting, 6 to 7 p.m.

Erving Library: Science Technology Engineering Art Math (STEAM) activities for 2- to 6-year olds. Pre-register. 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

**EVERY TUESDAY**

Wendell Free Library: *Intermediate Strength Training Classes for Adults of all Ages* with Kathy Sward. Must pre-register. 8:30 to 9:30 a.m.

Leverett Library: *Spanish Conversation Group*, 4 to 5 p.m.; *Qi-gong* with Dvora Eisenstein. 5:15 to 6:15 p.m.

Erving Library: *Tech Tuesday*. Questions answered. 4 to 6 p.m.

**1ST TUESDAYS**

Carnegie Library: *Youth Advisory Committee Meeting*. Youth ages 10 to 15 are invited to meet monthly at the library to volunteer, plan programs, meet people, and make a positive impact in their community. Snacks served. 5 to 6 p.m.

**3RD TUESDAYS**

Dickinson Library: *Genealogy Group*, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

**EVERY WEDNESDAY**

Wendell Free Library: *Sylvia's Awesome Play Group*, sand table and activities for newborn to 5 years old and their guardians, 10 to 11:30 a.m. (not on school vacations). *Healthy Bones and Balance Class* with Marianne Vinal, geared to older town residents, tea afterward. 10 to 11 a.m.

Carnegie Library: *Story Time with Karen*. Young children with caregivers. 10:15 to 11:30 a.m. *Home-school Science*. Hands-on STEM activities. 1 to 2:30 p.m.

Leverett Library: *Tales and Tunes Story Time* w/Heleen Cardinaux, 10:30 a.m. to noon. *Tai Chi*, advanced class, 1:45 to 2:45 p.m.

Erving Library: *Crazy 8s Math Club*. For 2nd- to 6th-graders, except first Weds., which is STEM time with Jean Daley. 1:45 p.m.

**1ST WEDNESDAYS**

Dickinson Library: *Wednesday Morning Book Group*. 10 a.m.

**2ND WEDNESDAYS**

Dickinson Library: *Readings: Non-fiction, Fiction & Poetry*. 3 p.m.

**EVERY THURSDAY**

Carnegie Library: *Music & Movement* with Tom Carroll and Laurie Davidson. For children. 10 to 10:45 a.m.

Leverett Library: *Yoga for Stress Reduction* with Nancy Paglia. 5 to 6:15 p.m.

**1ST THURSDAYS**

Carnegie Library: *Genealogy Gathering*. Informal discussion of local family research led by Sarah

Campbell. 6 to 7:45 p.m.

Dickinson Library: *Environment Awareness Group*. Topic facilitated by Emily Koester. 6:30 p.m.

**3RD THURSDAYS**

Dickinson Library: *Rep. Paul Mark: Office Hours*, 1 to 4 p.m.

**EVERY FRIDAY**

Wendell Free Library: *Explore Yoga* with Shay Cooper. Mixed level. 10 a.m. \$ or barter.

Dickinson Library: *Story Hour*. Stories, crafts, music and movement with Dana Mengwasser. Pre-schoolers and their caregivers. 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. *Friday Afterschool*. Variety of activities for kids after school. 2 to 3 p.m.

**1ST FRIDAYS**

Carnegie Library: *Mystery Activity*. Some possibilities are crafts, science experiments, tech-tools. For ages 8+ and teens. 3:30 to 4:45 p.m.

**EVERY SATURDAY**

Wendell Free Library: *Adult Strength Training* with Rosie Heidkamp, 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. AA Open Meeting, 6 to 7 p.m.

Leverett Library: *Advanced Tai Chi*, 10 a.m.; *Beginning*, 11 a.m.

**1ST SATURDAYS**

Carnegie Library: *Book Sale*. Books, DVDs, CDs, etc. \$1 or less. 10 to 1:30 p.m.

**2ND AND 4TH SATURDAYS**

Dickinson Library: *Food Pantry*, 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

### EVENTS

**FRIDAY, MARCH 1**

Dickinson Library: *Legos*. Free-for-all building event, especially for elementary students. 2 to 3 p.m.

**SATURDAY, MARCH 2**

Wendell Free Library: *Movie, Journey to the Center of the Earth*. Part of Science Fiction/Fantasy and Horror/Monster Series. 7:30 p.m.

**SUNDAY, MARCH 3**

Leverett Library: *How Trees Taught Us To Dance*: a photography slide show by Stephen Schmidt. Inspired by William Blake's *To See a World in a Grain of Sand*. Sponsored by the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust. Part of Community Read. Refreshments. 2 to 3 p.m.

**TUESDAY, MARCH 5**

Carnegie Library: *Yoga for Pre-schoolers*. Through March 19. Fun exercise, 3-week course with instructor Jackie Howard. 10:30 to 11 a.m.

Erving Library: *Library Legislative Day* at the State House in Boston. Ask for details at the Library.

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6**

Dickinson Library: *Fix-It Fair*. Bring your broken stuff! 5 to 6 p.m.

**FRIDAY, MARCH 8**

Dickinson Library: *Computers and Coding*, STEM program for children in grades 3-5. Learn about coding using computer apps and making binary bracelets. Funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services. 2:15 to 3:45 p.m.

**SATURDAY, MARCH 9**

Carnegie Library: *Candyland!* Join us for the biggest game of Candyland you have ever played. Designed for children of all ages

and their families/caregivers. 10:30 a.m. to noon.

**SUNDAY, MARCH 10**

Dickinson Library: *Mini-Golf in the Library*. Noon to 4 p.m.

**THURSDAY, MARCH 14**

Leverett Library: *Ukulele Strum-Along with Julie Stepanek*. Focusing on two- and three-chord songs. Ukes provided. 6:45 to 7:45 p.m.

**FRIDAY, MARCH 15**

Dickinson Library: *Slime!* Make and play with slime. Especially for elementary children, but everyone is invited, space permitting. 2 to 3 p.m.

**SATURDAY, MARCH 16**

Dickinson Library: *Beaver Dam Challenge*. STEM program for grades 3 to 5. See how well your team can build a dam like "nature's engineers". Presented by the Hitchcock Center. 10 to 11:30 a.m.

**SUNDAY, MARCH 17**

Leverett Library: *K-9 Trackers* with Montague police officer Jim Rud-dock and K-9 "Artie". Were dogs ever used to attempt to locate the Maine North Pond hermit? Part of Community Read. 2 to 3 p.m.

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20**

Erving Library: Author Rachel B. Hodges talks about her debut novel, *Gingerly*. 6:30 p.m.

**FRIDAY, MARCH 22**

Leverett Library: Family Movie: *Christopher Robin*. Christopher is all grown up but still needs help from Pooh and friends. Live-action. 7:30 p.m.

**SATURDAY, MARCH 23**

Dickinson Library: *Shelter from the Storm: Building Shelter by Tying Knots & Hanging Tarps*. Adventure In Adventure Out (Shutesbury) will teach us how to build the perfect campsite shelter... just like "the hermit" did during his 27 years of living outside in the woods of Maine. Part of the Community Read. 10:30 a.m. to noon.

**SUNDAY, MARCH 24**

Erving Library: Storyteller John Porcino, *Spring into Books at the School*. Call for time.

Leverett Library: *In the Winter Woods: Mammals, the Hermit, and Surviving the Cold*. Part of Community Read, with Dawn Marvin Ward. This is not an outdoor program. 2 to 4 p.m.

Wendell Free Library: *Book discussion* with Jonathan von Ranson. Part of Community Read. 4 p.m.

**TUESDAY, MARCH 26**

Dickinson Library: As part of the Community Read, Sam Ducharme presents *Thru-Hiking the Appalachian Trail*. Come see his gear, learn how he cooked, and hear what it was like sleeping in a hammock for six months. 6:30 p.m.

**THURSDAY, MARCH 28**

Leverett Library: *Literature Group*. This month's selection is *The Overstory* by Richard Powers. People's interactions with trees, and so much more. 6:30 p.m.

**FRIDAY, MARCH 29**

Erving Library: *Groundbreaking for the New Erving Public Library*. Call for details. 10 a.m.

Dickinson Library: Matinee movie, *Moana*. For elementary students and their friends. Popcorn.

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THE

SPRIT SHOPPE



**JINX** from page B1

bucket, walk up to the end of Coolidge Avenue, cross Montague Road, and enter an area of scrub oak that had open patches loaded with wild lowbush blueberries. There they'd squat and pick the ripe fruit until both buckets were full to the brim.

It seemed to Jinx, at the time, that they completed the task in just a few minutes, but he knows it probably took closer to two hours. Why the time flew so fast, he believes, was because of the fun conversation they were having between only the two of them and only about them.

These treasured times have stayed with Jinx throughout his entire life, and whenever he thinks of his mom, they come to the forefront of his thoughts.

"The Castle" would be engulfed with happiness on the many days that his mom, "Jo," would be baking pies and other delicious pastries. She'd move gracefully around the kitchen kneading the pie dough, rolling it out, and cutting it into two sheets. She then placed one into the bottom of the pie tin.

After cleaning and preparing the freshly picked fruit and pouring it into the dough-lined shell, she would add the top crust over it and trim the excess dough from around the edge of the tin. Then, using her thumb and forefinger, she'd gently pinch the edges together. After lightly smoothing a small amount of milk over the entire surface of the top crust, she'd cut several small slits in it to allow for expansion while baking, and then place the masterpiece into the preheated oven.

Throughout the entire preparation and baking process the house would be filled, as if by a beautiful bird, with his mom's whistling, which would not be outdone whenever her melodic voice erupted in song. It gave one the feeling that

they were in attendance at a grand concert with her conducting and performing it all.

The concert never ended until the last crescendo when, emerging from the oven and filling the whole Castle with magnificent aromas, came the masterpiece.

Obviously the Maestro of the Kitchen loved her work. To this day, Jinx can still hear and visualize the performance. He likes to think that the Maestro is still performing her concert for the Angels in Heaven.

**Horrible Horseradish**

Just the sound of the name Horseradish brings back the memory of several evenings at the Castle when at certain suppers, there would be horseradish on the table. Jinx's dad and brother Bud loved it, but Jinx was not so fond of the pungent smelling condiment.

The family did not have a regular table and chairs for the dining. Rather, there was a breakfast nook off the kitchen consisting of a permanently attached table and two side benches for seating. The seating arrangement was: "Bimp" on a chair at the head of the table, and to his left Jo, followed by son number two. To Father's right was Bud, with Jinx next to him, and son number three to his right.

Jinx had no way to get out unless Bud let him.

Well, Bud knew his feelings about horseradish and, at this one supper, decided it would be good sport to stick Jinx's nose into the bottle of the eye-watering concoction while holding the back of his head so he couldn't pull away. Bimp and Jinx's brothers thought it was hilarious seeing his expression and hearing him gag.

Only Jo was on Jinx's side, telling him to stop.



**SCHMIDT** from page B1

and after it," said Schmidt. He likes to dissolve the images into each other, and has arranged the work in a sequence that feels natural to him, starting with earlier work with trees and water reflections, and working into the dancers, and then back out of it. The music he has selected is mostly flute music, both Native American and classical.

Schmidt got his start in photography in high school, when he was given a 35mm camera and was smitten by the images on his first roll of film. When he went to UMass-Amherst, he was photo editor of the newspaper there. On weekends,

he took to driving around the hill towns to get to know the area, and Monday's paper invariably featured one of the scenes he photographed on these excursions on the cover. "They were my first mood pictures," explained Schmidt, who loved the area so much that he settled here after graduation instead of returning to the Boston vicinity.

"How the Trees Taught Us to Dance" sounds like a nice choice for a post-brunch, Sunday afternoon jaunt to Leverett. The Library is at 75 Montague Road. The show is free, and there will be refreshments.



**MONTAGUE COMMUNITY TELEVISION NEWS**

**This Week at MCTV**

By **ABIGAIL TATARIAN**

This week, we present to you... *Rumble at the Shea!* This is a new series featuring promotional videos on businesses in downtown Turners Falls. Check out every episode online at [montaguetv.org](http://montaguetv.org):

- 1. FAB Fashion; 2. Nina's Nook and Books Through Bars; 3. Mystic Pinball; 4. Great Falls Harvest; 5. Black Cow Burgers and Turners Falls Pizza House; 6. Nova Motorcycles; 7. Karma Salon; 8. Ed's Barber Shop; 9. Loot; 10. Mariachi Shoe Repair; 11. The Survival Cen-

ter; 12. About Face; 13. The Rendezvous; 14. Greenfield Savings Bank; 15. Great Falls Yoga; 16. Weeping Bong Band at the Voo.

Share them with your friends! Something going on you think others would like 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, [info@montaguetv@gmail.com](mailto:info@montaguetv@gmail.com), or stop by 34 Second Street between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., Mondays through Fridays. We'd love to work with you!

**HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG**

**Border Ditch; Shoveling Violations; Dumped Stove; Snow Piles; Bar Fight; Nasty Unity Street Pothole**

**Monday, 2/18**

10:28 a.m. Caller reporting vehicle off the road in a ditch, parties appear to be out of the vehicle. Caller initially gave location as being North Leverett Road in Leverett, approximately one mile over the Montague-Leverett line into Leverett. Conferred with Shelburne Control, who already took a call for a vehicle off the road in Leverett near the Baptist church, but the caller advised this vehicle was not near the church and was in the area of Ripley Road. Caller could not provide a vehicle description. Leverett dispatched by Shelburne Control. MPD officer advised and will be checking Montague side of line as a precaution. MPD officer checked North Leverett Road and met up with the Leverett chief, who has same findings on the Montague side. One vehicle was located off the road in Leverett with personnel on scene.

1:07 p.m. 911 open line; no identifiable background noise. Called back; rang and went to voicemail. Party called back after seeing missed call; advised her nephew was playing with the phone; no emergency. Units advised.

8:31 p.m. Caller from Millers Falls Road advising of grey sedan that parked behind her son's vehicle one day last week and then again twenty minutes ago. Caller stated that each time when she opened the door of the home to get a plate number, the vehicle leaves Edward Avenue in the direction of Millers Falls Road then takes a right onto that street. Caller instructed to call back should the vehicle return.

**Tuesday, 2/19**

1:02 a.m. Caller from X Street reporting odd smell in the house, possibly from the furnace. Unknown problem at this time. Both occupants evacuating to car. TFFD and MPD officer advised and en route. No issues found.

11:27 a.m. Disturbance in progress between two parties on Fifth Street. Parties could be heard arguing in background. Peace restored; verbal only; advised of options.

3:30 p.m. Caller from Fifth Street requesting officer retrieve caller's motor vehicle from attached party who is using it without authority. Caller states that registration has been canceled and that operator knows this. Officers arriving on scene and advising that vehicle in question is in the driveway. Officer advising that

MPD units are clear and that both the caller and the operator of this vehicle have contributed funds toward the purchase of the vehicle. Officer advised the two owners that this is a civil issue and provided them with options.

6:24 p.m. 911 misdial from Judd Wire. Upon callback, caller advised that she was trying to call an outside number and accidentally dialed 911. Officer confirmed misdial.

**Wednesday, 2/20**

6:35 a.m. Alarm activation at Town Hall; basement hall to DPW. Officer on scene confirmed DPW accidentally set off alarm. Unit clear.

9:43 a.m. Town bylaw violation notice served to party on Montague City Road (sidewalk not shoveled).

9:54 a.m. Town bylaw violation notice served to second party on Montague City Road (sidewalk not shoveled).

11:23 a.m. Caller from Gill reporting scam call she received. Caller also requesting options/advice re: a camper she sold in a private sale. Referred caller to her local PD (Gill PD) and provided number for Shelburne Control.

12:40 p.m. Motor vehicle accident at Unity Street and Millers Falls Road, two vehicles, no apparent injuries/smoke/fluids, negative airbag deployment. Report taken.

5:18 p.m. FRTA dispatch reporting that a bus had sideswiped a parked car on Third Street. Report taken.

**Thursday, 2/21**

8:13 a.m. Assisting vehicle off road in a snowbank at Millers Falls Road and West Mineral Road; no injuries. Motorist was able to get out under his own power.

8:19 a.m. Caller from High Street complaining of someone in a red truck taking snow from the corner house next to Scotty's and bringing it across the street to someone's private property. Caller has not spoken with the owner but

does not believe they have permission to do so. Caller advises this has been happening for several years. Caller advises the owner gave the Town of Montague permission years ago to pile snow there, but does not believe the neighbor has permission. Officer checked area; no apparent issues. Snowbank observed at end of High Street at Keith Street; no one around. No call from property owner as of yet.

8:45 a.m. Report of homeless person sleeping in the basement of caller's rental property on G Street. Caller advises that per his maintenance person, the subject has been entering for the past few nights, slept in the hallway one night, but is in the basement now. Caller and maintenance worker not on site at this time but maintenance person is local and can respond if needed. Units checked basement; no one located; will remain in area. Officer located attached male outside Family Dollar. Subject was verbally trespassed from the caller's building. Caller advised of findings.

5:26 p.m. Caller from Seventh Street states that the upstairs neighbor is playing loud music. Officer advised person in third-floor apartment about the complaint.

10:30 p.m. 911 caller states that there is a man in dark clothing standing in the road with his hands up on the bridge over the river on East Main Street. Caller almost struck man because he could not see him. Officers off with a male party on Newton Street. [Redacted.]

**Friday, 2/22**

1:22 a.m. Officers out with male party walking on Stevens Street. Clear; male walking to his sister's house.

8:09 a.m. Caller stated that four men in a vehicle were parked at the Masonic Lodge and it seemed suspicious. People waiting for a class to start; no issues.

11:36 a.m. Caller states that there is a large public sidewalk that borders a property on High Street and the property owners have not cleared it up all winter. Notification left in mailbox of the town bylaws regarding snow removal.

12:05 p.m. Greenfield PD advising they received a 911 abandoned call from L Street. On callback, they spoke to a female who advised it was a misdial. Officer located female at the pizza house having lunch; no problems.

1:44 p.m. Caller states that somebody just dumped a stove into the wooded area on Cemetery Road, just off Millers Falls Road. DPW notified.

**Saturday, 2/23**

1:25 a.m. Greenfield PD advises of incident reported to them, assault and battery yesterday at Between the Uprights between 3 and 4 p.m. Male party reports that he was punched in the face and has significant facial injuries that have him at the BFMC ER. MPD officer advised and will call BFMC.

5:53 a.m. Caller from Turners Falls Road reporting a vehicle parked on his property that appears to have crashed into his vehicle and caused significant damage. Vehicle is not running, unoccupied, airbags deployed. MPD units en route.

6:34 p.m. Officer advising he is out with a vehicle that just blew two tires on a pothole driving on Unity Street.

8 p.m. Caller from L Street complaining of a vehicle parked in his driveway space; has contacted landlord, but they don't return his calls. Officer advised of issue; stated that they have been dealing with this issue for a few weeks now. Dispatch called landlord, who stated that the caller does not even live there, but that she will look into the other vehicle parked there and have it towed if necessary.

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# OUT OF THE PARK: March 2019

By JON DOBOSZ

**UNITY PARK** – Hello again, everyone! We hope you’re having a great and fulfilling winter. If you’re just waiting out the clock for milder weather and spring, well, we’re more than halfway there. Either way, we were pretty lucky a couple weeks ago with getting a few inches of snow. Without it, we would’ve had to cancel our Night Sledding event due to a lack of it, so thank you Old Man Winter!



As we finish up on the winter season, we still have a few sessions of **Open Swim** that remain. Be sure to get your last little bit of pool time at the Turners Falls High School pool on Tuesday and Friday evenings from now until March 8. **Family Swim** is held from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., with **Adult Lap Swim** from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Switching gears to spring, let’s start with our ever-popular Tee Ball program. **Tee Ball** is for children ages 4 to 6, and goes from April 20 to June 1 on Saturday mornings. We have an Early Bird Registration fee that goes until Friday, March 22, so register ASAP!

We also offer a **Rookie League Baseball** for kids ages 7 to 9, which also runs from April 20 to June 1. This is a coach-pitch instructional program, and we recommend Kindergarten players start with Tee Ball before playing Rookie ball.

Switching to **Girls Softball**, we offer two teams. First is our Nipper League, which is represented by The Purple Panthers. The Panthers

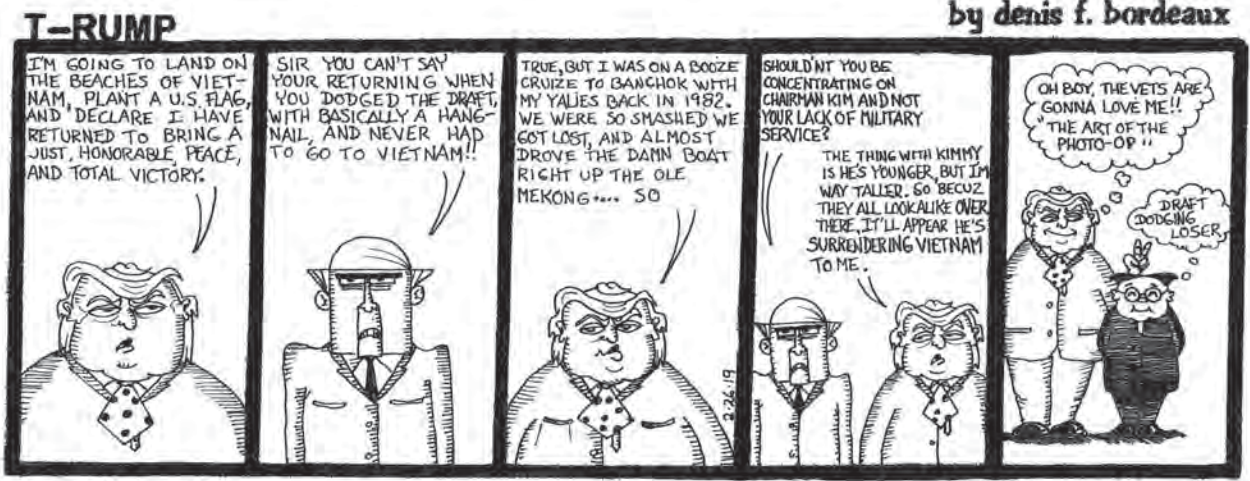
are a coach-pitch program that is geared to girls ages 7 to 9. The season goes from early April to mid-June, and we are members of the Greenfield Girls Softball League where all games are played at Murphy Park. We also offer softball for girls from 10 to 12, represented by The Diamond Dusters, in GGSL’s fast-pitch league.

Not being “just for kids,” MPRD also manages the **Montague Adult Co-Ed “B” Softball League**. This league is sanctioned by the American Softball Association, and has been in existence for approximately twenty years. If you have a team and a sponsor, or if you are interested in joining as an individual player, call us ASAP. The league is for those aged 18 and up, and the season goes from mid-May through mid-August, with games being held Monday and Thursday evenings.

Looking beyond spring, we’ll be starting **Summer Camp** registration for Montague residents on Monday, April 1. Tentative program dates are Monday, June 24 to Friday, August 16. Summer Camp is held Mondays thru Fridays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. We offer theme weeks, field trips, special events and trips to Laurel Lake. The camp is designated as a “Licensed Day Camp” through the MA Dept. of Public Health. Non-residents may start to register on Monday, April 29. That’s about it from here. If you wish to obtain information on some of our other programs and events like Peter Cottontail’s EGGstravaganza, Summer Bluefish Swim Team, Unity Park Community Garden events, and the Montague Warrior Dash Adventure Race, feel free to contact us at 863-3216, log onto montague.net, or view our Facebook page.

Other than that, stay warm, stay active, and think spring!

*Jon Dobosz, CPRP, is the director of parks and recreation for the town of Montague.*



**GARDENER’S** from page B1  
get together with friends from last year’s stay. This year they are three hours or so away on a large lake in Inverness, so we plan to meet half-way for lunch next Monday.

As we head out for a few errands we notice that the irritating tire pressure light is on. We pull into a gas station and line up with the air machine. We get out and find there is a large screw on the sidewall of the right rear tire.

Nearby, three young men are gathered around a pickup truck. They are locals and direct us to a local garage where they order us up two tires. It’s Friday, so we will have to wait until Monday morning to get squared up. This means driving around on the “donut” spare and postponing our get-together with friends, as we are not allowed speedy driving on highways until the new tires are on.

We spend the weekend driving gingerly around. The car computer complains about it, anywhere we go – slow or not. We are hugely grateful not to have picked up the screw on I-95 going 70!

We have a nice time getting reacquainted with our friends on Tuesday, and they invite us to drive down and stay with them for a day or two. Since we will have a long journey soon enough, we chat instead about connecting if we travel to the Great Lakes and Niagara Falls next year, a trip which we are contemplating.

February 14. All of a sudden, we are at the halfway point of our time at Crescent Beach. The time seems to have slipped away, as our days are filled with long walks on the beach, a midday meal out, more walking, and reading.

We have also returned to the old family stomping grounds in Crescent City twice, gone down to the

acres of Mexican pottery in Barberville, and hiked at Moss Creek.

*February 19.* We watch for the sunsets every day. The color seems to spread everywhere; it is so flat here at the beach. The sky is plum or red or pink. At the beach, the sun sinks by degrees just the way it rises. Tonight we watched for the super moon, but it was very cloudy.

*February 20.* At night, the huge moon is spectacular as it emerges from the clouds. We hurry to the beach and are in time to see it in all its glory over the ocean, its light dancing on the incoming tide.

*February 23.* We drive to the Princess Preserve for the annual Native American Pow Wow.

The participating tribes include Native Americans from North and South America: Pueblo, Creek, Aztec, Seminole and Mohawk.

We hear a charming reminiscence from Harold Littlefield, who recounted his first day at second grade. Only English was spoken, and he didn’t know any of this strange language. But he noticed that some children went up and formed a line in front of the teacher and were allowed to leave the room. He stepped right up, eager to go out as well. He later learned that what was announced was the reduced lunch line. After the meal, the children went out and played

on the swings. He enjoyed that, and stayed out until a teacher came for him. His current command of English is perfect.

Aztec dancers from Mexico City perform some fast, intricate moves in gorgeous costumes of all colors and highly decorated with elegant feather headdresses. At the end they encourage spectators to join in. A few brave souls give it a try.

Later in the afternoon is a ceremony honoring veterans of all the wars. We think many people are not aware that the Native Americans were represented in all the branches of the military. At the end of the ceremony, any veterans in the audience are encouraged to join the circle. Ken is very proud of his service in the Coast Guard, and quickly joins the parade.

*February 24.* We are down to our last four days at Crescent Beach. We arrive at this milestone with mixed feelings. It is a balmy day with westerly breezes, and will be near eighty degrees. But as it always happens, when it is time to head home, we are nostalgic for home base and our little cat.

We will fill these last days with more memories, and then head homeward with the warmth of the southern welcome and the splendor of the super moon in our hearts, and the haunting sounds of the Native flute still in our ears.



*Photo courtesy of the St Augustine Lighthouse & Museum.*

## Glasstastic: A Creative Collaboration at BMAC

**BRATTLEBORO** – A three-eyed being named “Jeff” who loves cupcakes, a young water bottle who owns a taco business, and a glue stick whose mission is “to unlock eternal happiness.” For the fourth time in a decade, the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center (BMAC) has connected young students with glass artists to create wild and whimsical creatures.

Next Saturday, March 9, BMAC will unveil the 2019 incarnation of this exhibit, called *Glasstastic*, featuring 20 works of art that were conceived of and drawn by children in grades K through 6, and transformed into three-dimensional pieces by glass artists from across New England. The creations will be on display through June 16, along with over 1,200 drawings that were submitted by school children during the open call last year.

The exhibit will open with a brunch reception on Saturday at 11 a.m., celebrating *Glasstastic* and the five other new exhibits opening on that date. The reception is free and

open to the public.

This year’s selected students hail from Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Connecticut, including four from Brattleboro, three from Hinsdale, New Hampshire, and three from South Burlington, Vermont. Each student artist will receive a certificate and a photograph of



*“A Flying Wonder”: drawing by Malena Hodgman, glass sculpture by Dan Coyl.*

the glass sculpture inspired by their drawing. The students’ families and schools are given the opportunity to purchase the pieces in advance. The remaining sculptures will be on sale to the public.

“We’re lucky to have so many talented glass artists in the area who have participated in this project over

the years,” said BMAC Education Curator Linda Whelihan. “This year, we have invited a handful of new artists recommended by our original crew. This is a labor of love for them. Often they choose a drawing that will stretch their abilities and allow them to experiment with new techniques, but that requires hours of trial and error, since glass doesn’t behave like other materials.”

Dominique Caissie and Jocelyn Brown, both of Terrapin Glassblowing Studio in Jaffrey, NH, said, “This is an amazing event that we are absolutely honored to participate in again. We think this museum is a gem of a place, bringing so much to the surrounding communities, and it is wonderful to get to work with such a great entity. Our favorite part, though: we love being able to encourage all those little budding artists to create and put themselves out there. We wish we could choose even more!”

Glass artist Lynn Latimer returned to the project for a second

time this year. “The children’s bold and free-styled drawings are a wonderful technical glass challenge and an invitation to explore and share someone’s vision,” Latimer said. “The show draws a great crowd and is alive with energy. It’s a lot of fun all around!”

The other five exhibits opening at BMAC on March 9 are *Sandy Sokoloff: Emanation*; *Amy Bennett: Nuclear Family*; *Jackie Abrams & Deidre Scherer: Connections*; *Joey Morgan: Catch + Release (2) Précis*; and *Joseph Diggs: Proud 2 Be American*.

Founded in 1972, the museum presents rotating exhibits of contemporary art, complemented by lectures, artist talks, film screenings, and other public programs. The museum’s galleries and gift shop are open every day, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., except Tuesdays. Regular admission is \$8 for adults, \$6 for seniors, and \$4 for students. Members and children 18 and under are admitted free of charge.

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# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

## EVENTS

### THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Kids Music Series with Under the Tree Music Company*. A five-week music series for young children combining music, laughter, song and movement. Adults and infants under 1 year are free; small fee per child or \$20 per kid for five weeks. 10:30 a.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Tom Waits Tribute*. To support a new library for Greenfield. Local bands. \$. 8 p.m.

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

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Arc Benefit Concert*. With *Heath Lewis, Danny Hescocock, Scotty K., Falltown String Band, Don LaCoy, Terry McKeon, Shawn Garland*. 8 p.m.

### FRIDAY, MARCH 1

Greenfield Community College: *Artspace Pottery Seconds Sale and More*. One of the biggest fundraisers for the Artspace Community Art Center, marking the 40th year of this annual sale. Work by local artisans, plus live music by Artspace students and door prizes. In the dining commons at GCC. 5 to 8 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Stage Door*. Four Rivers Charter School drama production about actresses trying to make it during the Great Depression. \$. 7 p.m.

Smith College, Northampton: *Bob Weir and Wolf Bros*. Grateful Dead singer and guitarist in new configuration with *Don Was* and *Jay Lane*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

All Souls Church, Greenfield: *Karin Allyson/Miro Sprague Benefit*. A benefit for the Stone Soup Cafe and the Church's film festival on racism. \$. 7:30 p.m.

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

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Rhythm Inc., No Lens*. Reggae fusion. \$. 9 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Weak Signal, Huevos II, MacGregor Men*. 9:30 p.m.

### SATURDAY, MARCH 2

Greenfield Community College: *Artspace Pottery Seconds Sale and More*. One of the biggest fundraisers for the Artspace Community Art Center, marking the 40th year of this annual sale. Beautiful work by local artisans, plus live music by Artspace students and door prizes. In the dining commons at GCC. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls:

*Stage Door*. Four Rivers Charter School drama production about actresses trying to make it during the Great Depression. \$. 7 p.m.

Wendell Library: *Journey to the Center of the Earth*. A professor and his colleagues explore a volcano that leads to the earth's center. Short film before the movie, an episode of *Fireball XL5*. Part of a monthly SciFi/Horror/Monster movie series. 7:30 p.m.

Root Cellar, Greenfield: *Reliant Tom, John Trudeau, Will Roan, Lost Life Preserver*. Avant-pop and experimental performance art duo. \$. 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Lush Honey, Electrio, Dish Soap*. \$. 9 p.m.

#### SUBMITTED IMAGE



*Jim Eagan, local singer/songwriter, plays finger-style folk and blues on his acoustic guitar. He teams up with multi-instrumentalist and vocalist Anand Nayak at the March 8 Great Falls Coffeehouse. One of Eagan's originals was featured on Jorma Kaukonen's latest album, and Nayak is a Grammy-nominated record producer who performs with Rani Arbo & daisy mayhem. Come see them starting at 7:30 p.m. in the Great Hall at the Center. Donation; refreshments available.*

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Mardi Gras Get Down*. Boogie with bands *Zydeco Connection* and *Bayou X*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Equalites Reggae Dance Party*. Reggae Fantastico! 9 p.m.

### SUNDAY, MARCH 3

McCusker's Market, Shelburne Falls: *Celtic Sessions*. Musicians, all levels welcome. 10:30 a.m.

Green Fields Market, Greenfield: *Co-Op Straight Ahead Jazz*. Balcony in the afternoon. 12 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *The Wailers*. Legendary reggae band. \$. 8 p.m.

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

### MONDAY, MARCH 4

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Bin-go*. 8 p.m.

### TUESDAY, MARCH 5

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Irish Music in the Wheelhouse*. Free Irish music session. 7 p.m.

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Salsa Wednesday*. With *McCoy* and *DJ Roger Jr.* \$. 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Creacion Latin Big Band Jam*. On the fourth floor. 8 p.m.

Root Cellar, Greenfield: *Rob Noyes, Alexander*. Guitar music. \$. 8 p.m.

### THURSDAY, MARCH 7

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Kids Music Series with Under the Tree*

*Horses, Honeysuckle*. Two rising bands that are redefining folk music. \$. 7 p.m.

Mt. Toby Meetinghouse, Leverett: *John McCutcheon*. McCutcheon has a huge catalogue of original folk songs and is a multi-instrumentalist and storyteller. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Falltown String Band*. 8 p.m.

Gill Tavern, Gill: *Trivia Night*. Come with a team or by yourself, \$5 to play. Winning team receives \$25 gift certificate to the tavern, and all proceeds go towards a monthly good cause. 8:30 p.m.

### FRIDAY, MARCH 8

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Jim Eagan and Anand Nayak*. Great Falls Coffeehouse Series presents Eagan and Nayak "picking" and singin' folk, blues, originals and covers." Suggested donations support programs at the center. Refreshments. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Memorial Hall, Shelburne Falls: *Pothole Pictures: Farmer of the Year*. Plainfield residents Vince O'Connell and Kathy Swanson sold their Northampton business and became filmmakers. This is their first feature about an aging farmer and his granddaughter who take a cross-country trip. Meet the filmmakers at both showings. Live music before the show. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Root Cellar, Greenfield: *Jon Camp, The Caribbean, Blue Dreamers*. Avant pop and electric guitar inventions. \$. 8 p.m.

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

### SATURDAY, MARCH 9

Memorial Hall, Shelburne Falls: *Pothole Pictures: Farmer of the Year*. Plainfield residents Vince O'Connell and Kathy Swanson sold their Northampton business and became filmmakers. This is their first feature about an aging farmer and his granddaughter who take a cross-country trip. Meet the filmmakers at both showings. Live music before the show. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Annual Big Surf Dance*. More than 30 bands, art, food and raffles to support Homeward Vets. \$. 1 p.m.

Battleboro Museum & Art Center: *New Exhibits Opening*. See exhibits listing for show descriptions. Brunch reception at 11 a.m.

Exhibit through June 16.

Root Cellar, Greenfield: *I Love You, Grist, Pronoia, Plants of the Bible*. \$. 8 p.m.



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**THURS 3/7 8 pm**  
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## EXHIBITS

Artspace Gallery, Greenfield: *Art as Veil: ixchelailee*. Local multi-media artist. Through March 22.

Brattleboro Museum & Art Center, Brattleboro, VT: Six new exhibits opening on March 9 include large paintings by a reclusive Vermont artist *Sandy Sokoloff*, glass creatures based on children's drawings, narrative paintings by *Amy Bennett*, collaborative fiber art of *Jackie Abrams* and *Die-dre Scherer*, an immersive mixed-media installation by *Joey Morgan*, and paintings documenting several generations of an African-American and Cape Verdean family on Cape Cod by *Joseph Diggs*. Through June 16. Opening reception, March 9, 11 a.m.

DVAA Gallery, Northfield: Members' exhibit in February/March: *Farms*.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *The Time of My Life: Vintage Views of Western Massachusetts*.

Enlarged postcard scenes take visitors on an imaginary road trip, with stops at Mount Tom, Sugarloaf, Turners Falls, Greenfield, Shelburne Falls, and the Mohawk Trail. Sit down and relax with reproduction postal souvenir albums, a hands-on stereoscope, and a Viewmaster with other area scenes. Sponsored by Memorial Hall Museum. Through April 21.

Greenfield Gallery, Greenfield: *Marjorie Morgan's The Long View*. Dream landscapes. Through March 15.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Rodney Madison and Friends*. Paintings and mixed media.

Leverett Crafts & Arts Center, Leverett: *Jump Start*, annual exhibit of student work from Louise Minks' studio classes, from March 4 to March 23. Opening reception March 16, 1 p.m.

Nina's Nook, Turners Falls: *In the Vicinity*, featuring *Nina Rossi's* mixed media works depicting Turners Falls, in-

cluding new textiles printed with streetscape paintings. Through March 9.

Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne Falls: *Women of Power*. Fabric Figures by *Belinda Lyons Zucker*. February 8 through April 28. Reception March 9, 3 p.m. Also, *Creating Together*, collaborations between mothers and their children and an art making space for children.

Sawmill River Gallery, Montague Center: *The Glance of Mercy*. Paintings of animals by Shali Sanders of Orange. Also, *All Creatures Great and Small*, works from the gallery collection. Through March 31.

Shelburne Arts Coop, Shelburne Falls: *Seeing Red*, a members' show with a red theme, on view through March.

Smith College Greenhouses, Northampton: *Spring Bulb Show*. Spectacular flowering hyacinths, narcissi, irises, lilies and tulips. Lift your spirits with color and scent. Daily from March 2 to March 17.

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# THE AUTHORS' CORNER: MAUREEN JOHNSON

By IZZY VACHULA-CURTIS

**TURNERS FALLS** – “Where do you look for someone who’s never really there? Always on a staircase, but never on a stair.” This riddle is the premise of the first two books in Maureen Johnson’s new series: *Truly Devious* and *The Vanishing Stair*.

*Truly Devious* and *The Vanishing Stair* are murder mysteries about a girl named Stevie Bell who goes to a private school called Ellingham Academy. Ellingham Academy is known for its infamous murders. In 1936, a student at the school was found murdered in the woods, and the wife and daughter of Ellingham’s founder, millionaire Albert Ellingham, were kidnapped.

Stevie is a young detective whose dream is to solve the Ellingham murder and kidnappings. Stevie is very anxious, and has panic attacks often, which I liked because

it really makes her feel like a realistic character who isn’t perfect. She is obsessed with “True Crime” magazines, and listening to murder mystery podcasts.

Stevie is not wealthy, like some of the other students at Ellingham Academy. When Stevie filled out her application to Ellingham, she wrote about her obsession with the Ellingham case, and her love of murder mysteries. When she applied to the school, she doubted she would get in.

Many of the other students at Ellingham did remarkable things like computer programming or engineering, and all Stevie did was obsess over murder mysteries. When Ellingham founded his school, he wanted it to be a mix of different kids; he wanted to give full scholarships to anyone he thought had a special talent or was unique. That’s why Stevie was very surprised

when she got accepted.

The setting in these books really helps give the story an eerie feeling. Ellingham Academy is right outside Burlington, Vermont, and is an enormous campus built into the side of Hatchet Mountain. The mountain is very large, and hard to get off of. To get to Ellingham, you have to take this long, treacherous road up the mountain.

Ellingham seems like a very fun and interesting school. In Stevie’s school cafeteria, they have amazing food, and there are various maple-flavored products that sound so amazing! They also have a yurt, which is a cabin with colorful pillows, beanbags, and comfy furniture. (When we were on vacation last week, we saw a yurt on our drive. It was a little cabin in the woods, and there was a sign that said “Yurt Rentals.”)

*Truly Devious* and *The Vanish-*

*ing Stair* are both incredible books about Stevie both trying to solve the Ellingham case from the 1930s, and also new investigations about “accidents” going on at Ellingham in the present.

I would recommend these books to people who enjoy murder mysteries, or suspenseful books. These two books are definitely more teen, or young adult books, and not really for younger kids. (If you know a younger kid who likes this type of book, the “Wells and Wong” series, really amazing books about two girls who solve murder mysteries, are a bit less scary.)

When I finished *The Vanishing Stair*, I was very disappointed when I found out the third book isn’t coming out until January 2020, because *The Vanishing Stair* left off on a massive cliffhanger, and left me coming up with a ton of conspiracy theories!



PHOTO COURTESY IZZY VAC

Vachula-Curtis with Johnson’s new series: *Truly Devious* and *The Vanishing Stair*.

I’ve been trying to get in touch with Maureen Johnson via email and Instagram. Hopefully she will write back soon, and maybe give us hints into what will happen in the third book...

Thank you so much for reading this article, and I hope you had a fantastic February Vacation!

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