

# The Montague Reporter

YEAR 17 – NO. 24

also serving Erving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

\$1

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

APRIL 11, 2019

## NEWS ANALYSIS

# Fire and Water Matter – And You Can Vote on Them

By JEFF SINGLETON

**MONTAGUE** – The Turners Falls Fire District will hold its annual district meeting at Turners Falls High School on Tuesday, April 16 at 7 p.m. The District runs the Turners Falls Fire and Water departments, which provide services to most residents of Montague – with the exception of those living in and near Montague Center, most of Precinct 1, where residents have their own water district and fire department.

Many Americans claim they are powerless in the face of political manipulation – whether by the “deep state,” “corporate America,” or some

other force. But it turns out that if you are a registered voter in Turners Falls, Millers Falls, Lake Pleasant, or Montague City, you can walk in to the auditorium of the Turners Falls High School on April 16 and vote on the operating budgets and special expenditures that fund your fire protection and your drinking water.

The meeting decisions cost you money, and in an era of downtown revitalization, decaying infrastructure, and costly public employee retirement costs, current budget votes may have long-term consequences.

Although the fire and water budgets are combined into one budget see **FIRE DISTRICT** page A4

## STARS OF THE STAGE



VICTORIA MAILLO PHOTO



JULIA HANDSCHUH PHOTO

Top: Las Gnadalupanas de México danced to “México en la piel” during the Center for New Americans’ Immigrant Voices showcase at the Shea Theater in Turners Falls on Sunday afternoon. (See page B6 for a Spanish-language review!)

Bottom: The after-school ACT program at Gill Elementary School performed an original musical, The Glass Mountain at the Gill town hall on Wednesday. The final performance, open to the public, will be at 7 p.m. this Friday, April 12.

# Spring Town Elections Fail to Lure Candidates

By MIKE JACKSON

**FRANKLIN COUNTY** – Local bookies will be disappointed to know there’s not much action on local elections this spring. Montague tree warden Mark Stevens faces a challenger – Diana Souza of Greenfield Road, nominated from the floor of the town Democratic caucus – but besides that, every line on every ballot in Gill, Montague, Erving, and Wendell, as well as the imaginary ballots in Leverett, is a non-competitive race at best.

Incumbents standing for reelection will be the general order of the day. Christopher Boutwell, Christine Heard, Randy Crochier, Scott Bastarache, and Peter d’Erri-

co are all willing to hold onto their selectboard seats, and we haven’t yet caught wind of any write-in campaigns to contest them.

The majority of spots on the Gill-Montague school committee were up for grabs this year, since two were filled on a temporary basis, but we won’t see a repeat of the contentious races of the past two springs: the only candidates to return papers were the five incumbents, Jane Oakes and Bill Tomb of Gill and Heather Katsoulis, Michael Langknecht, and Thomasina Hall of Montague. (Don’t forget: voters from both towns may vote for all district candidates.)

Leverett votes first, on Saturday, see **ELECTIONS** page A8

## ERVING SELECTBOARD

# Erving Scraps Faulty Geothermal System

By KATIE NOLAN

On Monday night, the Erving selectboard voted unanimously to abandon the senior/community center’s geothermal system and install air source heat pumps to heat and cool the building. According to selectboard member Jacob Smith, repairing the geothermal system is “dumping money on a system that is not working.” The system has had problems since the building was under construction in 2011.

Board members said that the project must be completed before summer, because the center would have to close in warm weather if there is no air conditioning. During this heating season, the building has been heated by a backup propane boiler.

The board authorized administrative coordinator Bryan Smith to submit the \$100,000 project to the



NINA ROSSI PHOTO

Trouble with the geothermal system at the senior/community center date all the way back to the building’s construction. See page A6 for a history of the issue.

state Green Communities Division for approval, as part of the town’s effort to reach a goal of reducing its energy use by 20% over five years. The heat pump retrofit would use

most of the town’s \$140,000 Green Communities grant money, and make it difficult to meet the 20% energy reduction goals for other see **ERVING** page A6

## MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

# New Plan: Hill Votes At Senior Center, Downtown Residents Vote At Town Hall

By JEFF SINGLETON

Montague town clerk Deb Bourbeau came before the selectboard on Monday to announce that she had attended a meeting at the senior center the previous week, and “while I was sitting there, I had a light bulb go off.” The light bulb was the revelation that the senior center on Fifth Street would be the perfect place to move voting for Precincts 3 and 4 from Hillcrest Elementary School.

Bourbeau had previously recommended moving polling places for the two precincts to the state-owned Discovery Center on Avenue A in downtown Turners. “The Discovery Center is a wonderful place,” she told the board, “but there’s a big cost factor that comes along with it.” Moving the polling stations there, she said, would require paying a “staff person,” an event fee, and either an environmental police officer or state police officer to stand around.

Bourbeau said voting at the senior center would avoid these costs, as well as the need for a backup polling station in case the Discovery Center was not available. Unfortunately, the senior center is in Precinct 5, and is the current polling location for that precinct’s residents. So, according to Bourbeau’s plan, Precinct 5 voting would be moved to the meeting room of town hall.

These various voting location see **MONTAGUE** page A5

## GILL-MONTAGUE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

# School Committee OKs Six-Town Study

By MIKE JACKSON

**GILL-MONTAGUE** – By a 7 to 2 vote, the Gill-Montague regional school committee voted Tuesday night to recommend that the towns of Gill and Montague form official “planning committees” to study the feasibility of entering a new six-town school district with Bernardston, Leyden, Northfield, and Warwick.

If the towns also approve this step, each town moderator would appoint a three-member committee, following a procedure set by state law; if all six towns form committees, they can then merge into a “planning board” tasked with studying the “fiscal and educational advisability” of the Pioneer Valley and Gill-Montague districts dissolving and forming a larger district.

There is little precedent in Massachusetts for exist-

ing regional districts to be combined, and some of the conversation on Tuesday reflected an attempt to understand the proper process.

“The district could create its own study committee, because we are a separate municipality,” said Montague member Michael Langknecht, but he was corrected by a reading of the rules: the committees can be created either by a town meeting vote, or by votes of both the selectboard and school committee of each town.

There seemed to be some doubt as to whether a regional school committee such as Gill-Montague had the authority to participate in the decision, but in the end a majority voted to endorse the idea moving forward in both towns.

“I’m just not comfortable voting for something that see **GMRSD** page A7

# The Week In TFHS Sports: The Spring Thaw

By MATT ROBINSON

This week, the Turners Falls girls’ tennis team opened the spring sports season, the softball team had a four-team play day, the track and tennis courts got drenched, and the baseball diamond dried out but didn’t quite thaw.

Also this week, questions about the future of Powertown Football were raised.

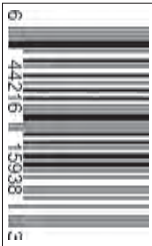
Congratulations to the Virginia Cavs, who beat Texas Tech in a thrilling overtime game to win the NCAA D1 Basketball Championship. Of course, my bracket was busted in the first round when Vermont, Northeastern, and Yale all lost to the favorites. You see, I base my predictions on loyalty, so I root for the schools from New England.

In high school sports, I don’t see **SPORTS** page A7



DAVID HOITT PHOTO

Turners’ Hailey Bogusz nails the ball for a bit as Thunder hosts D-I Minnechaug Regional, Quabbin Regional, and Keene, NH for an early season “Play Day” scrimmage.



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# The Montague Reporter

*"The Voice of the Villages"*

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August 2002

## Gifts and Treasures

Last November, the *Montague Reporter's* board of directors launched a capital campaign to help ensure this newspaper is sustained for the long term. You may have found a letter and a return envelope. 138 of you answered the call, chipping in anywhere from \$10 to \$500 for our work.

The board set a goal of \$10,000 for the campaign. This week, after adding up a few donations that have trickled in recently, we are very pleased to tie a bow on the campaign, which brought in \$10,192!

It's wonderful to have the support of so many in the community for this unlikely endeavor. The little notes of encouragement that so many included with their donations also had their intended effect, and our staff and volunteers made it through yet another winter – our 17th – with an independent, non-profit, unique, hyperlocal print newspaper still going strong.

We're attracting talented writers, including more regular columnists, which has made it easier to fill out each edition without a scramble for content. We've introduced several small delivery routes in Greenfield, so readers in the shire town will be able to get the paper in a more timely manner, and at a better price.

And you may have noticed another addition, beginning with our April 4 edition: a barcode. 644216159383, that's our number... While the first 758 editions of the *Montague Reporter* were unreadable to scanners, this eccentricity caused enough grief over the years that we've decided it was time to take this step.

While it's not the most aesthetically pleasing thing to look at, tattooed right there on the bottom corner of the front page, we anticipate it will help us get onto a number of additional newsstands in the coming months. If you have one in mind you'd like to find us on, write to [circulation@montaguereporter.org](mailto:circulation@montaguereporter.org) and we'll see what we can do.

We're counting on new subscribers and new store sales this year, but the newspaper business is an uphill battle at every step, and we will continue to fundraise on the side. With that in mind, we're excited to start a new fundraising offer!

David Brule, who for years has written his biweekly "West Along the River" column, has published a third collected volume of the series. It's a handsome book, and hefty, at just over 400 pages. You can buy it at local stores, but David has also donated a number of copies to the *Reporter*, which we will pass along to donors this season as a gift!

From the book jacket:

*These essays draw on the lore and oral histories of local characters in the many surrounding villages, including tales from the wild days of river log drives, several infamous and lingering memories of local witchery, a hometown hero from the early days of Red Sox baseball, whimsical observations of the earliest days on the New England frontier of the 1700s.*

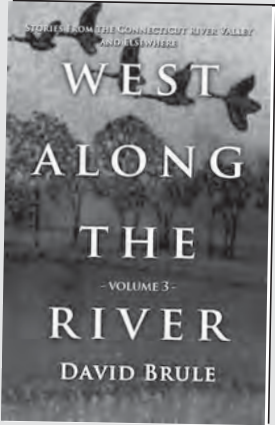
*The author recounts poignant adventures of summers in France and Brittany, wanderings through the countryside of Ireland and Spain, his return to his ancestral home on the banks of the Millers River in western Massachusetts.*

*Several chapters record the renewal of Native American presence in this region, and serve as a source of record, describing the ground-breaking work undertaken by local communities and tribes to uncover the multiple perspectives on events that occurred in this region during King Philip's War.*

*This eclectic anthology of nature writings, dwelling somewhere on the boundaries of poetry and prose, provides a calm and zen-like sanctuary for the reader. Some have chosen to read the essays aloud, and others, to escape the intrusive nature of the daily news cycle, choose to set aside time to read these stories during moments of quiet reflection.*

Anyone who contributes \$20 or above to the *Montague Reporter* – while supplies last – will receive a copy of *West Along the River 3*. All proceeds will go directly to help us stay in print.

Finally, David will be giving "pop-up" readings of the book, including one on Thursday, April 25 from 6 to 8 p.m. in our office at 177 Avenue A in Turners Falls. Come, donate \$20 or more, and leave with a signed copy! See the notice on page B5 for more details. We're very grateful to David for the gift, and encourage our readers to take him up on his offer!



NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION

*Ed Rahyer casts a 1,000-piece order of type at his Thompson foundry machine at Swamp Press in Northfield, one of four active commercial type foundries in the U.S. The machine is about a hundred years old, and is one of several he rescued in the 1980s when printers offloaded old technology in the rush to modernize.*

## Letters to the Editors

## Our Community's Best Conscience

I write in response to a police log entry in last week's paper about a caller offended by graffiti under the bridge at Unity Park. I don't know if the caller was upset by all of the graffiti there – the fact of graffiti in the first place – or if the "No Nazis" sign was especially upsetting.

But I'm writing in praise of the graffiti on that wall. Have you been to see it lately? The petals of two down-trodden but still hopeful daisies point down like dog ears, but their hearts do rise. A field of stylized red roses take a meaningful organized stroll. There's a loving "R.I.P." to a departed friend. Another message that says "You're doing great!" And yes, the word "Nazis" in a circle, with a line across it signaling: No!

In an isolated place under a bridge, a place that could feel unsafe for someone, that graffiti lifts my spirits. I want the people in my community to be kind, peaceful, interested in everybody's safety, and ready to protect each other.

To me, the graffiti on that wall is like a microcosm of the kindness, hope, spiritual clarity, and daring of – I guess – young people in our town. When I walk past it, the conversation I visually eavesdrop on lifts and reassures me. I don't know the artists, of course – that's often the point.

But I hope that they are friends with whoever made the beautiful cat exclaiming "Wow Life!" on the abandoned brick building on the other side of the footbridge. If they're not, it should be reassuring anyway that some stranger feels like they do, that there are better ways to live and see the world than the mean and ugly ones that seem so depressingly popular these days.

One of the beauties of graffiti is that it is unregulated, provocative, and free. Perhaps granting "permission" for more of it, for murals under the bridge, would dilute the power of what is there right now. But anyway, I write in appreciation of the artists who have made that turn under the bridge feel to me like our community's best conscience and a site of dreaming.

I don't want Nazis here either. I do want courageous, lively, and creative people, young and old, who take the initiative to call out for beauty and justice in whatever way they can.

**Nell Koenings**  
**Turners Falls**

## Downtown Bus Memories

Thank you for the interview with Jeff Singleton about mass transit ("The Transit Expander," March 28, page A1). We relied on the bus when I was growing up on Third Street.

Either the stigma that Jeff refers to wasn't prevalent then, or I blindly fit the perceived stereotypical bus rider. In the early 1960s, I regularly took the bus to Greenfield for movies at the Garden or to visit stores. It was GMTA in those days.

One of the reasons we moved from Montague Center to Third Street was so my dad could easily take the bus to work at Cabot Station after our car was totaled in 1951 or 1952.

I remember my sisters commuting on the bus to jobs in Greenfield throughout the 1950s. My mom would shop at Wilson's by catching the bus at the stop on the corner of Third and Avenue A (next to Norwood's).

Tucson, which also tore up its trolley tracks decades ago, now has a modern light rail system downtown to serve the University of Arizona. There is talk of expanding it, but funds are hard to find. Bus routes are always a point of debate there too.

I am glad Jeff is lobbying to expand routes, increase ridership, and promote mass transit as a sane choice for Franklin County.

Full disclosure: I am part of the problem, because we chose to live 30 miles south of Tucson, where mass transit is virtually non-existent.

**Jeffrey Webster**  
**Green Valley, Arizona**

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## LOCAL BRIEFS

Compiled by CHRIS PELLERIN

**Spring-like temperatures** now prevail, as well as the rains that bring the greening of the pastures and flowering of early bulbs. We’ve seen grackles and red winged black-birds at the feeders, hungry from their trip north from wherever they overwinter. Welcome spring!

The Great Falls Discovery Center’s Kidleidoscope program on Friday, April 12 will feature a story, craft, and games based **on the theme of Frogs**. The program is geared toward tykes three to six years old and their caregivers, and meets in the Great Hall from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

In case you’ve missed it in the past, Greenfield Savings Bank at 282 Avenue A in Turners Falls will host **Bingo** on Saturday, April 13 from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Tracey Bell-

ville will be the guest caller at this popular family-friendly event. GSB will provide cards, gag prizes and some light refreshments. All you need to bring is yourself.

Seating will be on a first call, first reserve basis, so call (413) 863-4316. Due to limited space, no one will be admitted without a reservation. I’ve noticed that Bingo usually happens on the second Saturday of the month, so you can always try again next month!

Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust is hosting a free program on Saturday, April 13 called **“Discovering Vernal Pools.”** Join wildlife ecologist Brad Compton to learn about the importance of vernal pools, those seasonal bodies of water that play an important part in the life cycle of frogs, salamanders, and other creatures.

The program is from 10 a.m. to noon at the Arthur Iversen Conser-

vation Area, Gale Road, Warwick. Register at [bit.ly/2FCFPCW](http://bit.ly/2FCFPCW).

Volunteers are welcome to join **Great Falls Books Through Bars** on the second Saturday of each month to read letters and match book requests from prisoners with donated books. The group will meet on Saturday, April 13 from 1 to 4 p.m. at La Mariposa, 113 Avenue A, Turners Falls. If you have any brown paper bags or paperback books in any genre, the group can always use them.

Reminder: Millers Falls Community Improvement Association’s **cleanup day** is Sunday, April 14 from 1 to 3 p.m. Meet at the Whistle Stop Café, 29 East Main Street, Millers Falls to coordinate.

Join sturgeon expert Dr. Boyd Kynard and journalist Karl Meyer on Sunday, April 14 for a short hike to an exceptional and beleaguered aquatic refuge where **shortnose sturgeon and other species** have spawned for thousands of years.

Kynard will recount his decades of research at the Rock Dam pool. Meyer will discuss the geology and history of this Connecticut River reach. It is free and geared to adults and children aged ten and above. Unfortunately, due to steep terrain, it is not accessible for those with mobility issues.

Meet at the public lot off G Street in Turners Falls, near the Silvio O. Conte Anadromous Fish Research Laboratory sign at 10:30 a.m. Heavy rain cancels the outing.

There are more fun events at the local libraries as part of the community-wide reading of “The Stranger in the Woods.” **Hike to Hermit’s Cave** with Rob Fletcher on Sunday, April 14 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Meet at the Erving Public Library, 17 Moore Street, Erving.

Also on Sunday at 3 p.m., drone photographer Jamie Malcolm Brown will present a program on **“Capturing Maine Landscapes”** at Leverett Library, 75 Montague Road, Leverett.

From 6:30 to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, April 16, Sally Naser will present “What’s Hiding in the Woods?” This program shows how to use **trail cameras** to track wildlife in your woods, and meets at the Dickinson Memorial Library, 115 Main Street, Northfield.

More information on each program can be found by calling the host library or following “Libraries in the Woods” on Facebook.

On Wednesday, April 17, from 6:45 to 8:30 p.m., “Woodcocks at Twilight: **The Song of the Timberdoodle**” will be happening at Northfield Mountain Recreation and Environmental Center. Woodcocks (aka Timberdoodles) perform an airborne ritual accompanied by a variety of unique sounds.

The program will begin with an indoor introduction, followed by a half-mile twilight walk on level terrain to experience the courtship flight of the woodcock.

Dress warmly in dark clothes and wear boots. Bring a blanket or portable chair to sit on and be prepared to sit quietly outdoors for 30 minutes. Advance registration is required by calling (800) 859-2960. For ages ten and up.

The UMass Amherst Libraries invite the campus and local community to drop by an open house for

the new Mass Aggie **Seed Library** on Thursday, April 18, 1 to 4 p.m. in the Science and Engineering Library, Lederle GRC Lowrise, University of Massachusetts Amherst.

The Mass Aggie Seed Library, now open for seed borrowing and donation, houses a collection focusing on organic, open-pollinated, and heirloom vegetable and flower seeds, as well as a collection of books to educate the community about seed saving. Additionally, seed-saving tools will soon be available for loan to encourage and support seed-saving efforts.

The Seed Library is made possible through a generous grant from the UMass Amherst Sustainability, Innovation & Engagement Fund (SIEF).

Looking ahead...

The Great Falls Discovery Center presents **“Animals of Spring”** on Friday, April 19 from 1 to 2 p.m. Rae Griffiths of Teaching Creatures brings amphibians, reptiles, and a mammal or two to the Great Hall to help explain what animals were doing all winter and what they are up to now that spring has arrived. Free; for all ages. Plan to come early as seating may be limited.

All are welcome to a free, family-friendly **reusable bag making workshop** on Saturday, April 20. Learn how to make a no-sew bags from T-shirts to replace environment-damaging, single-use plastic shopping bags.

Sponsored by Greening Greenfield, the program takes place from 10 a.m. to noon at the Green Fields Market annex, 155 Main Street, Greenfield.

**“A Pollinator Corridor for Greenfield?”** is the title of Greening Greenfield’s free Earth Day event, to be held Saturday, April 20, 1 to 4 p.m. The family-friendly event will be held at the John Zon Community Center, 35 Pleasant Street in Greenfield.

Greening Greenfield has invited Tom Sullivan, graduate of the Conway School of Landscape Design and owner of *PollinatorsWelcome.com*, to share stories of his recent trip to Ireland, where he met with folks implementing Ireland’s country-wide pollinator plan. This trip has inspired his vision of a pollinator corridor in Greenfield that would link the new pollinator garden he co-designed with Nancee Bershof at the community center with the gardens at the Energy Park.

After the tours, free wildflower seeds and snacks will be available along with many resources and a door prize of a Mason Bee nesting kit that Sullivan donated. For more information go to their website [www.greeninggreenfieldma.org](http://www.greeninggreenfieldma.org) or call 774-5667.

Everyone is welcome to attend a retirement party in honor of Ronnie LaChance, who retired in February after working for 17 years as the Tax Collector and Treasurer for the Town of Gill. Come by, say hi, and wish her the very best.

The event will take place on Saturday, April 27 from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Gill Church, located at 6 Center Road. Parking for the event is available in front of the church, around Town Hall, and across the road next to the Library.

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

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Great Falls Middle  
School Students  
of the Week

Week ending April 5:

Grade 6  
Julia Dickinson

Grade 7  
Taryn McDonough

Grade 8  
Kaylee Moore

Related Arts  
Sabrina Raymond



More Letters  
to the Editors

Three Items:

1) Leave the old directional post in Montague Center alone! Stabilize the wooden structure, but leave the lettering alone. It's an historic marker, not really a signpost. Put up accurate signage separately if you want to.

The historic marker shows how one got to “far-off places” like Worcester when the sign was erected earlier in the last century.

2) I feel like a broken record, but... the town needs to advocate that Eversource, as a part of the re-licensing, put up a Connecticut River access below the Rock Dam for quiet water canoeists and kayakers. Or the town needs to do it.

Above the main dam, one can access the upper Connecticut and worry about competing for space with the speedboats, many of whom respect the kayaks and canoes, and many who think it's funny to swerve over and give them a big thrill with high boat wakes.

The access that is being made on the Millers River has white water both above and below it, so is not going to be able to be used by quiet water/family canoers and kayakers; the potential for a private concern building an access

below the main dam in Turners but above the Rock Dam is not going to be able to be used by quiet water boaters for the same reason.

The Connecticut River between Turners (at the confluence of the Deerfield River) and Sunderland was designated as a quiet water corridor, thanks to the hard work of Terry Blunt before he died several years ago. This corridor restricts powerboat speeds, but quiet water folks who are not able to negotiate the dangerous access at Poplar Street, particularly as a place to take-out, can not really use this wonderful piece of water by starting in Turners.

Somewhere near the Water Treatment Plant looks like the easiest access down to the river. After putting-in there, the parking could be used up the street just a bit where the bicycle path crosses the road.

3) I really *was* at the Taj Mahal! While *I* appreciate Mike Jackson's sense of humor, I'm tired now of telling people that his caption under my photo was really a joke.

Jeri Moran  
Montague Center

Immigration & the Arts

“World-Class” West African drumming performed at the Shea Theater on April 7 – and you guys dance just fine, too!

Too many memorable performances to list here, but I must say, that young Bosnian bass player not only laid down some fine bass lines, but the way he skipped and hopped in place

while playing... sweet!

Plenty of teary-eyed moments for this old softee!

Thanks, Shea, Center for New Americans, and all you performers; and what a Grand Finale when you were all on stage!

John Ingress  
Wendell

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Death and Taxes?

Choosing Life With a Green New Deal

By ANNA GYORGY

**WENDELL** – It’s that time again. When taxes are due, and we can again consider how they are used. Here’s a case for turning our national budget away from war, destruction, and corporate enrichment towards reconstruction and reparations, under the umbrella concept of a Green New Deal. The Green New Deal legislation, sponsored in the House of Representatives by the dynamic youngest member of congress, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC) and in the Senate by our own Ed Markey, is gaining wide support – despite Republican jeers.

House Resolution 109, “Recognizing the duty of the Federal Government to create a Green New Deal,” calls for a new turn in our country. It does not include specific legislation at this point. Which is good, as it allows for broad discussion of the goals and means presented.

It is worth taking the time to read the text of this bill, written in clear English, online at [www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-resolution/109/text](http://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-resolution/109/text).

It opens by mentioning two major reports issued last fall that detail current climate degradation and make clear that the window for stabilizing the planet’s climate enough to prevent massive and irreversible damage is closing.

The resolution mentions that the US helped create the problem: through 2014 this country, with a world population of just 4%, has been responsible for 20% of greenhouse gas pollution.

The goals and mobilization the Green New Deal describes go way beyond calling for technical fixes around energy. The goals include eco-

nomie and racial justice, calling for well-paying jobs in a healthy environment, as part of “a Green New Deal [that] must be developed through transparent and inclusive consultation, collaboration, and partnership with frontline and vulnerable communities, labor unions, worker cooperatives, civil society groups, academia, and businesses.”

“Green New Deal goals” should be accomplished through a 10-year national mobilization that would see the “repairing and upgrading the infrastructure in the United States” to make it energy efficient, moving to 100% renewable energy.

Also mentioned, and of interest in our area, is: “working collaboratively with farmers and ranchers in the United States to remove pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from the agricultural sector as much as is technologically feasible, including – by supporting family farming; by investing in sustainable farming and land use practices that increase soil health; and by building a more sustainable food system that ensures universal access to healthy food.”

The comprehensive Green New Deal resolution provides a framework to work on and for. Of course, it’s not as if the public has been blind to the dangers of climate disruption. And citizen action has in fact set the scene for a Green New Deal. Hundreds of thousands have demonstrated, and major campaigns have seen arrests, injuries and citizen bravery against destructive fossil fuel projects, at Standing Rock, the XL pipeline protests, “our own” Kinder-Morgan fracked gas pipeline, and many more.

But the changes needed must go beyond divesting from fossil fuel companies and “keeping [oil, gas, and coal] in the ground.” We live in a

system where preparation for and participation in war takes the vast majority of this country’s national income and so many resources, human and natural as well as economic.

What will really bring us security, locally and nationally? A healthy population in a clean environment, doing meaningful work in a more egalitarian society? Or an economy so tied to weapons of war that cause such death and destruction? The effects, and costs, of their use in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Somalia, along with the 800-plus US bases around the world will be with us, and the many countries involved, for decades to come.

What to do? Actions vary. The National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee ([nwtccc.org](http://nwtccc.org)) “supports individuals who refuse to pay for war, and promotes war tax resistance in the context of a broad range of nonviolent strategies for social change.” Peace Tax ([peacetaxfund.org](http://peacetaxfund.org)) advocates are lobbying the US Congress to pass a Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Bill allowing conscientious objection to paying taxes for war with alternative tax payment programs.

Internationally, there are protests in many countries, including our own, during the Global Campaign on Military Spending’s ([demilitarize.org](http://demilitarize.org)) days of action from April 13 to May 9, under the slogan “Demilitarize: Invest in People’s Needs!”

Certainly, the Green New Deal presents many of those social and ecological needs, and should be checked out by all as we face the current reality of fossil-based militarism and “endless growth,” making the climate situation ever worse. There are alternatives.

Anna Gyorgy lives in Wendell and works with the Franklin County Continuing the Political Revolution (FCCPR) peace task force, and the Traprock Center for Peace & Justice.

GUEST EDITORIAL

“God Isn’t Fixing This...”

By EVELYN AUGUSTO

**TURNERS FALLS** – This morning I came across the ragged cover of the *New York Daily News*, December 2, 2015, in a file labeled “gun violence.” Its headline read: “14 Dead in California Mass Shooting: God Isn’t Fixing This.”

Four years later and nothing has changed.

I like to ponder *koans* because the effort to solve the riddle is intended to exhaust the analytic intellect and the egoistic will, readying the mind for a spiritual awakening. It gives one the opportunity to hear the voice of the Divine and a chance for enlightenment. I need that.

Here is my first attempt at a koan: The mass shootings that are occurring with regular frequency in our country are a sin, the refusal of our law makers to really do something to stop gun violence is a sin... which is most sinful?

There is no right answer to this koan: Sin is sin. But few understand that, because even fewer understand the central role sin can occupy in their lives. Sin is any action that harms our relationship with God and/or another person. It is choosing to act in a way that separates us from God and, inevitably, one another.

Contemplating these transgressions allowed me to consider the origin of the sin committed when a gunman turns his wrath on innocent people, and the origin of the sin that is committed, day after day, with the reluctance of our legislators to write appropriate laws prohibiting excessive manufacturing and distribution of firearms.

What makes these people behave this way? Malice? Mental illness? Or money?

Finally, two days ago the House “rebuffed a furious lobbying campaign by the National Rifle Association and approved a revamped Violence Against Women Act that would expand law enforcement’s ability to restrict gun purchases by convicted domestic abusers.” (*The New York Times*, April 4, 2019)

Lawmakers are finally taking responsibility for the gun pollution in our country. Thank you.

Still, it has become obvious to me that this gun violence is occurring with more frequency and indiscriminately because Americans don’t know much about God. Americans don’t know how to communicate. And Americans are filled with fear.

Yesterday, I met a woman who is battling breast cancer. While discussing gun violence in America she looked hard at me and said: “Do you know why Americans won’t give up their weapons?” Her earnest and serious demeanor struck me.

She said: “They are afraid of the government.”

I didn’t believe that. But I do believe that fear fuels gun violence: the fear of losing control, the fear of being powerless and left without a voice, and yes, the fear that *Uncle Sam is watching you*. As I readied myself to wrestle pro-gunners, the NRA, and the apathetic, I *arm* myself with the hope that today I might convince one person to embrace someone – or something – other than their gun.

Evelyn Augusto is an anti-gun advocate, poet, survivor of gun violence, and the author of the zine “YOUR GUN IS TALKING: Words to Thaw the Tongue.” She splits her time between upstate New York and Turners Falls.

FIRE DISTRICT from page A1

when voted at the district meeting, taxpayers are assessed for these services with separate bills. The fire district tax is mailed out by the Montague town treasurer, while water bills come from the water department office on Millers Falls Road. These costs fall on property owners, though most landlords consider water and fire protection costs when calculating rent. So budgets voted on April 16 will impact renters as well as property owners.

The largest item on the April 16 agenda will be an operating budget of \$3,021,457. Just over two-thirds of this will be financed from “taxation” (fire district assessments), while the remainder will come from water assessments and ambulance revenue. According to district accountant Eileen Tela, the \$3 million plus budget will be an increase of 6.8% over the previous fiscal year.

Tela explained this increase is partly a result of a 67% increase in debt service for the first payment of the fire department’s newest ladder truck. She also cited expenditure increases in the cost of ambulance service, which is covered by ambulance revenue, and the payments into the retirement system assessed by the Montague Retirement Board.

There are 12 other articles on the district meeting agenda, each appropriating money for specific purposes.

For example, Article 5 would appropriate \$40,000 to fix a “severe dip,” in Tela’s words, in the driveway of the fire station on Turners Falls Road, while Article 8 would allocate \$25,000 for an exhaust system upgrade for the station that may be required by new federal regulations. Both of these appropriations would be financed by “free cash,” which are balances left over from the previous year’s budget.

Expenditures earmarked for the water department include \$11,500 to buy a “mowing tractor” (Article

14), \$8,000 for an equipment trailer (Article 15), and \$20,000 for “upgrades to the water metering system.” (Article 13) The latter, according to Tela, will allow the department to read water meters from a distance. She said the appropriation would replace 110 of 1,400 meters, and then “we will evaluate the project.”

Some appropriations begin to address infrastructural and demographic problems of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. For example, Article 12 would appropriate \$50,000 for “future water main replacements or repairs.” In explaining this article, Tela noted the aging of the current town drinking water infrastructure, and the need to spread the cost of repairs over time.

Article 11 would appropriate \$10,000 to an “Other Post Employment Benefits” (OPEB) Trust Fund. OPEB funds, which cities and towns across Massachusetts have been creating, are designed to give municipalities and districts a head start in addressing the rising cost of retiree healthcare benefits. There is a general consensus that these costs could create a major local fiscal crisis over the coming decades with the retirement of the baby boom generation. The town of Montague allocates funds to a similar account.

The reader might ask why it costs \$40,000 to fix a fire department driveway, or why the water department needs an \$11,500 mower. The best way to get explanations is to attend the 7 p.m. meeting on April 16 at the Turners Falls High School. Unlike the Montague Town meeting, where representatives are elected from the six precincts, this is an open meeting where any registered voter can vote.

This article has covered a selection of warrant articles. The entire meeting warrant and motions can be found on the Fire District website at [turnersfallsfiredistrict.org](http://turnersfallsfiredistrict.org).



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**MONTAGUE** from page A1

movements were triggered by complaints from the Gill-Montague regional school district that the Hillcrest Elementary School, where voting has taken place for decades, is no longer suitable as an election site. The district has cited security concerns, as well as inadequate parking and bathroom facilities. Voting at Hillcrest was raised as an issue in negotiations over the lease agreement with the school district over the town-owned building, which is up for renewal this year.

Looking beyond the lease agreement, Bourbeau said her “ultimate plan, in 2021, is to reduce the number of precincts from six to three.”

She suggested that after the next census results, the town could be redistricted. Residents of the Patch and Montague City could vote in town hall with downtown residents, while current residents of Precincts 1 and 2 (Montague Center, Lake Pleasant, and Millers Falls) could be consolidated and vote at the police station in Precinct 4.

“That seems to make sense,” said selectboard member Michael Nelson.

Chair Rich Kuklewicz said the board should vote to approve the temporary changes for the spring election, and then revisit the issue in June “to see if there were any challenges.” Kuklewicz also suggested creating temporary parking spaces along Fifth Street for voters at the senior center. Bourbeau said she would send out letters to all voters in the affected precincts, and put a sandwich board in front of Hillcrest on the day of the election.

Town administrator Steve Ellis said he wanted “clarity” that any revisitation of the new polling places after the spring election would not include reconsidering the Hillcrest site, “so I can proceed with the lease agreement.”

“The school doesn’t want us to vote there,” said Kuklewicz, “so as much as I think we should vote there, I’m not suggesting we move back.”

The board voted unanimously to adopt Bourbeau’s temporary plan for the spring election, which will be held on Monday, May 21.

### Recycling Costs

Ellis announced that he received a letter from the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) about the renewal of the region’s ten-year contract for recycled materials processing. The processing takes place at the Springfield Materials Recycling Facility, a state-owned facility currently operated by the company Waste Management Recycle America. The letter says bids for a potential new operator are due on May 9.

Without mentioning the impact of the Chinese government’s new restrictions on recyclable materials, the DEP letter mentions “a very challenging global recycling market and increased risk aversion on the part of recyclables processors.” The letter predicts that “communities will incur significant additional recycling program expenses beginning in July of 2020,” and notes that recycling bids “in other areas of the State have generally resulted in municipal costs ranging from \$50 to \$90 per ton...”

Ellis said the letter is “potentially overstating the cost implications” of the change in the market. He cited a conversation with Jan Ameen, executive director of the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District (FCSWMD).

When contacted by the *Report-*

*er*, Ameen said that the DEP letter was designed to give the participating communities a “heads up” and encourage them to “pay attention” to the current bidding process. But she said that the cost numbers cited in the letter were “meaningless,” because they were probably generated by contracts with so-called “single-stream” recycling programs in the eastern part of the state.

Single-stream recycling loads all materials into one container, which requires the processor to sort more materials and may result in more contamination with non-recyclable materials. Under dual-stream recycling, as in the FCSWMD, materials are sorted before being picked up.

“We’re fortuitous in that our recyclables are clean,” Ameen said. “We will know in August what our costs and revenues are going to be.” She said Montague currently receives money – \$8 per ton – for recycled materials.

### Power Summit

Town planner Walter Ramsey came before the board to present Montague’s proposals for First-Light’s federal hydroelectric relicensing, which he had presented at a public meeting on March 29. The proposals focused on the potential recreational components of the new license (*Montague Reporter*, April 4, 2019 “A Rare Public Discussion of Hydro Relicensing Process”).

Ramsey proposed that the company upgrade the facilities at Cabot Camp, a site of historic buildings at the confluence of the Millers and Connecticut rivers. The proposal also called for shortening the portage around the Turners Falls Dam – currently a three-mile detour from Unity Park to Poplar Street – by both improving access and increasing water flow in the section of the Connecticut River below the dam. Ramsey’s proposal would also improve river access at Cabot Woods and Poplar Street.

Finally, he proposed that First-Light assist in improving the northern section of the land between the power canal and the river near the former Indec cogeneration plant, once the site of the Russell Cutlery factory. Most of this land is currently owned by the town of Montague.

The board voted to endorse the proposals.

### Other Business

Ellis and Ken Morin reviewed site plan revisions for the proposed highway department building on Turners Falls Road. “The new building is made somewhat smaller, a total of 27,720 feet,” said Ellis, “but an [expanded] canopy has basically had a fourth wall added to it, which will allow for storage of longer trucks and easier shuffling and movement of vehicles.” He estimated the additional cost of the revised plan to be \$15,000, which he attributed to three new overhead doors.

Representatives of the company 253 Farmacy, formerly 253 Organic, presented a revised site plan of their own for the cannabis growing and retail facility on Millers Falls Road, at the entrance to the airport industrial park. The company’s new plan has expanded its parking, as well as improving lighting and security. It has also addressed concerns raised by the planning board about stormwater runoff and drainage.

Ellis presented a brief update on the Montague Center directional marker which is planned to be upgraded this spring. He said the historical commission had strongly

### NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

# Town Settles National Grid Lease

By **JOSH HEINEMANN**

The Wendell selectboard began its April 3 meeting in its capacity as the town’s acting Municipal Light Plant (MLP), and discussed with town treasurer Carolyn Manley about the borrowing necessary to install fiber-optic internet connection to every house in Wendell. A draft contract with Westfield Gas and Electric (WG&E) for overseeing the administration and construction of the process was forwarded to town counsel for review.

An original estimate for “make-ready work” was \$450,000, and the town borrowed that amount already in anticipation of getting that work started. Manley said that money has not been touched yet. But that \$450,000 estimate increased to \$1.4 million.

The state of Massachusetts has promised to cover the extra expense, with the possible exception of private roads and extra long driveways. Wendell will still need to borrow money for the rest of project, but Manley said she thought that loan can wait until July 1, which will postpone the repayment schedule one year, possibly eliminating some overlap with the repayment of other loans.

### Personnel Policies

Manley stayed when the selectboard moved on to its normal responsibility as the town’s executive branch. She asked board members to approve the personnel policy, revised to accommodate vacation and sick time for the road crew’s summer schedule of four 10-hour days per week, and the librarian’s 30-hour work week.

That approval could be modified if town counsel has objections, and Manley said that she has been trying to contact counsel by email since November, and has not received a response yet. Town coordinator Nancy Aldrich will continue the effort to connect with counsel.

Manley said that the road crew prefers the four-day week, and the dates of change from winter to summer hours have been “floating.” She said the dates should be fixed, and should start summer hours on the week that includes May 1, and end the week that includes October 31. In winter the four-day week creates more overtime because residents want (and get) the roads plowed when the snow falls, and not just during the work week.

The selectboard approved setting the road crew schedule as stated.

Manley said income at the Wendell Recycling and Transfer Station (WRATS) is “way up,” and attendants have asked for a third employee who would be there to fill in when a regular attendant is out. People have left materials in the wrong place, which creates extra work when attendants have to relocate them, and items turn up missing, the latest being rain barrels. It is possible that someone thought that a WRATS tool was something left for the free store, but an extra set of eyes can prevent such a mistake.

### 97 Wendell Depot

Selectboard chair Dan Keller said that National Grid agreed to a lease of \$1,400 a month for a right-of-way to three fenced-in acres it owns at the town-owned property at 97 Wendell Depot Road. This was an increase from \$1,200 a month.

The company plans to use the fenced-in area for a mobile substation which will allow it to make upgrades to the Wendell Depot substation without interrupting delivery of electricity. They will need regular access to the site. Board members approved the lease from October 2019 to October 2020.

Board member Christine Heard suggested that the town should continue to look at possibilities for the property, which includes a house. She suggested a meet-

ing with all the town boards and committees that have an interest in the land and house: the board of health, conservation commission, planning board, finance committee, historic commission, and if available, people who have expressed interest in the building.

### Town Website

Of the three people who were scheduled to meet the selectboard to talk about the town website, only Robert Heller actually came to the meeting. He came early and sat reading quietly until he and the others were scheduled to speak at 7:45. Heard began the website discussion saying that people have been dissatisfied with the website, that it is difficult to get information from it, and that parts of it are no longer current.

Heller agreed. He said that the website first needs an update from WordPress 1.5 to WordPress 3. That change is involved, and needs someone who knows how to do it, but upgrades beyond WordPress 3 are easy. Heller said he thought resident Chris Parker could bring the site to a condition in which committees, boards, and departments can add to it easily, but that Parker would need to be paid. Heller was not sure how much, maybe \$2 or \$3 thousand.

The website committee has no budget. Aldrich checked the record and said the town has not used any of its IT budget for this year, \$7,500. Keller moved that the selectboard give Heller authority to make an agreement with Parker to make the necessary upgrades if the cost is less than \$3,000, and with Heard’s abstention the board approved that motion.

One problem is that departments may update their section once or twice a year, or less often, and in the interim a person can easily forget the procedure.

Aldrich said that the town’s IT contractor has been distracted, and has not completed work to give boards and board members their own specific email addresses for town work. He has not answered calls or emails.

The website committee needs new members, and Heller said that some familiarity with computer technology would be useful. Qualification for the committee may be age-related, he said.

### Other Business

At the March 20 meeting a Wendell resident of several generations hoped to rent the town hall for less than the \$130 that the town would charge for a private gathering involving more than 50 people. That amount did seem high, but Heard compared it with other venues, and said it is actually low.

Keller said that it costs the town more to heat the town hall for a winter rental. Heard said that in summer, people often hold their gatherings outside. Changing fees according to season is too cumbersome, and so board members agreed to keep fees as they are.

Aldrich agreed to collect fees for both kitchen use and town hall use, so that residents know there is one place to make arrangements for town hall use.

Eversource Energy sent a notice of their intention to control vegetation in their right-of-way with sprayed herbicide. Abutters will be notified. Massachusetts General law gives them authority, and residents have the right to stop spraying on their private property. Heard said the new herbicide has claims to be less harmful.

Keller said that a man with terminal cancer won an \$80 million lawsuit over Roundup, but that handy as \$80 million might be, the trade does not seem a good deal.

The next selectboard meeting will be May 1, and will include discussion with the New Salem selectboard and finance committee. For the week of April 17, board members will come in as they can to sign the warrant so bills can be paid.

The board voted to appoint Anabel Levine to the cemetery commission until June 30, 2019, as well as Paulette Billiel and Susan Yarmac as interim library commissioners until May 19, 2019.

The selectboard approved its bi-weekly summer meeting schedule, which will begin on May 21, and once again read and approved the annual town meeting warrant for May 4. The board then retired into executive session to discuss the acquisition of property on Industrial Boulevard.

The next scheduled meeting will be on April 22.



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ERVING from page A1

town buildings. However, the heat pumps would be more efficient than the propane boiler for heating, and will provide cooling in summer.

Board members said they planned to meet the 20% reduction goal with projects funded by the town, without grants, but that the fastest way to complete the heat pump project was to use Green Communities funds. The town has been working with utility consultant Energy Conservation, Inc. and ECI can hire a contractor directly and immediately.

If the town itself were to hire a contractor, it would be required to follow the state bidding procedure, which takes time for writing specifications, publishing the bid request, allowing time for contractors to respond to the bid, and evaluating and awarding the bid – all before starting work on the project.

If the air-source heat pump project is not approved by the Green Communities Division, the board will meet April 15 to decide how to fund it.

Street Relocation

Several abutters attended the hearing for the Wheelock Street relocation, which will appear as an article on the warrant for the May 1 annual town meeting.

At the March 26 selectboard meeting, chair Scott Bastarache said that the purpose of the article is to solidify the layout of Wheelock Street, which was initiated in the 1800s, but never went through a formal layout process. Lee Street, which extends from Wheelock, was never recognized by the state as a town road.

Although the article uses the word “relocate” for the layout, Bastarache said there would not be a physical change in the road, simply a clerical change at the registry of deeds. With the relocation, small strips of

land in the former layout will be returned to abutting properties. Bryan Smith said that the abutters’ property taxes are estimated to increase by between \$5 and \$48 per year.

The board will vote on the plan at their April 22 meeting.

Other Business

The board approved hiring Breta Yvars Petraccia as a part-time recreation commission assistant, starting April 22.

The board voted to accept two financial policies drafted by town accountant Deborah Mero, one concerning the town’s debt management, and the other its financial reserves.

The board decided that the town’s limit for annual debt service should be 10% of town revenues, with a target of 5%. It set the minimum balance for the general stabilization account at 50% of budgeted expenditures. If the stabilization fund’s balance falls below 50% of expenditures, the board is required to develop a plan to bring the account back to 50% within three years.

The capital stabilization account will be funded to cover the 5-year annual average cost of capital projects, and the target amount for the water and wastewater retained earnings accounts was set at 200% of the annual operating budget. Currently those accounts have a balance of 300% of the operating budget.

Greenfield Savings Bank has offered to donate an elm tree to the town and plant it. Highway foreman Glenn McCrory said that GSB wanted to plant before the first week in May. He recommended planting the elm on the front lawn of Erving Elementary School. Bryan Smith will contact the school administration about the idea.



ARCHAEOLOGY

“Bad Drilling – or an Act of Mother Nature”

Compiled by KATIE NOLAN

*The following are dates the Erving selectboard discussed the geothermal system at the senior center at its meetings.*

**September 26, 2011:** Administrative coordinator Tom Sharp told the selectboard that the new senior/community center geothermal system well was producing bubbles or air pockets. Owner’s project manager Bruce Hunter told the board the cause of the problems was unknown, and further testing would be done.

**October 24, 2011:** The building’s architect, John Catlin, told the selectboard that the problems with the well that had held up completion of the project have been resolved. The drilling subcontractor drilled the well deeper, and reinstalled the pump. Catlin said, “It appears that everything is working fine.”

**December 11, 2011:** At the groundbreaking for the new senior/community center, Catlin predicted that the town would save between 40% to 60% on energy bills for the building by using the geothermal heat exchanger to heat and cool it.

**January 23, 2012:** Selectboard members expressed surprise at the first electric bill for the senior/community center: \$1,687.24 for December 9 through January 11. Sharp noted that the town had budgeted \$9,000 per year for the center’s electricity, based on data provided by Catlin.

**March 12, 2012:** Senior center director Polly Kiely told the board that the center’s bill is approximately \$1,600 per month, primarily for the geothermal pumps. Selectboard member Andrew Goodwin asked, “Why was the architect so wrong in the estimate of electrical use?”

Sharp said that Catlin “admits that he blew it.”

**June 25, 2012:** Interim DPW

director Paul Prest reported that a valve in the geothermal system was leaking, resulting in a shutdown to prevent flooding in the building.

**August 13, 2012:** Sharp informed the board that grit and debris from the geothermal well was clogging filters in the system’s piping, resulting in leaking into the building if the filters are not cleaned daily. Speaking after the meeting, Sharp said that Catlin had suggested several remedies for the problem, including installing a special debris filter and routing the wastewater from automatic pipe-flushing to the overflow swale.

**September 10, 2012:** “We have a sandy well,” Catlin told the board. He said that the water filtration system has been clogged continually by sand, causing water leaks and other problems with the geothermal system.

Catlin said the general contractor, MCM USA, had not been supportive in addressing the problem. Catlin told the board that the upper bedrock that the geothermal well’s borehole passes through is sandy sedimentary rock. For the first 30 feet of bedrock, the 1,500-foot well pipe is surrounded by grout (“casing”), and then it continues deeper without casing. He said that it is possible that water is coming in to the uncased section, and “eroding the sandstone wall” and releasing sand into the pumped water.

Other possible causes he suggested included “bad drilling” or “an act of Mother Nature.”

Catlin recommended that the town buy a Lakos centrifugal separator to take out the sand before the water goes through the water filters. He said that the town could use the contractor retainage money to buy and install the separator. The retainage money is about \$11,000, withheld from payments to MCM USA until the town agrees that the building has been completed to its satisfaction.

Catlin also suggested that the

town notify Western Surety, the bonding company that insured MCM USA’s performance on the project, to inform them that MCM USA has not completed the work in accordance with its contract with the town.

**October 22, 2012:** Town counsel Donna MacNicol told the board that Western Surety replied with “a typical surety company letter,” asking for full documentation of the problem. MacNicol said that the town should formally terminate MCM USA and inform the surety company of this action in order to “free up the retainage.”

Selectboard member Margaret Sullivan expressed concern about heating the building this winter if the geothermal system is not fixed. Selectboard chair Eugene Klepadlo replied that the center has a backup propane heating system.

**November 5, 2012:** The board signed a letter firing MCM USA.

**January 7, 2013:** Sullivan told the board that “it was a hectic last two weeks” at the senior/community center. She said that the center was closed one day for lack of heat, because the two geothermal heating system pumps were not properly balanced.

She said that, with Prest on vacation, highway foreman Glenn McCrory was “learning under fire” to deal with the heating system’s problems. Sullivan praised the repair work conducted by Climate Heating and Cooling of Pittsfield.

**January 14, 2013:** Sullivan reported that the heating system had been heating the building efficiently, partly due to warmer outdoor temperatures. The board requested that Prest contact the contractor who installed the system regarding repair of the system.

**March 4, 2013:** Keily informed the board that increased rates and the electricity demand of the geothermal heating system “could

NOTES FROM THE WENDELL TOWN CLERK

Wendell Election, May 6

The Wendell Town Election is scheduled for Monday, May 6. The polls are open from noon to 8 p.m.

If you need an Absentee Ballot application for May 6, please pick this up at the Town Clerk’s office, or fill it out online and mail it in. The online version is available at [www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/elepdf/absentee/English-Absentee-Ballot-Application.pdf](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/elepdf/absentee/English-Absentee-Ballot-Application.pdf).

The application deadline for voting absentee is Friday, May 3 at noon. The last day to register to vote at the Town Election is Tuesday, April 16, and the Town Clerk Office is open on that date from 2 to 4 p.m. and 7 to 8 p.m. to accommodate new voters.

The following positions and candidates are on the May 6 ballot:

Selectboard, 3 years: Christine Heard (incumbent); Board of Assessors, 3 years: Anna Seeger (incumbent); Board of Health, 3 years: John Sullivan (nominee); Planning Board, 5 years: Nan Riebschlaeger (incumbent); Town Constable, 3 years: Anne Diemand Bucci (incumbent); Town Moderator, 1 year: Kathleen Nolan (incumbent); Cemetery Commissioner, 3 years: Jon Bowers (incumbent); Road Com-

missioner, 3 years: Wayne Leonard (incumbent); School Committee, 3 years: Beth Erviti (nominee); Tree Warden, 1 year: Corine Baker (incumbent); Library Trustee, 3 years: Michelle Wilder (nominee); Library Trustee, 3 years: Phyllis Lawrence (incumbent).

No papers were taken out for a 2-year vacancy on the School Committee. This position may be filled by a write-in candidate, as can any other position on the ballot.

Also on the ballot is a Yes/No Debt Exclusion Vote, regarding the costs associated with paying for a front-end loader for the highway department. More information on this vote is available from postings around town or by contacting the Town Clerk by phone or email: (978) 544-3395 x2; [wendelltown-clerk@gmail.com](mailto:wendelltown-clerk@gmail.com).

Those residents who have not yet responded to the Annual Street Listing, or licensed their dog, are reminded that these tasks are past due and must be completed soon to avoid consequences. Finally, if you want to file for a tax abatement or exemption, your paperwork is due at the Town Assessor’s office by May 1, 2019.

WARNING

Erving Hydrant Flushing

The Erving Water Department would like to notify residents that they will be flushing fire hydrants in the Erving side neighborhood beginning on Tuesday, April 16, 2019 and will continue until complete. Residents with questions may contact the Erving Water Department by calling (413) 423-3354.

blow my budget.”

**July 8, 2013:** CTC, Inc. recommended reprogramming the geothermal pump system to reduce its energy use.

**August 8, 2013:** The board approved a contract with CTC, Inc. for \$3,435 for changes to the geothermal pump system, including changing the pump from pressure-based controls to temperature-based controls.

**April 25, 2016:** Planning board member Jacquelyn Boyden said Jim Barry of the state Green Communities program told them that projects such as replacement of the non-efficient geothermal system at the senior/community center could potentially be funded by a Green Communities grant.

**August 28, 2018:** The Green Communities committee considered a project to purchase a \$2,500 HVAC controller that would allow the geothermal pumps to be shut off when warranted.

**January 7, 2019:** Senior center director Paula Betters told the board that propane use had increased over the last few months. “Something is not right here,” she said, and speculated that the cause was the propane-fueled boiler that acts as a backup to the geothermal system.

**April 1, 2019:** According to administrative coordinator Bryan

Smith, over the last few years, well water was “entering the system at such a low temperature that it would cause freezing in the air handling units.” When this happened, the backup propane boiler was adjusted to heat the water, resulting in high usage of propane.

Smith met with McCrory, Catlin, and an engineer from Jamrog HVAC on March 28. McCrory said that “water was bubbling up in the parking lot.” Smith said that, after investigating the system, the Jamrog engineer determined that the well feed line is frozen, most likely broken, and filled with sand and silt.

The break in the line is believed to be under the sidewalk near the center’s entrance and under the parking lot nearest the building. As a result of the damage to the feed line, the main circulation pump has burned out. Water discharged from the pipe may have undermined the sidewalk and parking area.

Smith said the Jamrog engineer outlined three options for dealing with the problem: repairing the existing open-loop geothermal system, at an approximate cost of \$20,000; retrofitting it to a closed-loop system, at an approximate cost of \$100,000; or abandoning the geothermal system and installing air-source heat pumps, at an approximate cost of \$100,000.

**April 8, 2019:** The board voted to abandon the geothermal system, and apply for Green Communities money to install air-source heat pumps.

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GMRSD from page A1

I don’t fully understand,” Montague’s Cassie Damkoehler said after the meeting, of her dissenting vote. “Something like this being voted on at town meeting, with more people... I think that might be a better venue, that’s all.”

Langknecht also voted against the motion, “because we need to be focusing on improving education,” he said. “I think there are educational formats that cost half as much as we spend now, and provide... much better outcomes for graduates.”

Rather than combining small districts, Langknecht said that though the “Massachusetts style of education” mandates a particular configuration, he would prefer grades and schools be merged, and a fundamentally different approach to education developed. “I have a big problem with age segregation,” he said.

The other seven members of the committee, though, endorsed the idea of a six-town region receiving serious study.

“I really hope... this is a really good opportunity to look at, not just regionalization from the point of view of how many people, but the whole of education,” said chair Jane Oakes.

“It can enhance the rigor of our program – the classroom will be full, and we can give different kinds of courses, and enhance our program, and therefore attract more people into it,” said Timmie Smith of Gill.

Superintendent Michael Sullivan has been requested to present a vision for how a six-town district could result in more robust educational offerings at a meeting of the towns’ “civic leaders” on April 30.

“The goalpost has shifted, in a really cool way,” Sullivan said, away from estimating potential savings to the towns and toward asking “where could we go, with newer resources?”

Theresa Kolodziej, who represents the town of Erving on the committee but does not have a vote, sounded a warning that Erving might not tuition high school students into a recombined region.

“Chances are, you won’t want us there,” she said. Over 80% of Erving’s tax base is covered by revenue from the Northfield Mountain pumped-storage station, and the residential tax rate is among the lowest in the state. Kolodziej said that including Erving could “mess up reimbursement” from the state for a new district.

When Erving left the Mahar region in the 1980s, she said – a process she had participat-

ed in – there was no school choice, and the town could only look at Gill-Montague and Pioneer as options for high school.

Kolodziej said that with the idea of six-town regionalization “in the wind,” Erving has “been exploring other options” for its high school students, including Quabbin Regional High School in Barre.

Sullivan pointed out that Erving, too, could appoint a planning committee to explore the potential costs and benefits of a reconfigured region. “This is a not a fast process, and it’s studying – there’s all kinds of time for this to play out,” he said.

The Gill and Montague selectboards are expected to take up the matter this month.

District Equity Committee

The committee heard how plans were shaping up for a new “district equity committee,” made up of various stakeholders, to lead the schools in addressing problems that became public over the winter concerning discrimination, harassment, and discipline, especially at the middle and high school level.

Jen Audley, manager of the Gill-Montague Community School Partnership, has been appointed to help establish the committee, which will be facilitated by consultants from the Northampton-based Collaborative for Educational Services (CES) and funded with a \$10,000 state grant.

Audley told the school committee she planned to “cast a wide net” to recruit 10 to 20 members, including at least five students, staff, and family members. Stipends will be available, but interested members must fill out an application and be available for a full-day training in May.

Langknecht discussed his desire for the school committee to “support” the new group “without dominating it, but without being marginalized by it.” Audley told him she hoped a school committee member would sit on the equity committee, and suggested that the school committee ask for regular reports, as both an indication of support and an “accountability measure.”

In a related development, a job description for a 15-hour-a-week “family outreach and diversity coordinator” position was sent back to the drawing board after much conversation.

“In my mind, these are two separate positions,” said Thomasina Hall of Montague. “I’m not saying it’s not needed, but for 15

hours a week, and with all the responsibilities – I’m like, *how?* Candidates are going to have to wear a cape.”

“If you had to choose, which is more pressing?” Sullivan asked her.

Montague’s Jen Lively suggested it was a “start,” and priorities could be identified after a hire.

Audley argued that the short hours and lack of health benefits could select for “an incredibly privileged person – which makes them not necessarily the right person to be a family advocate.”

“If you have \$19,000 to put toward family engagement, spend it otherwise,” she recommended.

The committee asked Sullivan to revise the description for future consideration.

Principal Search

Sullivan reported on the hiring process for a new middle and high school principal. Annie Leonard, who has held the job since 2015, announced in February that she would be stepping down from the position at the end of the school year.

The hiring committee has narrowed its search to two finalists, Sullivan said, both of whom have worked for the past four years as elementary school principals in the region.

The first, Paul Goodhind, served as principal of Mahar Regional High School-Middle School from 2007 to 2010, and then of Boylston and South Hadley elementary schools. The second, Joanne Menard, was a teacher and instructional coach before serving four years as principal of Petersham Center School.

Goodhind and Menard were scheduled for school visits this Wednesday and Thursday, respectively, and the hiring committee is expected to make a recommendation in time for the next school committee meeting.

Other Business

Joyce Phillips and Carol Gloski of the Gill-Montague Education Fund gave a short presentation advertising their annual fundraiser gala on Saturday, April 27 at the high school auditorium. This year’s gala features an ABBA tribute band.

Gloski said the group had raised “almost \$22,000” so far this year, and that nearly all the revenue is directed toward student learning enrichment in the form of grants.

Gill second-grade teacher Sherry Wood, principal Conor Driscoll, and director of el-

ementary teaching and learning Christine Limoges came to present on “Bridges in Mathematics,” a new math program their curricular review team has recommended for the district’s elementary schools.

They also discussed Add+Vantage Math Recovery (AVMR), an “approach” to teaching math that allows teachers to diagnose just what parts different students aren’t getting. “It’s like a new language for all of us,” said Wood.

“Numbers are scary to a lot of kids,” said Damkoehler, herself a math teacher outside the district, “and it can turn them off from the very beginning – if you have a bad experience, what are the chances you’ll fall in love with it later?”

“Quite some time ago,” said Oakes, a retired teacher, “when a student was having difficulty, the approach was to do more of the same.”

Montague’s Heather Katsoulis, who said she, too, used to teach math, praised the team for choosing programming that aligns with Common Core standards.

It is unclear whether enough players will be available to field a football team at Turners Falls High School in the fall, despite a cooperative agreement with Pioneer Valley. Athletic director Adam Graves held a meeting to discuss the issue on Monday, and a follow-up meeting is expected later this month.

Turners and Pioneer also share a Pride Alliance, and on Tuesday the school committee approved a field trip for the group to travel to New York City on April 27 to catch *Dear Evan Hansen* at the Minskoff Theater on Broadway.

Sullivan reported that he had been in Boston earlier that day for a joint session of the state senate and house education committees. Joining other rural superintendents, he testified in favor of a “low enrollment adjustment factor” for districts that are small but do not qualify for rural aid.

“It was a little hard to tell, from the committee of representatives and senators, how open-minded they were about that,” Sullivan said. “We’ll see what comes of that.”

The ballot for May 20 district elections was approved. Three seats in Montague and two seats in Gill are up for grabs, but the only candidates to return papers in time to get on the ballot were the incumbents: Langknecht, Hall, and vice chair Heather Katsoulis of Montague, and Oakes and Bill Tomb of Gill.

The school committee’s next meeting will be held April 23 at the high school.



SPORTS from page A1

necessarily make predictions; I leave that up to my many sources. But I do root for Turners Falls and Franklin Tech teams and in the opening week of this spring season, I saw some bumps in the field.

But I also saw some promise for the three squads who competed this week.

Girls Tennis

Pope Francis 5 – TFHS 0

With the opening week of spring sports came April showers, and April showers brought postponements. So after the postponement of a boys’ tennis match, a track meet, and two baseball games, Turners Falls Girls’ Tennis cut the ribbon on the season on Wednesday, April 3.

The ladies traveled to Springfield to take on the Cardinals of Pope Francis. Haley Green, who moved up two spots to first singles this year, lost her match 6-0, 6-1. Izzy Farrick and Steph Peterson, who transitioned from the doubles courts to second and third singles respectively, were also swept in straight sets.

Maria Labelle and Ceci Wood, who played first doubles, stole a game in each set, and the second doubles duo of Emily Dennison and Mercedes Bailey also dropped their match, 6-1, 6-1.

The Lady Thunder get back on the court up in Shelburne against Mohawk this Thursday, April 11.



Jade Tyler completes her windup as Thunder hosts D-I Minnechaug Regional, Quabbin Regional, and Keene, NH for an early season “Play Day” scrimmage.

Softball

Then on Saturday, April 6, Turners Falls hosted a softball play day, with scrimmages against Wachusett, Quabbin Regional, and Keene, NH. It snowed pretty hard Friday night, but unlike Keene, there was no accumulation in Turners Falls, so the games went on.

I stayed for the first two games against Wachusett and Quabbin be-

fore traveling to Athol to watch the baseball team. The first game was very interesting, as Olivia Whittier took pitching duties, and the rest of the team shuffled infield and outfield positions.

I was told by a source that Turners plays Wachusett later in the season, so Coach Mullins didn’t want to show all his cards.

Mullins pulled out his ace in the

second match, as Jade Tyler went to the mound and the rest of his players took more familiar positions. This game was a laugh as the Blue Bats came alive and Quabbin was not able to answer.

Their first regular season game is scheduled for Monday, April 15 at home against Ludlow.

Baseball

Athol 7 – TFHS 4

The Turners Falls baseball team also opened their season on Saturday, April 6, because their scheduled game against Athol was postponed. But Saturday had its own challenges. It was so cold that spectators bundled up in blankets and huddled for warmth. At times, the sun came out briefly, and the braver fans took down their hoods.

And the Turners Falls Boys’ Thunder played cold – at least at first, with most of the damage done in the very first inning. In the top of the first, Kyle Dodge got a 2-out hit, stole a base, and was hit home by Jon Fritz and Blue took a temporary 1-0 lead.

But for the Turners pitching staff, it took them more than an inning to warm up. Taking a 1-0 lead into the bottom of the first, their pitches never found their marks. Although they allowed very few hits in the bottom of the first, they let up 6 walks, allowed 2 steals, and gave up a run on a hit-by-pitch.

By the time the second inning rolled around, Powertown was down 6-1, and they never fully recovered.

Powertown got three runs back in the third. Jake Dodge led off with a base hit. Jaden Whiting followed suit and advanced Dodge to third, and a double steal sent him home. Fritz, batting third in the inning, sent Whiting home. Then Ryan Campbell got a 1-out hit and scored Fritz. The inning ended with a boomer to center and a double-play throw to first.

Athol got one more run in the fourth to make it 7-4, and that was it. Both teams’ bats went silent, and the game ended with a 7-4 Athol victory.

Turners plays their home opener against Mohawk on Wednesday, April 10.

Football

Will there be a 2019 Turners Falls football team? That’s the big question. And the only thing coach Chris Lapointe could tell me was, “We shall see.”

With school enrollment down below 200, the pool is pretty shallow. So let’s keep our fingers crossed. It would certainly change Friday nights and Thanksgiving for many of us.

Next Week: The first track meet, hopefully!



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### ELECTIONS from page A1

April 27, from the floor of town meeting. Town clerk Lisa Stratford told the *Reporter* that the town “stopped doing Candidates’ Night because no one came,” but the town newsletter includes a poll of incumbents’ likelihood to stand for their offices. It looks like there will be vacancies on the board of health and finance committee, as well as two on the school committee.

Erving and Wendell both vote on Monday, May 6. Erving’s vacancies will be on the school committee and recreation commission, and Wendell has one on its school committee. Readers are encouraged to remember that it is not funny to write in a very busy person just as a prank.

Two weeks later, on Monday, May 20, the Gill, Montague, and Gill-Montague elections will be held. Gill’s ballot supplies a candidate for each position. Peter Turban is running for treasurer, a role he has been temporarily appointed to fill since the retirement of Ronnie LaChance in February.

Montague looks much the same, save for the race for tree warden. Mark Stevens said he had “two years left to work,” if we heard correctly, and is running to “keep it going.” He said the job has been going “good” so far, and then declined further comment.

The *Reporter* was unable to reach his challenger, Diana Souza. Attendees of the Montague Democrats’ annual town office election caucus are able to nominate townwide candidates directly onto the ballot, and this appears to be what happened in Souza’s case. An email to the Democrats’ chair, Mark Wisniewski, early Tuesday afternoon had received no response before press time early Thursday morning. We will let our readers know if we hear from Souza why she is running.

There’s a vacancy in Montague for one one-year library trustee seat.

Finally, there is Montague town meeting. Each year, seven candidates are elected to represent each of six precincts for three years, for a total of 126 representatives. Of the 42 seats turning over this year, 33 come with offers from incumbents of re-election, and eight seats (two each in Precincts 1, 2, 4, and 5) show up as blank lines on the ballot for write-ins.

Lilith Wolinsky of Montague City Road, running for Precinct 6, is the only new volunteer for town meeting to appear on the ballot this year. A total of five seats in Precincts 1, 2, and 3 were also vacated early, so town clerk Deb Bourbeau will be earnestly pursuing 13 write-in candidates.



# MONTAGUE REPORTER



“Even Rex reads the Reporter!” writes Pinnie Sears of Montague, from the Delmarva Poultry Show, Harrington, Delaware.



Peg Bridges of Montague Center (at right) and her family hit the beach in Cozumel, Mexico!

# ON THE ROAD

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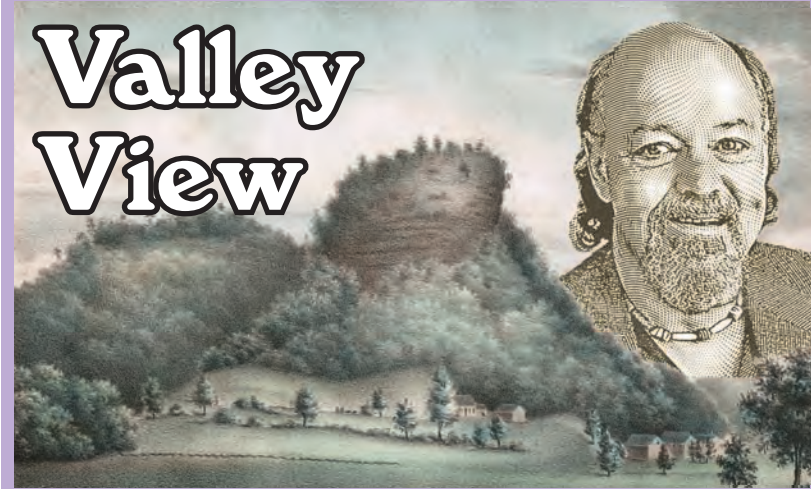
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FEATURES@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER APRIL 11, 2019



By GARY SANDERSON

**GREENFIELD** – When a story stirs your imagination, digs deep into your inner consciousness, you must ride it for all it’s worth. So, here I sit: thinking, probing deep, trying to remember every minute detail. Pedal to the metal, I’m exhuming distant memories that meandered through my neighborhood.

The impetus was a recent mid-day phone call. The caller ID displayed the name of an old friend, roommate and teammate. His name is Chip. He rarely calls or visits anymore. But when he does, we’re always ready to roll, like we’ve never been apart.

We played baseball on the same and opposing teams before traveling the country together and sharing rooms as professional fundraisers – six weeks here, six weeks there, wheeling and dealing to raise money, primarily for police associations. Some called the chaotic, noisy, telephone offices in which we toiled “boiler rooms.” An apt description.

Our boss, a former Connecticut state amateur golf champ, admitted to 400 pounds. He was a big spender, and a bigger Elvis fan. His office motto had a humorous ring to it: “If you wanna live in style, spin the dial,” he’d bellow through his broad, bushy Fu Manchu. The catchy phrase probably means nothing to young folks familiar only with push-button dialing.

Our job took us thousands of miles, introduced us to places we probably would not have otherwise visited, and placed us in many motels, some better than others, providing a rollicking collection of entertaining tales. Unfortunately, few are appropriate for print. Oh well, such is life in the mainstream press, where the best stories can never be told. And when they are, it’s called “fiction,” which usually wanders little from the truth.

Whenever Chip and I converse, be it face to face or on the phone, the stories flutter up like mischievous ridgetop spirits in a cold, blustery, moonlit wind. We chuckle, reminisce, savor the conversation, often laughing to tears, as though our friendship never sauntered off in different directions many decades ago. Now retired and settling into our golden years, it’s a fine time to reconnect, to reflect back on the good and bad

days of our past.

The last time I spoke to him, before Christmas, he and his wife were on winter vacation down south. He answered his cell phone to clinking silverware and the soft buzz of background conversation in a Charleston, SC restaurant. The city had escaped the full fury of another of those devastating 100-year hurricanes that seem to rear their ugly head annually these days. When asked, he said he had seen some of the storm damage from the air on his flight in, but Charleston had been spared.

The reason I had called that winter day was to inform him that an old friend had died – a troubled Vietnam veteran with whom we had played ball and travelled the country, and for whom we had served as ushers at his 1975 wedding. Having heard not a peep from the man in years, I was concerned. I finally Googled him on a nighttime whim and can’t say I was shocked to find his obituary. Big John had died at 62. Not recently, either. On July 13, 2013. The short obit offered no hint as to how the end had arrived. No “died suddenly” or “unexpectedly” or “tragically” or “at home with his loving family by his side.” Just a benign official notice that Big John had passed.

“Something tells me it didn’t end well,” I surmised back then. “Yeah, I hear you.”

This latest call from Chip was a reversal of sorts. He was calling to say he’d done a little digging to no avail, calling both phone numbers stored away in his address book – one a cell, the other a land line. The recorded answers were identical: both numbers were no longer in service. Hmmm? A dead end. Not surprising, considering the subject.

As mysterious in death as he had been in life, our buddy had a dark side reaching deep into his troubled past. Born out of wedlock with a twin sister in 1950, he had been up against it as a boy till the day he was dropped in Danang, South Vietnam, as a 17-year-old virgin fresh out of Basic Training at Texas’ Lackland Air Force Base. His mother was a single airline stewardess at the time of his birth. She claimed his father was Chuck Connors, “The Rifleman” of television fame. She would know, and the story made sense. The

see VALLEY VIEW B5

Above: A tractor trailer leaving Hillside Plastics rolled over on Unity Street and came to rest on the guardrail. The driver escaped with minor injuries. Chris Sawyer-Laucanno caught this view out of a top-story window of his Prospect Street home.

# Finding a Visual Voice: Alone, and with Others

By TRISH CRAPO

**LEVERETT** – Walking through the front doors of the Leverett Crafts & Arts building the other day was like walking into a strange dream. At the end of the entry hallway, a young girl who seemed to be both living flesh and cracked porcelain china was breathing out tendrils of drifting underwater plants, within which floated a shining bubble containing the blue iris of a human eye.

The delicate, luminescent renderings of intricate plants, a small fish, thin-stemmed mushrooms, the accuracy of the girl’s eyebrows and eyelashes, the creased lids of her eyes, all drew me in to peer closer, even as the mystery of the image made me want to step back in order to absorb it more fully.

The image, a reproduction of a large pastel drawing, was the work of Zitong (Ann) Xu, a senior at Northfield Mount Hermon School, and part of her exhibit *Lost Girls* on display in the Hall Gallery at Leverett Crafts & Arts. The original pastel drawings were too fragile to ship from Xu’s home in Shanghai, according to artist and gallery committee member Susan Valentine.

By phone, Xu said that the *Lost Girls* portfolio “started with a loss of voice because I was young, and young girls are not heard. As the years went on, it became about a loss of identity.”

Two large portraits of girls with their lips sewn shut with coarse twine, their eyes welling with tears, are the most obvious depictions of this theme. But all of the images explore it. In one image, “Blossom of Sorrow,” smaller faces emerging from flowers dangling below the girl’s portrait are like “the voices within herself, voices in her head that have been so shackled,” Xu said.

As a whole, the series traces Xu’s growth from a young girl of 13 to last year, when she was 17. The image that had arrested me was the last one in the series, which Xu says represents her learning to “internalize the pains and sorrows, and then breathe them out so that they grow into a new experience, a new world view.”

“All those pains you endure become part of the energy you can use to create potent and beautiful art,” she explained.

CRAPO PHOTO



Respiring Wounds, by Zitong Xu, represents the artist learning to “internalize the pains and sorrows, and then breathe them out so that they grow into a new experience, a new world view.”

Because her academic studies are so rigorous, Xu is largely self-taught as an artist. She taught herself to draw by going to cafés and drawing the people she saw there until she felt she had acquired enough skills, at 13, to begin making the pastels.

Xu will be graduating from NMH this spring and attending film school next fall at the University of Southern California, where she plans to study animation. She’s already begun to create stop-animation videos

see FINDING page B2

## THE GARDENER’S COMPANION

# Sugar Snow



MARY AZARIAN WOODBLOCK PRINT

By LESLIE BROWN

**MONTAGUE CITY** – The family moved to New England when I was eight, and we discovered the joy of winter snow. I learned to ski and actually won a cross-country race, owing partly to fierce competitive energy and partly to a short list of competitors. Then there was snow-plowing down the bunny slope on long wooden skis, and then being hauled back to the top by the rope tow.

Then were the joys of snow tunnels and attempted igloos. Decked out in the old-fashioned snowsuits,

hats, and mittens, we could play for hours before thinking about the cold. When we’d had enough, we could go in for a nice, hot, marsh-mallowy cup of cocoa.

A neighbor had a sugar house; we could watch them stoking a hot fire and take in the steam of the boiling sap, and later, a helping of sticky new syrup on a dish of snow: heaven!

We care rather less now for winter snow, although the first snowfall is so beautiful and the clear nights so cold and bright. We seem to care less for it now; it goes on so long and there is shoveling and hauling wood to keep the stove going, and we tire of it and long earlier and earlier for spring which, as always, takes its own sweet time.

Last Friday we drove to Rhode Island to visit the last of the aunts,

who at almost ninety-four has been diagnosed with terminal cancer. We found her still much the same, her bright blue eyes capped by a striking cloud of pure white hair, an angel already, although she still holds on to her tart tongue and a great taste for sweets. She was eager to see what kind of pie we brought this trip. She was hoping for that delectable concoction of tart lemon covered with sugary meringue. Sure enough, we had got it right, much to her delight.

On the last lap of the trip home, the mountains began to be shrouded in mist, and suddenly it was an unwelcome burst of snow. This snow has lost its charm; we are sick of it, as we have treasured the tease of an occasional spring-like day and measured the daily progress of the

see GARDENER’S page B2



# Pet of the Week



CHRISTOPHER GARMODY/COLLAGE

## “DAFFODIL”

I’m Daffodil, the dwarf hamster. Are you looking for a pocket sized buddy to add to your family? Call to let them know you’re in love and want to adopt me!

Hamsters are nocturnal, which means that we love to sleep during the day and play at night. We have poor eyesight and we may nip if startled, so be gentle when picking

us up! We like to live alone, but do enjoy spending time with people. Our average lifespan is about 2 to 3 years.

Please speak with an adoption counselor for more information or to inquire about adoption! Contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at (413) 548-9898 or at [info@dpvhs.org](mailto:info@dpvhs.org).

## Senior Center Activities

APRIL 15 THROUGH 19

### 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 4/15

8 to 9:30 a.m. Foot Clinic, by appt.

12 p.m. Potluck & Bingo

### Tuesday 4/16

10:15 a.m. Chair Yoga

1 p.m. Knitting Circle

### Wednesday 4/17

9 a.m. Veterans’ Outreach

12:30 p.m. Bingo

1:30 to 2:30 p.m. Mobile Food Pantry

### Thursday 4/18

9 a.m. Tai Chi

10:15 a.m. Chair Yoga

1 p.m. Cards & Games

4 p.m. Mat Yoga

### Friday 4/19

12 p.m. Breakfast at Noon

1 p.m. Writing Group

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 4/15

8:45 a.m. Step & Sculpt

10 a.m. Healthy Bones & Balance

11:30 a.m. Breakfast Brunch

12:30 p.m. Pitch card games

### Tuesday 4/16

8:45 a.m. S.W.A.P. Exercise

10 a.m. Stretch & Balance

12 p.m. Easter Lunch, Egg Hunt,

and Bonnet Contest

(No Friends meeting)

### Wednesday 4/17

8:45 a.m. Line Dancing

10 a.m. Chair Yoga

12 p.m. Homemade Lunch

1 p.m. Drumming Class

### Thursday 4/18

8:45 a.m. Aerobics

10 a.m. Healthy Bones

12 p.m. Congregate Lunch

12:30 p.m. Brown Bag Pickup

6 p.m. Swing Dance begins

### Friday 4/19

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.

### 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.

### GARDENER’S from page B1

season. On the highway the incoming white melts, but by the time we go to bed, a fresh new blanket coats the grass, just when there was none to be seen in the yard.

By morning it was gone and was followed by a balmy day, albeit one still cooled by the frisky breeze of April which seems to characterize this month and Spring.

Still, we’ve heard the peepers in the marsh, noted the bossy call of the phoebe, and the sweet trill of the song sparrow. The daffodil spears stretch, but no buds yet. In the sunroom, many of the tomato seedlings are over an inch tall.

In this sweet breath of new green life, death seems like an anomaly inappropriate to the joyous season. But in truth, my mom and dad and husband all died in the spring, just when you would think the desire for life would be the strongest, with all of that to look forward to.

Yet all the same, that loss in spring is like the persistence of life, affirming that death is not the end. Spring is bittersweet, short, and wonderful, even as we know how ephemeral.

The poet Marie Howe described it thus, from her

poem “What the Living Do”:

*I’ve been thinking: This is what the living do. And yesterday, hurrying along those wobbly bricks in the Cambridge sidewalk, spilling my coffee down my wrist and sleeve,*

*I thought it again, and again later when buying a hairbrush.*

*This is it.*

*Parking. Slamming the door shut in the cold. What you called that yearning.*

*What you finally gave up. We want the spring to*

*come and the winter to pass. We want*

*whoever to call or not call, a letter or a kiss – we want more and more and the more of it*

*But there are moments, walking, when I catch a*

*glimpse of myself in the window glass, say,*

*the window of the corner video store and I’m*

*gripped by a cherishing so deep*

*or my own blowing hair, chapped face and*

*unbuttoned coat that I’m speechless:*

*I am living. I remember you.*



### FINDING from page B1

using puppets and stage settings of her own creation.

“My art has always been storytelling,” she said. “The animation is just a different medium. So far my art has been my own story but as I grew, it became more of a story that would appeal to a broader range of people.”

“I want art to be a powerful voice to make a change,” she added.

Xu likened visual art to literature, which she loves, comparing the strength of the words of classic authors to weapons.

“Art is another weapon,” she said, “not to kill but to change.”

### Side by Side: A Group of Seven

In the Barnes Gallery, a group exhibit curated by Annaliese Bischoff highlights the work of painters Ann McNeal, Frankie Dack, Jacqueline Tsai Lin, Mari Rovang, Pat Little, Marti Olmstead, and Annaliese Bischoff. The seven women have been studying together in Greenfield Community College’s painting studio for at least three years, some of them longer.

Part of the show’s title is a play on “The Group of Seven,” a group of seven male Canadian landscape painters also sometimes called the Algonquin School, who worked and exhibited together from 1920 to the early 1930s. Bischoff smiles as she recalls her reasoning for the first part of the title.

“Some of the people in the group are whistlers,” she says. “And they end up whistling while they work. Mari [Rovang] is a whistler. And she might even be whistling the classic song, ‘Side by Side.’”

But it’s also the way the 30 or so

painters in the studio work side by side in the relatively small space, offering critiques and supporting each other, she says.

Bischoff began taking painting at GCC three years ago, shortly after moving to Leverett. Her decision to try painting, after three decades of working and teaching as a landscape architect, was sparked by a group exhibit of GCC painters she saw at the Barnes Gallery. Thus, curating this show is especially meaningful for her.

Though the show includes work of varying styles, it is well curated to emphasize a flow from the visual strengths of one artist to the next. The broader perspective of landscapes by Ann McNeal and Frankie Dack moves fluidly to the zoomed-in view of the sensuous folds and lush colors of Jacqueline Tsai Lin’s abstract tropical flowers.

Mari Rovang’s paintings seem to pick up those folds and broaden them to reveal the bold, mountainous landscapes of Oaxaca and Norway. Some of Rovang’s greens are echoed in Pat Little’s three abstract paintings of an argument. Little’s energetic brushwork gives way to the textured beach in the foreground of Marti Olmstead’s painting, “Crescent Beach.” And Bischoff’s abstract, black and red compositions are prefigured by the rectangles of the window that separates her work from Olmstead’s.

Bischoff cited painters Mark Rothko and Sean Scully as influences. Scully, she said, is originally from Ireland, and is influenced by “all the stones in the landscape.” Bischoff, too, is Irish, and finds herself moved by that landscape. But the four paintings in the show

are “more of an urban landscape,” she says. “They are referencing, but very abstractly, the architectural world...They are sort of organic geometries.”

Bischoff builds up layer after layer of oil paint to create densely textured surfaces on her canvases. She uses so much paint, she says with a laugh, that other students give her their unfinished tubes. In some areas, the layers show through, creating an effect that is almost like a shimmer on water, as if something off the premises of the canvas, such as a line of trees along the bank of a river, is reflecting back onto it.

Bischoff credits her growth as a painter to the guidance of GCC art instructors Penne Krol and Budge Hyde, as well as the thoughtful and serious critiques she’s received from instructors and other students over the years.

“I’m so proud to be a part of GCC,” Bischoff says. “It is such a unique art program. The inspiration people get, the direction, and the warm support.”

Lost Girls, by Zitong (Ann) Xu, in the Hall Gallery and Side by Side: A Group of Seven from Greenfield Community College, curated by Annaliese Bischoff, in the Barnes Gallery will be on view through April 28, with an artists’ reception this Friday, April 12, from 4 to 6 p.m. at Leverett Crafts & Arts, 13 Montague Road, Leverett.

April hours are Thursdays through Sundays, 1 to 5 p.m. and by appointment. Contact Bischoff at [sagegreen33@gmail.com](mailto:sagegreen33@gmail.com).

Visit the gallery website at [barnesgallery.org](http://barnesgallery.org).



CRAPO PHOTO

Curator Annaliese Bischoff stands with her series of abstract paintings in the Barnes Gallery at Leverett Crafts & Arts.

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THE SPIRIT SHOPPE



# A New Sandwich at the Coop; New Silverthorne Season Begins

**GREENFIELD** – Silverthorne Theater Company’s new play reading series, Thursday Theater, is presenting Steve Henderson’s *Sandwich*, which will be read at 7 p.m. on Thursday, April 18 in the Franklin Community Coop meeting space at 170 Main Street, Greenfield.

This year, Silverthorne is having free rehearsed readings of new (or new to us) plays, followed by audience discussions. The purpose of the readings is to give a platform for new work to be heard, and when possible, to be able to give playwrights direct audience feedback. The reading is free and open to the public.

Directed by Brianna Sloane, the reading features Linda Putnam, Christine Stevens, and Linda Tardif. The play presents three women, three generations, three sets of problems, one house – a recipe for flying sparks! Henderson has commented that the grandmother, Marlene, is modeled on his own grandmother.

An integral part of Silverthorne Theater Company’s mission is to promote the development of new work, especially by western Massachusetts and New England playwrights. Last year they staged the world premieres of three new works, two of which were from such writers.

Thursday Theater also gives Silverthorne a look at plays that they might consider fully producing in future seasons. Future readings will be held in different locations in the region.

## Tales of the Lost Formicans

Life is not organized around a co-

herent narrative, despite how much we would like it to be. Life can be messy, jumpy, nonlinear, fragmentary and discordant, and we might find ourselves desperately trying to make sense out of it. The season premiere of *Tales of the Lost Formicans* reflects this messiness and the effort to make sense of it, both in its content and in its form.

It seems as if all characters are struggling through a crisis of this sort or another. Within the turmoil of their lives, all characters try to find something to hold on to, something that will serve as a solid ground to walk on.

Playwright Constance Congdon experiments with the structure and form of this play, so it reflects the messiness of our life. She also uses a framing device, the Aliens, who try to analyze and understand the world of the play, exactly like the audience.

Through this dichotomy of messiness and fragmentation vs. efforts to find meaning and order, the play explores existential themes like: adolescence, aging parent, lost love and divorce, memory, and the strength of the familial unit. Congdon will be attending the first night of the show and there will be a pre-show discussion at 7 p.m. that night with her. The play will run on April 25, 26, and 27, and May 2, 3, and 4 at 7:30 p.m. at Hawks & Reed Performing Arts Center in Greenfield. On May 2, Congdon will attend for a post-show discussion. A matinee is available on Sunday, April 28 at 2 p.m.

Complete information may be found at [silverthornetheater.org](http://silverthornetheater.org).

# Supermen on the Screen

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

**GREENFIELD** – I was watching an episode of this *Supergirl* TV series featuring Superman when it popped into my head to do a critique of all the actors who played the character of Superman. I thought it would be a cool idea.

I have seen one or two episodes of the *Adventures of Superman* TV series which starred George Reeves. His portrayal of the character makes him seem like an honest man, as well as a nice guy. But I learned playing the character didn’t exactly help his acting career, though the series did lead to opportunities for him to direct.

The next actor to talk about who did this is Christopher Reeve. I have seen a couple of the *Superman* movies he was in. That man’s portrayal of Superman made him seem like an honest man, too. But it also seemed like he was corny, which might be a product of the movies being made when they were: in the late ‘70s and the ‘80s. I think that era produced a lot of television that seems like that.

Also another word to call Christopher Reeve as this character is that he really made him seem like a nerd. At least that is what I think when I see him as Superman on screen.

Tyler Hoechlin plays him as being real and earnest, like Dean Cain did – which is pretty good, since from what I understand Cain was just a model before doing *The New Adventures of Superman*. Tyler first appeared as Superman in the Season 2 premiere of CW’s *Supergirl*

TV series. The way he pulls out his suit and jumps into action is very good. His Superman has made several appearances since on *Supergirl*, so fans must like his performance of the character very much.

Henry Cavill’s, I don’t know in what way to comment on. I did see him as Superman in *Man of Steel* and *Justice League*. One thought I had is the actor made him seem like a real person who is trying to find himself and his place in the world.

That is certainly also how Tom Welling portrays him in *Smallville*. It’s actually a way to describe Tom Welling’s acting, because this man plays Clark Kent before he becomes Superman, and on his journey to become Superman as we know and love him.

I also don’t really have much to say about Brandon Routh playing him. Routh played Superman in a movie called *Superman Returns* like he plays the character the Atom, a.k.a. Roy Palmer, like he’s a Boy Scout. I now watch him doing that on the TV series *Legends of Tomorrow*. If how he portrays the Atom on those shows is any indication, several people might have enjoyed him very much as Superman in that movie.

I believe the best portrayals of Superman that I have seen have been Dean Cain and Tyler Hoechlin. Tom Welling, I would probably make the third best. That is how my Top 3 list would be, for the best actors who have ever been around to play Superman.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

# Inappropriate Skunk; Curled-Up Skunk; Wounded Skunk; Limping Skunk; Healthy Skunk; Dead Skunk; Naked Guy

## Monday, 4/1

2:11 a.m. Voicemail left in incident box reporting disabled motor vehicle at intersection of Montague Expressway and Great Mall Parkway. Street names do not exist in Montague; believed to be an intersection in San Francisco. Contacted caller and advised of error; requested party contact appropriate police agency for the location.

8:23 a.m. Caller from Park Street requesting animal control officer’s number; has baby raccoon in attic.

6:56 p.m. Party into station reporting that around 7:30 p.m. she was walking on Millers Falls Road and had just crossed the crosswalk area when a pit bull was charging towards her; she backed up but lost her footing, fell backwards, and slammed her head onto the concrete. Party states that the owner of the dog came out and called the dog away; the dog did not attack the reporting party at all, just scared her enough that she fell. TFFD in lobby checking on head injury sustained by reporting party. Officer off at residence to follow up with dog owner; requesting ACO follow up with both involved parties.

10:34 p.m. Transfer call from Greenfield PD; cell phone caller witnessed what looked like a female party being dragged into a vehicle. Caller is following vehicle, which just came over the canal bridge. All units advised. GPD and MSP out with vehicle in front of the Gun Rack. All units clear; officer states it was an intoxicated female who got out of the car and family members assisted her back into the car; no issues.

**Tuesday, 4/2**  
11:32 a.m. Report of illegal burning of building material on Fourth Street. TFFD advised.

12:08 p.m. Caller reporting past breaking and entering into her vehicle at Fourth and L streets and larceny of both license plates. Caller is not with the vehicle. Referred to an officer.

1:54 p.m. Party from Federal Street into station requesting to speak with an officer regarding an ongoing issue with town bylaw violations (unregistered vehicles). Advised of options.

1:54 p.m. Report of a crab apple tree that was knocked down by a delivery truck on Third Street. Truck is no longer in the area. Contacted DPW to remove tree.

3:22 p.m. A 22-year-old male, homeless, was arrested on warrants.

3:46 p.m. Caller from

Millers Falls Road states that there is a skunk in their backyard that is not acting appropriately. Officer spoke to caller. Caller did not want animal put down. Officer contacted ACO and left message.

3:48 p.m. Report of suspicious person on caller’s property on Montague Street; advised the other day, party entered caller’s house without permission. Today, he was in the caller’s yard, and later on he was watching her husband while her husband was raking the yard. Officers spoke with all parties involved. Report taken.

6 p.m. Caller from Millers Falls Road reporting a skunk in the yard by their deck; skunk is curled up into a ball. Officer advises animal has been put down.

## Wednesday, 4/3

12:30 a.m. Caller from Fourth Street states that her neighbors in the apartment next to hers have been loud every night for the last week. Both parties in residence advised of complaint. Male party was verbally upset about the situation.

6:50 a.m. Report of wounded skunk walking near the entrance to Turners Falls High School on the east side. TFHS called back; maintenance has the skunk in the recycle barrel and is putting it by the bonfire pile for ACO. ACO advised.

## Thursday, 4/4

3:57 a.m. Three callers reporting fireworks somewhere in vicinity of Fifth Street. Officer out on foot patrolling lower end of Fifth Street. Officer located some used firework material in the Rendezvous parking lot. Unfounded.

6:43 a.m. Structure fire on Vladish Avenue.

7:30 a.m. Caller from Rod Shop Road advises that the condemned building

next to his house has a cement wall that is coming down; about a half dozen cement bricks are in the road. DPW advised and will send someone down as soon as they can. Caller called back to advise that it appears that dog feces were thrown at the building. Officer advised.

7:38 a.m. Caller advises neighbor’s boyfriend’s vehicle is parked in a private lot with an expired registration. Officer advised.

3:24 p.m. Report of fight in progress on G Street. Several parties punching each other; approximately seven subjects involved; no known weapons. During call, parties began to disperse. Peace restored. Advised of options.

4:59 p.m. 911 report of skunk walking in circles and limping in a backyard on O Street. Area search negative.

## Friday, 4/5

1:39 p.m. 911 caller reporting that a tractor-trailer unit has tipped over going down Unity Street. PD, FD, and AMR responding. Unknown fluids or injuries. Chief Williams requesting MSP Truck Team to respond. Unity Street shut down at L Street and Maple Street. FRTA notified. Roseledge Towing requested to scene. Chief requesting DPW to respond with barricades. Investigated.

4:22 p.m. Caller from Hillside Road states that a silver pickup truck was driving slowly back and forth near two younger girls who were walking on the street. Appeared suspicious. Area checked; unable to locate.

7:36 p.m. A 49-year-old Turners Falls woman was arrested on two straight warrants.

## Saturday, 4/6

1:34 a.m. Officer checking on vehicle parked in fish ladder lot. Clear; male is talking to friend.

12:18 p.m. Party into station reporting a skunk walking in and out of the road near the four-way

intersection on Turners Falls Road. Skunk does not appear to be sick. It has walked back into a wooded area.

3:12 p.m. Caller from Fifth Street states that there is a skunk next to her front steps that she believes is sick. Caller called back and said that MPD could cancel response for now; skunk has gone well under the porch area and is out of sight.

3:22 p.m. Caller states that there are two kids who have climbed up into a tree along the bike path near First Street and are breaking branches and throwing them to the ground. Area checked; no kids in trees.

5:08 p.m. Caller from Federal Street states that a neighbor is playing loud music and revving up engines on the vehicles that they have in the yard. Officers did not hear any music being played too loud or any vehicles being loud. Homeowner advised of complaint.

5:20 p.m. Caller states that elevator in Crocker Building is malfunctioning and she is stuck inside. PD and FD responding. FD unable to open doors; requesting someone from housing authority respond. Party now out of elevator; FD advises that the elevator is now out of service.

7:34 p.m. Caller from Federal Street states that the neighbors are once again being excessively loud playing music and revving car engines. Officer monitored area for about twenty minutes; no noise disturbances.

## Sunday, 4/7

9:09 a.m. Caller from Norman Circle concerned that there is a dead skunk on her neighbor’s property and her dog can reach it. Message left for ACO; officer advised.

4:35 p.m. Caller from Fifth Street reporting a skunk in her yard near the bushes; states it is limping and hanging its head down; seems to be sick. Officer advised.

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# As You Write It, On the Color Spectrum

**TURNERS FALLS** – Local As You Write It authors will read recent writings that are reflecting on the theme of color at the Gill Montague Senior Center on Sunday, May 5. Join Estelle Cade, Joan Hopkins Coughlin, Sally Fairfield, Penny Jordan, Laura Rodley, and Alice Thomas from 1 to 3 in the afternoon for this relaxing entertainment, complete with complimentary refreshments. There will also be raffles, and the event is free!

These authors have all contributed to the popular anthology series *As You Write It*, Volumes I through VI. Local author Tinky Weisblat described the *As You Write It* antholo-

gies this way: “Authors share memories of pets, of family members, of snowstorms, of odd characters, and of work experiences. Above all, they share their hearts, humor, and wisdom.”

The authors are part of a monthly writing group led by Laura Rodley at the senior center. Says Rodley, “We fought through the snows of winter with guided color meditations. Come hear the results, each story a stained glass window unto itself.”

Whet your appetite with these selections from some of the writers who reflected on the theme of Color during winter’s drear. Enjoy!

## White

By ALICE THOMAS

Shafts of white bore down from the pages of Gwendolyn’s sheet-music. Her sprite tunes fell on ears in the same way that the paintings of Robert Ryman pierce then melt behind one’s eyes. His work is quiet! Each piece waits in the possibility that the viewer will see his thought and swag of brush; shift of intent; aware of the whiteness that reveals all in plain view: its very own blindness; much the same as Jose Sara-

mago’s posit in his book that bears the same title [*Blindness*].

All of these reveal the fact that white brims with a fancy edge and falls down, down with thunder; calls our attention to its power, then slips from view. Illusively, it calls us like the magician who holds then slides our eyes away. Ubiquitous yet hidden, white reveals what isn’t; reveals the most distinct within the bands of all else.

I am stunned by white’s exclamation and veil!

## Too Much Green

By ESTELLE CADE

A scene from my childhood pops up as we think about Green today. I’m six or seven years old, visiting our country relatives. My boy cousins, a bit older than I, say “come on over here to the corn field.” It’s not a huge field, just my great uncle’s corn patch I suppose, but the stalks are high, corn to be harvested soon, and the leaves are an extremely dark, healthy green – with nasty sharp edges, close together.

A wheedling voice – “Estelle, come on over,” I hear one of the kids call, and I enter one of the rows. Suddenly I’m surrounded on all sides by towering corn stalks. The leaves clash together as I walk, hesitating, down this narrow path, and the leaves slash the tender skin on my arms. I no longer hear the voices of my cousins and begin to feel like the lost child from one of my story books.

Tears come to my eyes, but I’m determined not to cry and then be

labeled a baby or a scaredy cat. I walk on, turning at the end of a row, having no idea where I might be. At last I hear the gentle voice of my eldest cousin (she is sixteen or so), saying “just turn left Estelle and go straight ahead. I’ll be at the end of that row to meet you.” Saved! There she was, smiling and saying “good for you! Here I am. Let’s go in the house and get something cold to drink and a cookie, just out of the oven.” Hot and tired as I was, it all sounded wonderful to me.

And later, my other cousins, as we sat down to enjoy a summer supper of new potatoes and sweet corn, seemed much subdued. Evidently they had been “spoken to” about playing a mean trick on a younger relative (and I never “told” on them, either).

As for the adult me, I avoid “Fun Houses,” mirror mazes and will never, ever, put a foot in one of the currently popular Corn Mazes! Adrift in a corn patch is not my idea of a fun time!

## Purple

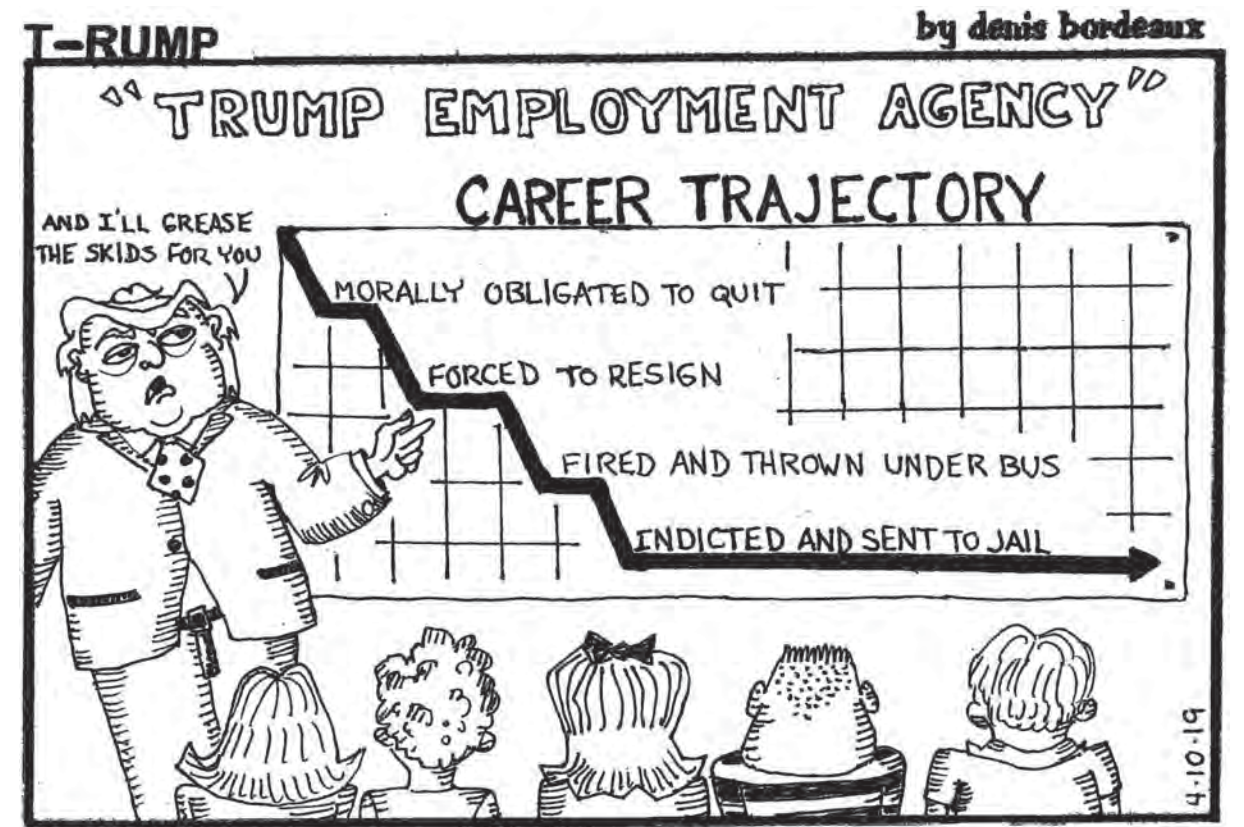
By ANN MARIE MELTZER

Footfalls cushioned by fallen leaves release a scent of sweet decay. Trees rustle with a voice in harmony with the breeze. Each step brings Rivkah closer to the place she heard about in the whispered voices of her mother and grandmother.

She stills her eyes to broaden their pupils – the landscape sparkling with dewdrops and subtle colors of shrubs dappled by sunlight, fill her perception. Sounds of quiet prick her ears and slow her breath. Aware-

ness changes the palate of colors before her. Tiny purple flowers peek up at her revealing an opening path through the trees. She has found the way to the magic place.

She stops, remembering her grandmother’s caution – to walk carefully in this place. Purple mist emerges from the flowers dancing like fairies in a seductive choreography. Trees thin to surround a circle of moss before the mouth of a cave. Rivkah enters the dark and sits quietly, senses open and spirit dreaming.



## LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here’s the way it was April 9, 2009: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

### Public Hearing on Center School Reuse

The town of Montague will hold a public hearing about the future use of the Montague Center School building, at the Montague Center fire station on Wednesday at 7 p.m.

The 14,182-square-foot building sits on 3.3 acres of land, adjoining wetlands, with some parking out front. It has been in town hands since last June, when the Gill-Montague Regional School District closed the school. The property, which has a new roof and a recently tested and approved underground oil tank, is assessed at \$768,800.

Using \$20,000 in program income funds, the town has hired Greenberg & Associates, architects of Putney, VT, and Landvest, a real estate consulting firm out of Orange, to conduct a feasibility study for reuse of the building. The public hearing will give residents a chance to hear the consultants’ ideas for the building’s reuse, and to offer their own.

“Our first hope is we can put the building on the tax rolls,” said Les Cromack, chair of the capital improvements committee. “At least we hope to get payment in lieu of taxes on the building. Our next objective is to have something go in there that fits comfortably with Montague Center.”

**Baldassare Reaffirmed As Mahar Super, Over Wendell’s Objection**

On Tuesday, the Mahar school committee, facing official criticism from three of its four member towns over the process used at their March meeting to appoint

director of student support services Michael Baldassare to replace departing superintendent of schools Reza Namin – including a request by the Orange selectboard to rescind that vote and go through a formal search process to hire a new superintendent – opted instead to reaffirm Baldassare’s appointment, by a vote of 10 to 1.

The committee also rejected a call by Orange to reduce the size of Mahar’s 2010 operating budget by 5%, to help ward off a projected FY’10 deficit of nearly \$1 million in the largest of the district’s member towns.

**G-M Taps Ladd For Superintendent**

Also on Tuesday, the Gill-Montague Regional School District picked a new superintendent of schools. His name is Alan Ladd, and on Thursday he formally accepted the post.

The two finalists for the position came to Turners Falls High School on Tuesday to answer questions in front of the school committee, present their educational views, and discuss how they would lead the Gill-Montague schools at this transitional time if they were selected.

Besides Ladd, who is current superintendent of schools in Groveton, NH, the other finalist was Lynne Celli Saransin, Ph.D., deputy superintendent of schools in Lexington, MA.

The vote was unanimously in favor of Ladd. Due to the peculiar situation Gill-Montague finds itself in, with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education overseeing the district’s finances since last year’s failed budget process, Ladd will still have to meet with DESE Commissioner Mitchell Chester and participate in contract negotiations with the school committee before his hiring becomes official.

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MONTAGUE COMMUNITY TELEVISION NEWS

# This Week at MCTV

By ABIGAIL TATARIAN

This week on Montague Community TV, we present a momentous occasion captured on video. At our “Latest Videos” page, or on Channel 17, you can watch the Erving Library Groundbreaking Ceremony, an event to initiate the library construction process, which is kicking off after years in the planning phase. To Senator Jo Comerford, who was present for the dedication, it represents “a town that is invested in a

long and beautiful planning process” and an investment from the state on the community level to lift up the “vital services” provided by libraries. 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, [infomontaguetv@gmail.com](mailto:infomontaguetv@gmail.com), or stop by 34 Second Street between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., Mondays through Fridays. We’d love to work with you!

## VALLEY VIEW from page B1

tall, handsome actor had indeed played briefly for the Boston Celtics around that time, and, yes, the resemblance was there, especially the eyes.

Big John’s Vietnam tour was in fact a cruel twist of fate. Had the big righthander played ball as a Norwood High School senior, he would have either signed a pro contract (as brother teammates Richie and Denny Hebner had) or accepted a scholarship to some big-time college-baseball factory. He had it all: an athletic 6-foot-4, 215-pound frame, good looks, a heavy, lively ball and a potent bat.

Maybe it just wasn’t meant to be. Pitching Norwood’s 1968 season opener, the star-crossed kid’s season ended abruptly when he was hit by a pitch that fractured his right wrist during his first at-bat. When his telephone-company-executive stepfather declined to pay his college tuition after graduation, Big John had no choice. With the Vietnam War escalating to a loud crescendo, he was going to be drafted into the Army. Instead, he enlisted in the Air Force and took a circuitous route back to the baseball diamond four years later at UMass’ Earl Lorden Field, arriving in Amherst for the fall 1972 semester.

I met Big John driving to my first UMass baseball meeting that semester. There he was, tall and lean, thumb sticking out across the road from Sunderland’s Cliffside Apartments. He was wearing a baggy T-shirt, cutoff shorts, sneakers, and a floppy, green, wide-brimmed, military-issue, chin-strapped hat. I pulled over, picked him up, and asked him where he was headed. When he answered UMass, I asked where and he provided a Boyden Gymnasium room number. If memory serves me, it was either Room 112 or 121, but I could be wrong. It was long ago.

“To the baseball meeting?” I asked. “Yes.” “Imagine that.”

I reached out my right arm, shook hands, introduced myself and said, “Well, it’s your lucky day. That’s precisely where I’m going.” We were friends from that day forward. What a wild ride it was, winding from Miami Beach to Orono, Maine, to Chicago, Rock Springs, Wyoming, Denver, and who knows where else. At every stop, we lived our own version of Jack Kerouac’s *On the Road*. Though it now seems like fanciful chimera, it was real. Trust me. Many stories. Maybe even too many for our own good.

Big John had a loud, defiant streak fueled by his years in ’Nam, which had instilled in him deep distrust for and aversion to authority. “Give ’em one more stripe than you and a half-thimbleful of brains,” he

told me many times, “and you had to salute and say ‘Yes, Sir.’”

It wasn’t for him. Let’s just say that, similar to many other Vietnam vets I met over the years, all of them aimless drifters, Big John was done with military protocol by the time he returned to civilian life. And he wasn’t one bit reluctant to admit it. He was all done taking orders. This predisposition did him few favors.

Shortly after meeting Big John, he told me that one of his Air Force buddies (I’m quite sure his name was Peter) lived in Montague. They met during Big John’s final Air Force days at Westover, where he served out his enlistment.

“Isn’t Montague right around here somewhere?” he asked, decades before GPS and the Internet.

“Yeah, it’s just north,” I answered.

“Well, you gotta take me out there someday. I think you’ll like Pete. He’s cool.”

Leave it to Big John to make the reunion happen quickly. Within days, he’d made arrangements to meet his friend at the Montague Inn. I drove, picking up Big John outside his Cliffside apartment on a Saturday afternoon and taking Route 47 north to the Route 63 bar. We pulled into the parking lot and Big John’s friend was waiting. Looking for us, he soon spotted Big John in my car and broke into a warm smile. Big John couldn’t contain his enthusiasm, either.

“Peter,” he bellowed out the window in his deepest, most sinister baritone.

“Mac! How ya doin’, Man?” Big John jumped out, walked joyfully toward his pal, locked thumbs and wrapped each other in the strong embrace of long-lost brothers. They were obviously glad to reacquaint far away from the regimented Air Force.

Soon we were inside, sipping sour-mash whiskey and shooting 8-ball on a pay pool table. Among the neighborhood players there that day was soft-spoken Wil Stone, a dignified man I had seen before, no slouch with a pool cue in his hands. To be honest, I don’t know if that small joint’s still standing. The last time I passed it, the derelict building appeared to be fading into oblivion. Back in the day, the place drew a feisty assortment of townie characters. On any given day you might run into the likes of Al Holmes, Paul Prentice, Fast Willie Fistis, or Stone, all local poolhall legends. If I’m not mistaken, the joint even had an occasional live band on week-ends. I may be wrong on that one, though. It was long ago.

As dusk descended, Pete suggested a trip to Turners Falls, where in those days it seemed like every other door on Avenue A opened into a dim barroom. Once there we made the rounds, starting at the Bridge Café and working south to Carney’s

and the Fireside before closing down the American House, known in Powertown lingo as “The Zoo.”

Back then, the drinking age was 18, intoxication was encouraged by happy hours, ladies’ nights and you name it, and drunk driving was a misdemeanor rarely charged without good reason. That included property damage, serious injury, or outrageous behavior. Otherwise cops would pull you over, assess your condition, and follow you home. The man in blue would depart with a stern warning that you’d best stay home or face serious consequences. Wise folks, even those of a stupid, drunken persuasion, heeded such warnings.

My, those days now seem so long ago. Though the same points of the compass, it’s a different world. Don’t get me wrong. I’m not suggesting the old days were better. Just different. More forgiving. Today, wise folks don’t drive drunk. The penalties are too severe. Not so then.

“We were lucky to grow up when we did,” Chip opined near the end of our recent telephone chat. “They were wild times, and we got away with a lot of stuff that would be treated as serious infractions today.”

He was right. I feel fortunate to have enjoyed the freedoms of the Sixties and early Seventies, before the screws of justice tightened significantly. They play for keeps nowadays.

Despite remaining in the area since meeting Big John’s buddy that day so long ago, I never again caught so much as a glimpse of the man in my travels. When working for the Town of Montague in 1979, I asked around for him and was told that if I was talking about who they thought I was, he was quiet, a bit of a loner and minded his own business. Many years later I happened to catch his newspaper obituary, if I had the right guy. The facts seemed to line up, if I’m remembering right. It can be difficult to piece things like that together so many decades later. I’m confident I have the basics right.

If so, it was not a happy ending for Pete. Then Big John joined him a decade or even two later. Though the end was premature and not pretty for either man, they’ve gone to a better place – one where the words “Yes, Sir!” and “No, Sir!” are never spoken.

Subservient responses like those were made for this world. You can’t take them with you.

*Gary Sanderson is a senior-active member of the Outdoor Writers Association of America and the New England Outdoor Writers Association and has written about the Pioneer Valley and its hills for 40 years. He can be reached at [gsand53@outlook.com](mailto:gsand53@outlook.com).*



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## FCTS Grows Robot Arm



SUBMITTED PHOTO

*John Passiglia, a teacher in the welding and metal fabrication program, demonstrates the new robotic welding arm.*

By MICHAEL REARDON

**TURNERS FALLS** – Franklin County Technical School (FCTS) superintendent Richard J. Martin, 1<sup>st</sup> Franklin District rep Natalie Blais, and Greenfield Community College president Yves Salomon-Fernandez cut the ribbon recently to celebrate the completion of the school’s newly renovated and modernized Welding and Metal Fabrication program.

FCTS received a \$495,000 Massachusetts Workforce Skills Cabinet grant to completely refurbish the program. The grant allowed the school to buy new state-of-the-art equipment, including an advanced robotic arm welding machine, and additional CNC welding and metal fabrication machines. The money was also used to expand the school’s welding shop by 1,400 square feet in order to accommodate the new equipment and create a classroom. A new floor, LED lighting, and ventilation system were installed.

Martin told the crowd of about 60 people that the new equipment replaces outdated machinery. “The welding and manufacturing field has changed significantly over the last 10 years, with an increased emphasis on CNC manufacturing,” he said. “Our Welding program was outdated and needed a complete renovation and replacement of 1960s machines and equipment so our students can

be employable in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.” FCTS was one of 177 schools in Massachusetts to apply for the Skills Capital Grant, and only one of 32 to receive one.

Blais said she is amazed by the passion of the teachers, students, and administrators whenever she visits FCTS. She noted that when students graduate from the school they most likely will stay in the area and contribute to the economy.

Fernandez said GCC and FCTS have a great relationship which she looks forward to continuing. “The work we do here is important,” she said. “It keeps the local economy competitive.... The students are the future of this community.”

Welding and Metal Fabrication teacher John Passiglia said the new equipment prepares students for the modern workplace. “It gives our students a broader base of knowledge,” he said. “They can go to a welding shop and say, ‘I’ve done that. I know how to write a program.’”

Sophomore Joe Boyden, who will be using the equipment in the Welding and Metal Fabrication program, added, “There’s a lot of shops out there that have this equipment. It’s good for us to be able to learn on something modern that we’re going to be able to see in the workforce.”

*Michael Reardon works as a public relations officer at FCTS.*

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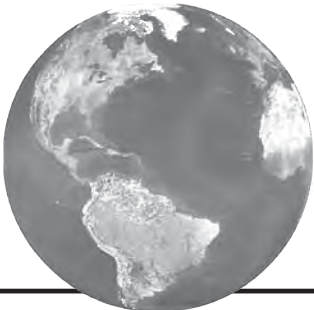
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# Aquí se habla español

Esta es la página en español del periódico **The Montague Reporter**. Aquí podrán encontrar cuestiones acerca de la comunidad hispana, eventos de interés, curiosidades, y noticias en español. Si quiere colaborar o compartir alguna sugerencia, envíenos un correo electrónico a: [spanish@montaguereporter.org](mailto:spanish@montaguereporter.org). Esperamos su participación.



## Voces Inmigrantes 2019: ¡Una celebración de las artes!

Por **VICTORIA MAÍLLO DE AGUILERA**

**TURNERS FALLS** – Organiza- do un año más por *Center for New Americans*\* en el en teatro Shea de Turners Falls tuvo lugar el domingo 7 de abril la cuarta edición del festi- val *Voces Inmigrantes* para celebrar la diversidad y la interculturalidad reunidas encima de un escenario. El evento ofrece la oportunidad de mostrar el talento artístico y las tradi- ciones culturales de los que llegan a este país y lo enriquecen cada día.

El locutor radiofónico Monte Belmonte abrió el evento como el anfitrión al ser el presidente del con- sejo de dirección del teatro Shea. Monte mostró en su presentación el orgullo de recibir una vez más este evento en un teatro que según la

dirección del mismo debe ser con- siderado como lugar de encuentro comunitario y más aún en los mo- mentos políticos en que vivimos.

A continuación, dieron la bien- venida al público los presentadores del acto: Maricella Obando-Moya de Costa Rica, Biani Salas-Morales de Venezuela y Samba Kane de Se- negal. En su discurso expresaron su agradecimiento a las marcas colabo- radoras y al consejo de dirección del teatro Shea.

La primera actuación corrió a cargo de Johanne Juste y Rose Co- quillon provenientes de Haití que interpretaron la canción “*Mi bande- ra*.” Vestidas con los colores de la bandera de su país (rojo, blanco y azul) que llevaban también en sus pañuelos, cantaron en criollo haitia- no una canción inspirada en la en-



*Pequeños integrantes del grupo Folklore Latino, con la bandera de Guatemala.*

seña nacional. Sus excelentes voces y el sentimiento puesto en la inter- pretación hicieron que el público, aunque no entendía el idioma, com- prendiese la idea de la esperanza de libertad y el orgullo de ser haitiano.

Anderlee López Briceño de Vene- zuela, estudiante de auxiliar de en- fermería, recitó el poema “*¿Quién soy yo?*” que trataba también acer- ca de la bandera, en este caso la de Venezuela, que la artista ondeó al final de su actuación.

La tercera artista fue Biani Salas-Morales de Venezuela, vesti- da con unas espectaculares mallas plateadas a conjunto con los zapatos de su acompañante, Frank Razzaia, nos deleitaron con un baile que no tenía nada que envidiar a los que vemos en “*Got Talent*” incluida la pirueta final de Biani con el acom- pañamiento de fondo de la can- ción “*¿Por qué será?*” del cantante venezolano Oscar D’ León.

A continuación Juleen Johnson de Corea del Sur, ataviada con un vestido de gala de su país, recitó un poema escrito por ella misma titu- lado “*Sangre y huesos*”. El poema narraba su experiencia llegando a este país, la tristeza de dejar su país y a su familia combinado con la experiencia de convertirse en es- tadounidense y la dualidad de iden- tidad que ello conlleva.

La siguiente en subir al escenario fue Elina de Irán que es demostró ser una artista muy completa. Primero recitó en farsi el poema “Una chica de Irán” escrito por ella misma. Sus versos hablaban de la desolación que se siente al no ser entendida y acer- ca de la imposibilidad de mostrar su arte en Irán. Los sonidos del farsi me parecieron cercanos, suaves, casi como si te abrazaran. Después, tras un cambio rápido de vestuario cantó y bailó al ritmo de dos canciones procedentes de Irán. Elina mientras cantaba, incitaba al público a llevar el ritmo con sus palmas.

Las siguientes en pisar el escena- rio fueron unas viejas conocidas del evento, Las Guadalupanas de Méxi-

co, entre cuyas integrantes están Gabi Aguilera y Eva Martínez. La primera es una antigua estudiante de auxiliar de enfermería en *Center for New Americans*. Bailaron la canción “*México en la piel*” con la bandera de su país al fondo y siempre el or- gullo de ser mexicanas en el corazón.

Les siguió Raquel Artiga de El Salvador, otra asidua de este evento, con un vestido negro con lentejuelas brillantes y flores rojas y azules en el cabello, que nos cantó la canción “*Tu tanta falta de querer*”. Se diría que Raquel había pasado toda su vida encima de un escenario con su forma tan profesional de actuar.

Y por fin llegó la siempre es- perada actuación de los pequeños dirigidos por la hermana Rosa. El grupo Folklore latino integrado por niños de la parroquia de Nuestra Señora de la Paz bailaron la canción “*El Garañón*” de Guatemala todos vestidos iguales con los colores de dicho país y dos pequeños que por- taban la bandera azul y blanca del país centroamericano.

Más tarde Gentile, Chance and Tuyi de Ruanda impresionaron a la audiencia cantando *a capella* la canción *gospel* “*Viene el día del fin del mundo*”. Entonaron sus maravil- losas voces sin ayuda de instrumen- tos ni música de fondo. Su actua- ción gustó tanto que tuvieron que volver a cantar una segunda canción que no estaba prevista.

A continuación llegó Maricella Obando- Moya de Costa Rica con la interpretación bailada de la dan- za típica de Costa Rica “*Tambito*”. Maricella llevaba un precioso ves- tido folclórico de Costa Rica que supo mover y mostrar con estilo y ritmo. La canción hablaba de las características típicas de la mujer costarricense.

Johanne y Rose actuaron de nuevo cantando “*Hallelujah*” de Leonard Cohen. Rose explicó a la audiencia que cuando escuchó por primera vez la canción le en- cantó, pero que no entendía la letra porque entonces no hablaba inglés

e intentó adaptar los sonidos del in- glés al criollo haitiano.

El grupo folclórico de Sal- vaMéxico con integrantes de El Salvador y México que se represen- ta sobre el escenario con los trajes en azul y blanco como la bandera de El Salvador y con dos charros mexicanos que bailan con las inte- grantes del conjunto interpretaron las canciones “*Bésame, morenita*” y “*Adentro cojutepeque*.”

Se hizo a continuación una pequeña pausa entre las actuaciones y ese fue el momento elegido por la directora de *Center for New Ameri- cans*, Laurie Millman, para subir al escenario y dar las gracias a todos los que habían participado y colabo- rado en llevar a cabo el evento, especialmente a Marilyn Sylla que ha dirigido estas cuatro ediciones y que está a punto de retirarse.

Después de este pequeño inter- medio el grupo de Bulgaria, Hot Sauce of Bulgaria, nos presentó su música tecno-electrónica pegadiza con dos canciones llamadas “*Habi- bi*” y “*Motel*.” El ritmo me hizo recordar una fusión entre música europea, turca y del Medio Oriente.

La última actuación corrió a cargo del grupo senegalés compuesto por Samba Kane, Pape Ba, Assane Coly y Modou Gueye con sus tambores autóctonos y un xilófono hicie- ron que toda la audiencia coreara con palmas y con los pies sus rit- mos provenientes de África. Como fin de fiesta, y con todo el públi- co puesto en pie, todos bailando y contagiados del ritmo, los artistas salieron al escenario para despedir un evento maravilloso celebra- do la riqueza de la diversidad y la multiculturalidad, principal rique- za de este país.

\* *Center for New Americans* enseña inglés, uso de computadoras y derecho cívico. Ofrecen también clases online y entrenamiento para cuidadores y auxi- liares de enfermería. Todas las clases son gratis.

MAILLO PHOTOS



*Maricella Obando-Moya bailando la canción “Tambito” de Costa Rica.*

## Tablón de anuncios

• **Food Bank de Massachu- setts** sigue ofreciendo comida gra- tis cada tercer miércoles de mes en el parking del Senior Center en Turners Falls cuya dirección es 62 5th Street. La próxima distribu- ción de comida será el miércoles 17 de abril de 1:30 a 2:30 p.m. Por favor asegúrense de traer sus pro- pias bolsas.

Este programa re realiza en alianza con FCCMP y Montague COA Si tienen preguntas, con- tacten con The Food Bank of West- ern Massachusetts en el teléfono (413) 247-9738.

• **Paseando y leyendo al mis- mo tiempo:** La escuela elemental de Turners Falls, Hillcrest Ele- mentary, está planeando un evento comunitario destinado a toda la fa- milia en el centro urbano de Turners Falls que se celebrará el próximo 4 de mayo de 2019 desde las 10 de la mañana a las 12 del mediodía.

El libro elegido como cen- tro de la actividad comunitaria es *Llárame árbol* de Maya Christina



González. Las páginas de dicho li- bro estarán colocadas en las jardine- ras de la Avenida A entre las calles Tercera y Cuarta a ambos lados de la avenida. Las familias podrán disfrutar de la lectura de ellas en in- glés y en español al mismo tiempo que pasean al aire libre. El paseo terminará en el centro comunitario La Mariposa en el número 111 de la Avenida A donde se exhibirá una muestra de arte realizada por los estudiantes de la escuela elemental, así como un concierto con música para todos los públicos.

Esperamos que puedan asistir con toda su familia y que el tiempo acompañe.

## El misterio de los pájaros muertos en Turners Falls

Por **VICTORIA MAÍLLO DE AGUILERA**

Un sábado de hace algunas sema- nas salí a la calle a primera hora de la mañana dispuesta a pasear con mi perra Ssoula cuando nada más pasar el umbral de la puerta de la calle,

me encontré con dos pájaros muer- tos sobre la acera. Los pájaros eran grises con la punta de la cola ama- rilla. Hoy mismo, también en fin de semana, he visto otros dos pájaros muertos en la acera en el centro de Turners Falls. Desde aquí llamo a la colaboración ciudadana para pedir

la resolución de este misterio. ¿Al- guien puede ayudarme a resolver este enigmático *avicidio*? ¿Alguien sabe qué está pasando o qué signifi- ca este misterio?

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# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

## EVENTS

### THURSDAY, APRIL 11

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Kids Music Series with Under the Tree Music Company*. Last event in this series. 10:30 a.m.

Montague Congregational Church, Montague Center: *Fiddle Orchestra*. Directed by David Kaynor and Annika Amstutz. 7 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Alienation Movie Premier*. Short film made by and featuring local families. Screening and Q&A with cast and crew. 7 p.m.

Root Cellar, Greenfield: *Colleen Green, DeGreaser, Taxidermists, Jesus Vio, Editrix*. \$. 8 p.m.

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

### FRIDAY, APRIL 12

Flywheel Arts, Easthampton: *Ted Leo, Jelani Sei, Pandemix, Diana Davies*. Flywheel 20th anniversary. \$. 7 p.m.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *After the Rain*. Coffeehouse Series presentation. See photo caption. Donations support programming at the Center. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Pothole Pictures, Shelburne: *Paint Your Wagon*. "An oddball musical about a gold prospector, his 'pardner,' and the boom town they help create; it's not like any Western you have seen." Live music before the show at 7. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Habibi, ZoKi, Nanny*. All-female indie rock/punk artists. \$. 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Big Sam's Funky Nation*. Funk with rock, hip-hop, jazz. \$. 8 p.m.

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

Root Cellar, Greenfield: *Grace Ives, Jack Whitescarver, Lucy,*

**AUDITION**  
New and experienced actors are welcome to audition in Shelburne Falls for Jackie Walsh's next theater production, *Ropes*. The cast is made up of three men, with ages ranging from 20s to 70s. Audition on Tuesday, April 16 at 6 p.m. and Saturday, April 20 at 2 p.m.; call Jackie for details: (413) 625-9413.

*Plants of the Bible*. \$. 9 p.m.

North Village Smokehouse, Millers Falls: *TNT Karaoke*. 9:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Jetta Babes*. DJ with non-stop Brit-pop, indie, new wave, post-punk, psych vinyl. 9:30 p.m.

### SATURDAY, APRIL 13

Augusta Savage PopUp Gallery, 12 Federal Street, Greenfield: *Eshu Bumpus* and *Motoku Dworkin*, storytelling. *Rebirth*, high energy band. 12 p.m.

Root Cellar, Greenfield: *Traditional Music Open Session-Contra, Irish, Old Time Etc*. Open jam session. 3 p.m.

Flywheel Arts, Easthampton:



*After the Rain performs original acoustic and a cappella arrangements of everything from Appalachian to classic rock to contemporary folk. Enjoy rich blended harmonies by Ruth Critcher, Rae Griffiths, and Carol Sharick with Devin Griffiths on guitar. Part of the Great Falls Coffeehouse series at the Discovery Center in Turners Falls, this Friday evening April 12 at 7:30 p.m. By donation.*

*Bush Tetras, Can Kickers, Bun-nies, Rogue Conjuror, Les Derailleurs*. Flywheel 20th anniversary. \$. 6:30 p.m.

Montague Center: *Montague Common Hall Open Mic #33*. Featured artist *Bobby D*. Open mic in a beautiful space and friendly environment. Donation. 7:30 p.m.

Memorial Hall, Shelburne: *Paint Your Wagon*. See Friday's listing. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Old Town Hall, Wendell: *Pamela Means*. Full Moon Coffeehouse presents Pamela Means in a benefit for the Village Neighbors organization. "Snarling, energetic guitar" and "emotional, raw, angry when it needs to be"

voice. Means will perform with a four-piece band doing originals and covers and many danceable tunes. Open mic before the show, Dessert-O-Rama to fuel your dance. Donation. 7:30 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Session Americana and Ali McGuirk*. Americana, rock, blues, R&B. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Lester Rawson Band*. Funky mix of blues, contra, classic rock and R&B. 9 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *TV2000, Hung Trucker, Parlor Shark, Scare City*. 9:30 p.m.

### SUNDAY, APRIL 14

Nina's Nook, Turners Falls: *Spontaneous Combustion*. Join

recorded live and be available to listen to. *Emma June Band, Ona Canoa*, and *Izzy Heltai* will perform this month. Limited seating. \$. 7:30 p.m.

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

### MONDAY, APRIL 15

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Quiz Night*. 8 p.m.

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17

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

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

### THURSDAY, APRIL 18

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

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Comedy at the Shea*. Josie's Magical Flute presents an evening of improvised comedy. Featuring Julie Waggoner, Sally Ekus, and Mandy Anderson. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *World Dance Party with The Pangeans*. Latin Jazz, Reggae, Samba, Calypso, Afro-beat, and more. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Half Shaved Jazz*. 8 p.m.

### FRIDAY, APRIL 19

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

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Frank Solivan & Dirty Kitchen*. Folk and roots music, bluegrass. \$. 7 p.m.

Guiding Star Grange, Greenfield: *Contra Dance*. Andy Davis with David Kaynor, Annika Amstutz, and the *Back Row Band*. \$. 8 p.m.

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

North Village Smokehouse, Millers Falls: *TNT Karaoke*. 9:30 p.m.

### SATURDAY, APRIL 20

Montague Bookmill, Montague Center: *Caroline Cotter* and *Ashley Storrow*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Owsley's Owls*. Grateful Dead covers. 9 p.m.

North Village Smokehouse, Millers Falls: *Lake Side Drive*. 9:30 p.m.

*Combustion: Improvisatory Art* by Adam Bosse. Improvisations in color, paint, and ink, with a soundtrack from Bosse's musical projects. Through May 5; reception with improv jam Sunday, April 14, 1 p.m.

Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne Falls: *Women of Power, Fabric Figures* by Belinda Lyons Zucker. Through April 28. Also, *Creating Together*, collaborations between mothers and their children and an art making space for children.

Shelburne Arts Coop, Shelburne Falls: *The Lay of the Land*, local watercolor landscapes by Nina Coler. Through April.

Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton: *Plastic Entanglements: Ecology, Aesthetics, Materials*. The story of plastic in 60 works by 30 contemporary artists, exploring our entangled love affair with this miraculous and malevolent material. Through July.

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THE AUTHORS' CORNER: JENNIFER L. HOLM

By IZZY VACHULA-CURTIS

**TURNERS FALLS** – Happy Spring! Today I'm going to be reviewing Jennifer L. Holm's *The Fourteenth Goldfish*, with my little sister, Markie Vachula-Curtis!

*The Fourteenth Goldfish* is about a girl named Ellie who is in sixth grade. Ellie isn't having a very good year; her best friend is too busy with volleyball to hang out with Ellie anymore, and she misses her pet goldfish who passed away.

Then a boy who looks about Ellie's age shows up at her house. The weird thing is: He acts and looks

a lot like Ellie's Grandpa Melvin. Grandpa Melvin is a really intelligent scientist and has been trying to find the secret to immortality. Could this kid really be Grandpa Melvin?

I really enjoyed this book because it was funny, and the end was really happy and inspiring. I don't really like books about immortality because it's kind of sad that *real* people don't live forever, and I worry about people dying. The ending of this book was really amazing and happy though, which I loved!

Since Ellie's grandpa is a scientist, I learned a lot from this book, too. Like, I found out that Jonas Salk created a vaccine for polio in the War on Polio, and that Robert Oppenheimer helped with the bombs that ended World War II.

One of my favorite parts of the book is when Ellie, her friend Raj, and the strangely familiar teenager break into Ellie's grandpa's lab to steal a powerful device he'd been working on. (Grandpa Melvin calls it the *T. Melvinus*.) In order to get the *T. Melvinus*, they have to attempt to break in many times before their plan actually works.

This book is really quick, but still exciting and fun! I would recommend it to kids, or young adults.

I emailed Jennifer L. Holm about an interview, and she didn't respond. My grandmother and my little sister, Markie, read this book before me and loved it, so they inspired me to read it! I'm going to ask them both some questions about it now.

**Izzy V-C:** *What was your favorite part of this book?*

**Markie V-C:** I like the ending because, I don't want to give it away, but it leaves you on an exciting cliffhanger!

**IVC:** *Who was your favorite character, and why?*

**MVC:** My favorite character is the main character, Ellie. I like Ellie because she is a leader not a follower; she is a leader because she doesn't want to follow in her parents' footsteps.

*(Note from IVC: Ellie's parents want Ellie to be an actress or have an occupation with theater, but Ellie wants to be a scientist.)*

**Laura Vachula:** The grandfather was my favorite character! Probably because he's about my age. My favorite parts were when he was at school and interacted with the middle schoolers from the viewpoint of a senior citizen!



Izzy V-C didn't hear back from the book's author this week, so she interviewed little sister Markie.

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**IVC:** *If you could change one thing about this book, what would it be?*

**MVC:** I would change how her goldfish didn't die. *(IVC: Ellie had a pet goldfish and it died when she was little, so her mom kept replacing it with another one so Ellie wouldn't know that it had died and wouldn't be sad!)*

**IVC:** *On a scale of one to ten, how much did you like this book, and why?*

**MVC:** I like this book a ten, because I liked how the author, Jennifer L. Holm, put the story. Like how she made the main character, Ellie, not want to be like her parents because they act and she doesn't want to.

**IVC:** *Who would you recommend this book to?*

**LV:** I would definitely recommend this book to all age groups because it shows we can all learn from each other, no matter what our age is!

Thank you Markie and Grammy for answering the questions. Have a great April Vacation, everybody!

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