

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 18 – NO. 10

also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

\$1

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

JANUARY 9, 2020

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Meals Bails on Waste Post; Date Set for Center Fest

By JEFF SINGLETON

Eric Meals, who was recently chosen to supervise the Montague water pollution control facility (WPCF), has decided to remain at his current job at Hatfield’s sewer treatment plant. Montague will thus begin the new year with a new search for a WPCF superintendent.

The turn of events was announced by town administrator Steve Ellis, almost as an afterthought, at the town selectboard’s meeting on Monday night. The board had just completed a lengthy discussion – with much public input – about a summer global music festival in Montague Center, and

was about to adjourn, when acting chair Michael Nelson asked Ellis: “Wastewater?”

“Oh my gosh,” said Ellis. He went on to say that Meals, scheduled to start the job during the week of January 20, “has opted to remain in his present position [in Hatfield], and will not be joining the Montague team.”

Ellis said the search committee, which was expecting to have a “clean-up meeting” the next day, will probably decide to re-advertise the position, and begin a new search. Ellis said that since three months had passed since the original search, “we certainly are

see MONTAGUE page A7

GILL SELECTBOARD

Two Corporate Tax Appeals Head to Special Town Meeting

By GEORGE BRACE

Among other business in a short January 6 meeting, the Gill selectboard approved two warrant articles related to property tax appeals filed by FirstLight Power, and set a date of January 26 for a special town meeting to vote on them. The board also continued looking at possible responses to a rise in rates for disposing of recyclables coming on July 1.

The board set a date of Wednesday, January 22, at 6:30 p.m. for a special town meeting to vote on two articles related to a proposed settlement of several property tax appeals

filed with the state Appellate Tax Board (ATB) by FirstLight Power.

Town administrator Ray Purington said he believes the first of five appeals included in the proposed settlement dates from 2014. As part of the agreement to settle the cases, the board needs to agree to a specific valuation of FirstLight property for FY’20 and FY’21. The board of assessors is empowered to resolve property tax issues, but setting a property valuation for a future year requires the approval by town meeting sought in the article.

The second article seeks approval of the release of money for legal

see GILL page A6

ONGOING INVESTIGATION

Questions For Mr. Gaffigan



JESSICA VACHULA-CURTIS PHOTO

Thomas Gaffigan is in his first year as GFMS/TFHS assistant principal.

By ANTHONY PETERSON

GILL-MONTAGUE – Mr. Thomas Gaffigan is assistant principal at Turners Falls High and Great Falls Middle School. It is his first year at the schools. He took over after Kathi Smith left last summer.

Mr. Gaffigan formerly worked at Franklin Tech and Greenfield High. He is very social with the school community in and outside of school. When I’m walking the halls I see him a lot talking to students in a very friendly manner.

He is often around, shopping at local stores, and really being a part of the community.

MR: What was your first job?

Thomas Gaffigan: Working

construction, doing gas lines.

MR: What is your favorite season of the year, and why?

TG: I love the fall, with all its colors and its football season!

MR: What is your favorite sport, and why?

TG: Football. I played in college, and coached varsity football for 30 years.

MR: What is your favorite food?

TG: Shepherd’s pie – yum!

MR: If you could go to one place in the world, where would you go, and why?

TG: Ireland. I would love to explore the land of my ancestors!

see QUESTIONS page A5

WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Board Faces Backlash Over Logging Letter

By JEFF SINGLETON

WENDELL – Thirty mostly Wendell residents crowded into the meeting room of the town office building on January 8 to discuss a letter sent by the town’s selectboard opposing a bill before the state legislature, H.897, that would eliminate commercial logging on forest land under the control of the state Department of

Conservation and Recreation (DCR).

In December, the board sent an “open letter” to the town’s state representative, Susannah Whipps, calling a ban on logging “not a reasonable step and not necessarily the most beneficial approach to our forests.” The letter stated that DCR’s forest management policies “may very well produce the results most favorable for carbon

see WENDELL page A6



JANET MASUCCI PHOTOS

Wendell selectboard members Dan Keller, Christine Heard, and Laurie DiDonato met with a crowd Wednesday night.

Hollywood Returns to Franklin County

By MIKE JACKSON

TURNERS FALLS – Curious onlookers craned their necks but mostly kept their distance Wednesday morning as the sidewalk in front of the Upper Bend Café was taken over by a film crew from Los Angeles. Two nights earlier, Mulholland Productions, Inc. had secured the permission of the Montague selectboard to film on Avenue A, and now a crew of nearly a dozen clustered around writer, director, producer, and star Steven Grayhm, filming repeated takes as he taped and re-taped a “Lost Dog” poster onto a lamppost.

The Secret of Sinchancee is Grayhm’s feature-length directorial debut. The square-jawed Canadian actor has a resumé in both television and movies, and is probably best recognized for his brief comedic speaking role as “Russ – Party Boy” in the much-discussed 2004 Wayans Brothers farce *White Chicks*. He has also previously directed short films and music videos. “It’s a small-town story,” Grayhm explained. “My wife and I got married here – she grew up here, and her mom owns the diner across the street, the Black Cow.”



JACKSON PHOTO

The crew prepares for a long shot across Fourth Street.

Primary locations for the shoot include not only the Black Cow Burger Bar but also the property of the Rose Ledge towing company in Irving, which is owned by Grayhm’s father-in-law.

The crew soon crossed the Avenue and set up for another shot on Fourth Street, where they discovered two technical challenges: a black Ford Focus parked in front of their scouted location, and an unlicensed US Postal Service logo

plainly visible on a mailbox.

First assistant director Lynn d’Angona, who shares a production credit on *Sinchancee* and appeared to be the primary authority figure present on Wednesday, took both challenges in stride. At her instruction the crew piled trash bags on a snowbank to obscure the postal logo and managed to track down the vehicle’s owner, who made a face but moved the Focus out of frame.

see HOLLYWOOD page A5

The Week in Turners Falls Sports

By MATT ROBINSON

GILL-MONTAGUE – This week in sports: a recap and a look forward. This week I was able to get out of bed, and attend a basketball game and a swim meet.

Last Saturday, the New England Patriots’ magical coach-and-four turned back into a pumpkin when they lost to the Tennessee Titans 20-13 at Gillette Stadium. It was a sad night in New England, with all sorts of predictions that their vaunted dynasty had finally come to an end.

So the Pats won’t win the Super Bowl this year. So what? There’s a mantra I say every season, for every sport: “There’s always next year.”

Girls’ Basketball

The Turners Falls Lady Thunder has entered Year Two of the Marvell Age. And coach Eddie Marvell’s sophomore year seems similar to his first.

Last season, Blue lost a number of games by a basket or two, while other contests were blowouts. It took almost the entire season for the Ladies in Blue to record their first win. This year, the Thunder lost their first six

see SPORTS page A8



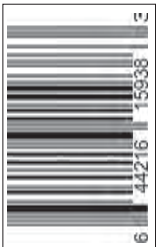
DAVID HOITT PHOTO

Turners’ Stephanie Peterson is ready to shoot as Pioneer’s Emily Tibbetts (left) and Sophia Walker (right) defend.

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The Montague Reporter

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Technical Administration

About Face Computing

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August 2002

A Turning Point

Turns out, an awful lot can happen in a week.

Last week in this space, we discussed the demonstration and attack on the \$750 million US embassy in Baghdad, wondered how President Trump would respond, wondered why US troops are still in that country, and asked, "What's the plan?"

About nine hours after the edition went to press, the US carried out a drone strike at Baghdad International Airport that killed Iranian major general Qasem Soleimani, invited into the country on a diplomatic mission by the Iraqi government, and nine other people including several leaders of the Popular Mobilization Forces, a government-sponsored militia coalition.

It was a shocking escalation, flouting all international law as well as any rational expectation. Domestically, the president's supporters have rushed in to backfill a strategic or moral rationale for the move. Soleimani, they argued, was evil and an organizer of terror, and therefore anyone who objected to his extrajudicial killing condoned the worst violence he had previously had a hand in.

Nevermind that Soleimani's Quds Force and the PMF were largely responsible for driving the Islamic State out of Iraq, a victory touted by Trump. Nevermind that the US itself routinely passes in and out of coalition with various regional militias with links to terrorist tactics and sectarian violence.

Trump's 2016 boast that he

"could stand in the middle of 5th Avenue and shoot someone and... wouldn't lose voters" was finally taken to the test. And the entire world braced for further escalation between the rival powers.

Fortunately – as of press time – it appears the Iranian leadership chose a strategy of deescalation while saving face, launching a single wave of missile attacks at US bases in Iraq that bore no casualties. And fortunately, Trump correctly interpreted the signal and has not counter-attacked, claiming victory while continuing to wave his saber.


The United States has denied Iranian foreign minister Mohammed Javad Zarif a visa to attend the United Nations in New York, unilaterally blocking the main context in which a set of norms or a rule of law can be enforced among nations.

And on Wednesday, Republican senators Mike Lee and Rand Paul left an intelligence briefing on the assassination furious.

"They were asked repeatedly what, if anything, would trigger the need for the administration to come back to Congress for a declaration of war or an authorization for the use of military force," Lee reported. "At one point, one of the briefers said something along the lines of 'I'm sure we could think of something!' But they struggled to identify anything."

To the other 96% of the planet, America is now a rogue state, governed by a rogue executive. This is a moment of deep national shame.

CORRECTION: A caption on page B1 last week referred to the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge as the "Gill-Montague Bridge." We were just seeing if Ed Gregory was still paying attention. He was! Apologies to all for the error.



NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION

Seay and Rebekah Minor stand in the walk-in cooler full of harvested and packaged sprouts at their Gill Greenery business. They bought the enterprise ten years ago from Phil and Susie Maddern. Seay says a new crop takes four days to grow.

Letters to the Editors



Have We Learned Nothing?

President Trump recently ordered an airstrike that killed top Iranian commander Qasem Soleimani as well as others in Iraq. This followed an attack on the US Embassy by Iranian-backed militia in Iraq. The architects of the 2003 US war in Iraq are bellowing for all-out war with Iran on Fox News and wherever else they can get a forum.

Have we learned nothing from the disastrous 8-year war in Iraq, based on a lie, that killed hundreds of thousands of Iraqi people, 2,400 US soldiers, and left tens of thousands of US war veterans suicidal, homeless, with PTSD, and against that war?

Have we learned nothing from the recent revelation that our nearly 20-year unhinged war in Afghanistan lacked purpose, lacked "progress," lacked a moral compass, and placed that country in the hands of the Taliban?

We had a carefully monitored agreement with Iran in which they agreed to eliminate their capacity to make nuclear weapons for our dropping economic sanctions that were strangling their economy.

Renouncing that agreement and baiting Iran to war – at a point in which we are given 10 years to pull the world back from climate catastrophe, as Australia is experiencing – manifests the truth of the poet John Milton's lines: *"For what can war but endless war still breed."*

Pat Hynes
Montague
Traprock Center for Peace & Justice

Letter: Climate Change Creates *More* Forestry Challenges

As a licensed forester who has worked to maintain the health and regeneration of our central Massachusetts forests for more than 50 years, I believe that the "Forest Crisis" created by a group of Wendell folks is misleading. They erroneously argue that commercially removing parts of any tree from the forest is detrimental to the forest and ultimately worsens climate change. Their emotional claims that the careful harvest operation in the Wendell State Forest, and on other DCR and state forest land, is a significant problem for carbon sequestration is unproven.

I, and most professional people who work in the forest, are more concerned about the threats facing our forests from climate change, insects, diseases, invasive plants and the warming temperatures. Now more than ever, our forests need careful management and tending... not the benign neglect advocated by the group's no-cut policy.

The Wendell protesters seem to be unaware of their good luck, that the ill wind that brought the gypsy moths as far north as New Salem did not make it to Wendell State Forest, because this forest is a vast bread basket of mature oaks. The results of two to three years of defoliation on the Quabbin Reservoir lands resulted in 2,000-plus acres of dead oak forest. Statewide we have lost 50,000 acres of oak forest in the past five years to insects and diseases. Our native trees continue to be lost: starting with the chestnut and elm, and now continuing with the beech, ash and hemlocks... all essential for bio-diversity.

The rate of tree loss is alarming and not too far in the future, I suspect that mortality will outpace growth and the sequestration of carbon. I also believe that climate change and its impact on our forest, by energizing new and established diseases and the importation of new insects and diseases, may eliminate our forest halfway through this century even if we don't cut a tree.

Yes, we have a forest crisis... one that needs careful management on many fronts.

So, what do we do when forests die? What do we do when we have too many herbivores (including moose) that prevent biodiversity of plants? What do we plant when native species like the sugar maple and white pine are struggling with the rising temperatures? How do we eradicate invasive plants, especially when chemicals are the only option?

The notion that the management work proposed by House Bill 897 will be funded with millions of dollars of state tax funds, and no commercial return from the harvest of needed forest products, is pie in the sky. Just ask anyone who has tried to get the state to fund its obligations in education and transportation.

I commend the Wendell Select Board for supporting a science, silviculture-based approach to our forestry problems and raising their concerns about House Bill 897 amidst all the emotional and uninformed protests.

The Select Board knows that Wendell citizens have a long history of careful tending of the regional forest land by generations of logging families (the Fishers, Clarks/Blackbird, Hildredths and Wilders) who often put exemplary forest restoration goals above monetary gain because they believe in their work and the importance off the forest for future generations. They also recognize that that the commercial silvicultural (irregular shelterwood) method recently employed by DCR in the Wendell State Forest in a 115 year-old, even-aged oak stand helps the forest sustain biodiversity and carbon sequestration. The Select Board has seen how the forest can recover with careful management after catastrophic events like the past tornado.

I share the Wendell group's concern for our forests, and I agree that forest management practices need constant vigilance and review. But I totally disagree with the provisions in House Bill 897 which will eliminate all commercial logging on state lands. With proper oversight and strict regulations, the partnership of DCR foresters and local logging companies are an important tool to maintain the health of our forests resulting in diverse regeneration, carbon sequestration, enhanced wildlife habitats, and the beautiful New England forest landscapes like we have in the Wendell State Forest today.

Bruce Spencer
New Salem

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Compiled by NINA ROSSI

Start reviewing your poems for submission to the 29th annual **Poet’s Seat Poetry Contest** by March 2. You may pick out up to three for entry into this local tradition. For more information about contest particulars, see *friendsofgpl.org*.

Musica Franklin will host a community night Thursday, January 9 from 5:45 to 7:15 p.m. at Sheffield Elementary School in Turners Falls. Students will demonstrate what they have been learning, followed by a short concert with guest artist Lissa Schneckenburger, and then a shared meal. Schneckenburger will play traditional fiddle tunes and songs from her original album, *Thunder in my Arms*. This event is free and open to the public.

You may also catch Musica Franklin at a second community night at Leyden Woods in Greenfield next Tuesday, January 14 at 5 p.m. After children have played, the featured performer will be Violet Walker on her musical saw, followed by a shared meal. Find out more details at *musicafranklin.org*.

This Friday evening, January 10, **live music from the group**

Windborne comes to the Great Hall at the Discovery Center in Turners Falls during the January Great Falls Coffeehouse.

Windborne is an internationally acclaimed group of folk musicians who specialize in close harmony singing that spans many continents and cultures yet remain deeply rooted in American folk. They have collected and studied polyphonic vocal music from cultures around the world, and are able to shift between radically different genres in what promises to be a surprising and inspiring performance: educating as they entertain, telling stories about the music, and explaining characteristics and stylistic elements of the traditions in which they sing.

Windborne concerts typically include songs from Corsica, the Republic of Georgia, Bulgaria, Quebec, and Basque country, as well as traditional and original American folk music.

Join the Coffeehouse at 7 p.m. for this performance, and enjoy refreshments provided by donation from the Friends of the Center, who use the funds to support programming at the museum. Sliding scale donation of \$6 to \$15.

The art exhibit in the Great

Hall curated by my group Exploded View, **You Are Here**, provides a vibrant backdrop to the concert Friday night, and will be on view through February. Over 30 artists have contributed work that explores the theme of maps, the significance of place, and movement across boundaries.

A reception with the artists will be held this Sunday, January 12. Things kick off at 1 p.m., and there will be a performance by Exploded View at 2 p.m.

Great Falls Books Through Bars is constantly receiving requests for dictionaries, almanacs, thesauruses, thrillers, law books, Dungeons & Dragons, westerns, street lit, mysteries, Wicca, occult, conspiracy theories, aliens, tattoos, manga/graphic novels, and pagan books. If you’ve got paperbacks in these genres that you’re ready to let go of, the group would gladly take ‘em off your hands!

Join them packing books and filling requests for incarcerated readers this Saturday, January 11 from 1 to 4 p.m. at La Mariposa, 115 Avenue A in Turners Falls. If you can’t make it in person, there is always an option to donate online towards expenses such as packing tape, shipping supplies, and postage. Find the group on *GoFundMe.com*.

The group is still also collecting donations for the **Western Mass Prison Abolition Network**. The Network creates backpacks full of necessities for people recently released from jail, who are often placed right onto the street, with no rides or resources.

Donations of backpacks, pre-paid credit and gift cards, toiletries, non-perishable no-prep food, and water bottles are needed.

Later on Saturday, January 11, the Montague Common Hall open mic will feature local **singer/songwriter Tom Dews**. Dews was born in the Deep South, where he soaked up the roots and rhythms of the blues, jazz, gospel, and bluegrass. He accompanies his singing with guitar and harmonica, and offers what is described as a “lived-in voice.” In performance, he mixes his own songs with tunes he wishes he’d written.

The event starts at 7:30; open mic sign-up begins at 7 p.m.

Young-at-heart adults are invited to channel their inner scribblers at an **Adult Coloring Hour** in the Community Room of Greenfield Savings Bank in Turners Falls this Saturday, January 11 at 10:30 a.m.

All materials will be provided by the bank, including light refreshments. Everyone is welcome

to this free event. This is a calming, relaxing, and fun activity, and who knows, you may make a new friend.

On Tuesday, January 14 from 5:30 until 6:30 p.m., join the Northfield Bird Club at Northfield Mountain Recreation and Environmental Center, as **Tom Ricardi shares stories from bird encounters**, from his time growing up in Worcester to more recent experiences, including an eagle that regularly removed his glasses.

During the past year, Tom has rescued more than 140 hawks and owls with the goal of returning them to the wild. He will use selected live birds of prey to highlight stories from his life rescuing birds. Donations are welcome, and help towards expenses such as food and veterinary services for Tom’s Massachusetts Bird of Prey Raptor Rehabilitation Facility.

The program is primarily geared for adults and older children, although all ages are welcome. No registration is required.

The Leverett Library is hosting a **presentation by Chaya Grossberg, the author of Freedom From Psychiatric Drugs**. She will discuss her work with people coming off psychiatric drugs, what helps them the most, and her experience working with people in withdrawal from these medications.

Grossberg will share her wisdom gained from 15 years of professional experience working on non-medical alternatives with people, as well as her personal story of withdrawing from psychiatric medications. Bring your questions; free and open to the public, on Thursday, January 16 at 6:30 p.m.

Do you care about **parking in Millers Falls**? Check out the Millers Falls Community Improvement Association’s meeting to discuss parking in the village center next Thursday, January 16 at 7 p.m. at the Millers Falls Library, 23 Bridge Street.

The Greenfield Family Inn is **looking for a few good landlords** to help house families who are currently in their shelter. They are looking for landlords who currently have a lead certificate and are willing to take a HomeBase subsidy, which can contribute up to \$10,000 a year toward rent.

Feel free to contact the shelter for more information: (413) 774-6382 or *efogle@servicenet.org*.

Send your local briefs to *editor@montaguereporter.org*

State Reps Plot 2020 Census Launch Event in Turners

TURNERS FALLS – State representatives Paul W. Mark and Natalie Blais, along with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments’ Complete Count Committee and the US Census Bureau, will hold a Census 2020 Kickoff to raise awareness for census outreach efforts in Franklin County.

The kickoff event is open to the press and the public, and will be held at the Gill-Montague Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street in Turners Falls, on Thursday, January 23 from 3 to 4 p.m.

The US Census, which is con-

ducted every ten years, provides a snapshot of our nation that helps determine where to build new schools and business and how federal funding is distributed.

With the 2020 Census less than a year away, outreach efforts are being conducted by state and local governments, businesses, and community organizations to raise awareness and educate the Commonwealth on the importance of the Census.

Representative Mark currently chairs the House Committee on Redistricting.



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GUEST EDITORIAL

By NATALIE BLAIS

SUNDERLAND – A year ago, I was sworn in as the State Representative for the 1st Franklin District. I wanted to take this opportunity at the beginning of the New Year to thank you for allowing me the honor of serving you and update you on my work in the Legislature.

As the Representative for the second largest district in the state, I have spent a great deal of time out in communities talking with constituents about the challenges you are facing and how I can best assist you.

Whether it's the Fall Festival in Ashfield, some blueberry buckle in Buckland, the Festival of the Hills in Conway, business expansions in Deerfield, a holiday celebration in Huntington, a summer picnic in Middlefield, a town hall in Leverett, a summer afternoon at the Shutesbury Athletic Club, a water and sewer infrastructure forum in Whately or a 26-mile walk to end hunger, I am literally going the distance for you!

My day-to-day activities fall into three main categories: introducing, considering and advancing legislation; bringing resources back to the district; and providing effective casework for individuals, non-profits, businesses, and municipalities.

Speaking of day-to-day work, Mondays and Fridays are generally reserved for district meetings. The legislature typically holds formal legislative sessions on Wednesdays and the committees on which I serve generally meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

This session, I have had the great pleasure of serving on four joint committees considering hundreds of bills: Transportation (336 bills); Public Service (354 bills); Municipalities and Regional Government (87 bills); and Tourism, Arts and Culture (16 bills).

2019: My Year In Review

Legislation

Since January 2019, approximately 4,500 pieces of legislation were filed in the House (compared to about 2,500 in the Senate). I sponsored 26 bills, and co-sponsored approximately 250.

The legislation I introduced to establish a Massachusetts government assistance task force to address the statewide impacts of the 2018-2019 federal government shutdown was the first House-initiated legislative act to pass the House in the 191st Session.

Four of the bills I introduced have been signed into law by the Governor, including H.4224, which allowed the Town of Cummington to expand its town-owned cemetery. I am extremely proud to have advanced legislation that allowed my hometown of Sunderland to move from a "Board of Selectmen" to the more inclusive "Selectboard" at their request. Other local bills filed on behalf of Chester and Williamsburg have also been signed into law.

Three other pieces of legislation I introduced have moved favorably out of committee, and I'll continue to advocate for the advancement of the remaining bills I sponsored.

I voted in support of legislation related to education, climate change, public health and safety, children's wellness, and the protection of civil and reproductive rights. 2019 legislative highlights are available on my website at repblais.org.

These game-changing pieces of legislation are significant, but there are also important efforts happening behind the scenes. I have actively been involved in supporting our farmers, addressing increases in trash and recycling rates, water and sewer infrastructure challenges, advancing legislation that will address climate change, and many other areas.

The two-year 191st Session will

end on July 31, 2020. Two of the primary areas I will focus on are transportation and the environment.

As a member of the Transportation Committee, I am keenly aware of the challenges facing our state-wide transportation system, and recognize that 40% of our greenhouse gas emissions come from the transportation sector. The Transportation Bond Bill proposed by the Governor is currently before the legislature and I anticipate a robust discussion around transportation revenues this spring. Meaningful progress on how to provide public transportation solutions in rural areas will be a priority for me.

I will also actively support legislation that addresses the climate emergency. Young people across the globe have highlighted the negative impacts of our inaction. We must enact a visionary legislative climate package that protects current and future generations now.

Financial Resources

Ensuring that the 1st Franklin District receives the resources it needs is a critically important part of serving as your state representative. Our rural communities cannot be left behind when it comes to funding.

In the FY'20 budget and supplemental closeout budget, I was able to secure funding for the following local projects: \$25,000 for the Town of Montague to replace a failing roof on the Unity Park Fieldhouse

in Turners Falls; \$25,000 for the Shelburne Falls Senior Center to assist with the advancement of the chosen site; and \$50,000 for the Hampshire Hills Emergency Communication project to improve the emergency communications system that serves the 1st Franklin communities of Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Plainfield, Williamsburg and Worthington.

Constituent Services

My legislative aide, Lily Wallace, and I are always available to help you. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you are experiencing difficulties with state government or if you have ideas on how I can make government work better for you.

In addition to holding regularly scheduled office hours in Buckland, Chesterfield, and Turners Falls, I hold outreach events throughout the district. If you can't make these times, give me a call and I'll meet you at a location that is convenient for you. My phone number is (413) 362-9453, and my email address is Natalie.blais@mahouse.gov. Additionally, my website (repblais.org) has helpful information.

It is my greatest honor to serve you as the State Representative for the First Franklin District. I wish all the very best to you, your friends and family in 2020.

Natalie Blais serves as state representative for the 1st Franklin District.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Habitat for Humanity Builds Affordable Home in Shutesbury

SHUTESBURY – Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity is pleased to announce that applications are available for a 3-bedroom homeownership opportunity in Shutesbury. The application deadline is Friday, January 17. The sale price for the home will be \$175,000 or less.

Eligible applicants will have incomes up to 60% of area median income which is adjusted for family size. People interested in submitting an application are invited to attend an information sessions to learn more. The last info session before the deadline is at the Jones Library, 43 Amity Street in Amherst, at 10:30 a.m. this Saturday, January 11.

During the information session, potential applicants will learn about Habitat's selection criteria and how to prepare a complete application. The selection criteria include housing need, ability to make mortgage payments of \$700 to \$1,200 per month, and willingness to partner with Habitat, such as participating in the construction of the home and other Habitat projects.

All homes will be built to Energy

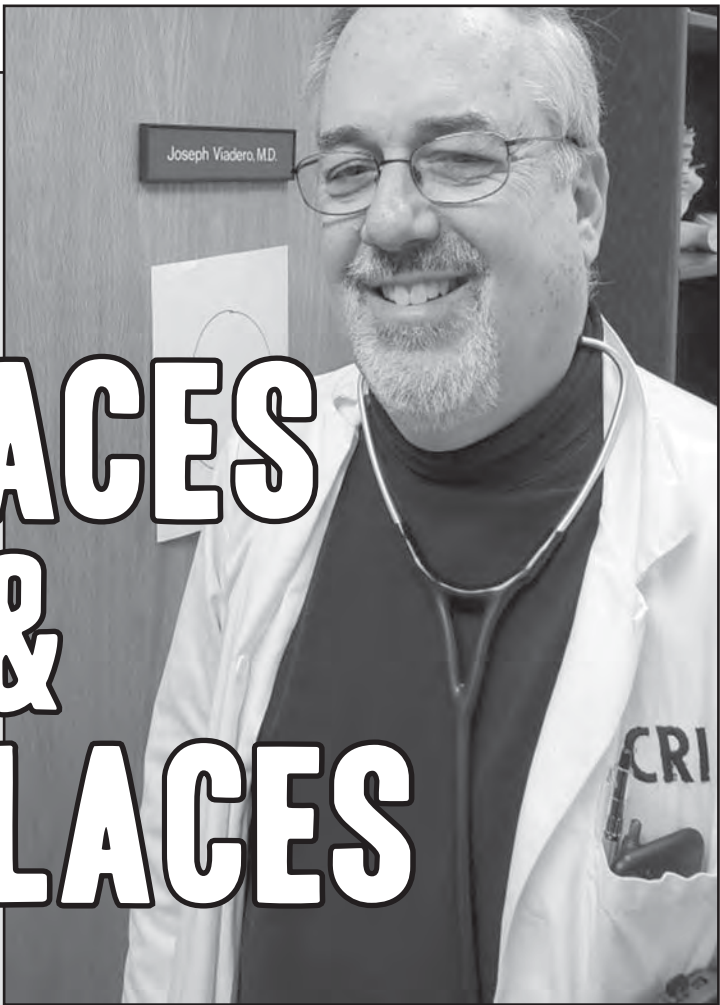
Star standards, and are designed to be visitable by someone in a wheel chair. All Habitat-built homes are restricted to income eligible buyers in perpetuity.

Since 1989, Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity has built decent, affordable homes with 42 low income families in Hampshire and Franklin counties. They build homes with volunteer labor and donations of material, supplies, land, and services.

At the onset of homebuilding, a family is selected and enters into a long-term partnership with Pioneer Valley Habitat. Future homeowners contribute 250 hours of labor during the construction of their home alongside volunteers from the community. Upon completion, the home is sold to the family with an affordable mortgage.

Habitat is a hand-up, not a hand-out: the organization has a perpetual legacy in that all mortgage funds received are reinvested to build more homes. The housing organization helps bring stability to families, bringing more stability into our neighborhoods and communities.

FACES & PLACES



PARZYCH PHOTO

By JOSEPH R. PARZYCH

MONTAGUE CITY – Joseph Viadero, MD of Connecticut River Internists in Montague retired last week after 30 years of practice as a doctor, alongside the three other doctors in the practice, who are retiring at the same time as him.

"I enjoy traveling, watching football or baseball, or playing golf," Dr. Viadero told me. "Now is the time to pass the torch to the new medical team."

Dr. Viadero is going to spend more time with his wife, Anna Viadero, editor of *The Good Life* and *Local Color: Stories by Western Massachusetts Senior Citizens About Life as They Remember It*. She ran a seniors' writing group in Greenfield and Turners Falls in the 1990s through the 2000s, in which seniors wrote stories about growing up. She passed the torch to the As You Write It group in Turners Falls.

Thank you, Dr. Viadero, for many years of taking care of your patients, and congratulations on your retirement!

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NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Leverett Elementary Food Service Struggles to Keep Up with Costs

By JERRI HIGGINS

Bruce Turner, director of finance and operations for Union 28, was able to get to Tuesday night’s Leverett selectboard meeting in lieu of Leverett Elementary School principal Rhonda Cohen, who was on the agenda but was unable to attend. Turner explained to the board why the elementary school is currently operating at a deficit.

At the beginning of each fiscal year in July, Turner said, the schools make a large payment into the county retirement and health insurance system. About \$5,000 from the food service line item and \$3,000 from the after-school program line item are used to cover the initial expense.

This, he explained, causes a deficit in those two accounts “before we’ve even made dollar one in the fiscal year.” While the after-school program revenue catches up, food-service revenue tends to lag. “Through the year, we do the best we can to keep the program solvent, but at the end of the year it’s been running at a small deficit,” he said.

“I just want to be careful that what happens in some of the schools doesn’t happen here,” said selectboard chair Peter d’Errico, “with particularly the food service beginning to run increasing deficits, and suddenly we’re running thousands of dollars in the red, and how do we dig ourselves out?”

“It’s a difficult program to not lose money in, let’s put it that way,” Turner replied. “We have to do what we have to do to feed the kids. I think we run a pretty lean, mean program.”

Turner praised Leverett Elementary’s new food service director Tom Crocker. “I think he’s taking it even a better direction this year,” he said, “but reimbursements from the state

and the federal government seem to be less and less every year which does not help at all.”

Turner recommended the school committee look into those reimbursement rates, which could give the school committee guidance toward increasing lunch prices.

“Are reimbursements less and less each year?” asked board member Tom Hankinson.

“Yes,” Turner responded. “Reimbursements come directly from the USDA, and we get a small portion from the state, and it’s all based on number of meals we serve.” Turner added that he and the food service directors at Union 28’s four elementary schools are working together “to see what we can do to improve everybody’s program, because it’s a serious issue in all four schools.”

Town administrator Marjorie McGinnis asked why Swift River School’s lunches are free.

“Swift River and Erving fall under Provision 2 of the community eligibility provision (CEP),” Turner explained, referring to low-income eligibility. “The amount we get reimbursed for them is even worse.... Leverett would have to get to a 40% free or reduced lunches minimum to even apply, and Leverett’s nowhere near that.”

“So Swift River and Erving are at the 40% free and reduced rate?” asked McGinnis.

“Yes,” Turner responded.

D’Errico remarked that the schools could be more efficient if Union 28 combined their food directors and operations, and Turner said that it is under consideration. “Everybody does their own thing, and it’s something the superintendent [Jennifer Culkeen] and I are trying to wrap our collective arms around to make it more consistent,” he said.

Moving on, Turner said the

school does control the rates charged by the after-school program. “Last year we had a new director come in, Shelly Hicks, and she’s done a really good job,” he said. “That’s something Rhonda [Cohen] and I will be talking to Shelly about, to make sure that we’re making enough money to cover all costs associated with that program, because it has to be self-sufficient.”

Asked about the program’s costs, Turner responded that it’s just employee wages, “and a small budget of a couple hundred dollars for snacks.”

“There’s no reimbursements of any kind, and there’s no mandate to do it – it’s just part of what’s offered?” asked d’Errico.

“No,” said Turner, affirming there is no mandate. “If we had special needs kids, that would be different, but it’s a service we offer to the parents to help keep the parents employed.”

Highway and Fire Departments

Leverett highway superintendent Matt Boucher reported that he has been training his new employees on the finer points of plowing Leverett’s roads, and it has been going well.

He asked the board for guidance on budget spending to include uniforms and a washing service for the department.

“I don’t have a proposal, but both guys are interested in having uniforms,” Boucher said. “I explained to Margie [McGinnis] the other day that the washing service is important. I’ve wrecked a lot of washing machines, and other people’s clothes, because mine were oily and dirty.”

The selectboard gave their approval, but asked Boucher to look into pricing for both the uniforms and washing service.

Board member Julie Shively asked Boucher when the repaired

TOWN OF LEVERETT CONSERVATION AGENT

The Conservation Commission is hiring a part-time Agent beginning as soon as possible. Duties to include, but are not limited to, reviewing, processing and making recommendations on wetlands applications, responding to public inquiries, recording minutes, preparing for hearing and meetings, working on special projects, maintaining budgets, and organizing the Commission’s files. Must be able to work days, evenings and weekends for an average of 5-8 hours per week. Pay is \$15-18.00 per hour. A job description and application are available in the Town Hall or at www.leverett.ma.us. Questions should be directed to Isaiah Robison, Conservation Commission Chair, at Isaiahrobison2@gmail.com.

Applications accepted until position is filled.
Leverett is an AA/EOE

Coke Kiln Road bridge, which has been closed for at least four years, was scheduled to open.

Although he was yet to hear from the Massachusetts state inspection official for verification, Boucher said the bridge should be operational this Wednesday. “We pulled the actual Jersey barriers today,” he said, “and put up some small ‘road closed’ signs.”

“People will be celebrating the opening,” Hankinson said.

“Champagne will be uncorked for sure,” added Shively.

Fire chief John Ingram requested approval of a new hire, Jon Miller. “He’s a pump operator on the student force in Amherst,” said Ingram, “so it will be a short time to get him up to speed with driving, and other training.”

Ingram also updated the board on two Massachusetts state grants received through the department of fire services. One allowed the department to purchase a gear washer/extractor, and the other was put toward particulate hoods, which help protect firefighters from cancer-causing contaminants.

Other Business

McGinnis informed the board that she had completed a webinar on cyber-security, and sought their support for the complications implementing security measures will likely create for town employees.

“There are all these emails that are going to go to everyone who has

a town or school email address,” McGinnis said, “and I just want to make sure you guys are on board, and that you’re supportive of it, because it’s going to get difficult.”

“The only way to do it is to do it,” d’Errico said. “And look what happened to Union 28, with them losing three months’ worth of work after they were [cyber-]attacked... You can put in a hundred firewalls and backup systems, but if the end user doesn’t have a clue about what cyber-security is, forget it.”

McGinnis said four different training sessions will be sent out to everybody, and tests and simulations will be conducted on the material. “There’s a lot of information and education,” she said, “and it’s good, but it’s going to be time-consuming, and all employees are going to have to do it.”

McGinnis also informed the board that the outgoing Council on Aging outreach coordinator told her that the coordinator position needs to be full time to meet the needs of Leverett’s elders. The board will consult with the COA on this issue.

Hankinson spoke briefly about an email sent by naturalist and Amherst resident John Root, who is proposing a “pollinator-protection” resolution to create pollination zones, encouraging bees and butterflies away from pesticides which have been killing bees in massive numbers in recent years. Hankinson said that Root is eager to speak to the board about this issue.

QUESTIONS from page A1

MR: What is your favorite holiday, and why?

TG: The 4th of July. I love the history behind the founding of our country.

MR: If you could play a round of golf with anyone famous, dead or alive, who would it be?

TG: Jack Nicklaus, the greatest golfer of all time.

MR: What is your favorite movie of all time?

TG: The original *Brian’s Song* (1971).

MR: What is your favorite color?

TG: Green.

MR: What is your favorite Thanksgiving food?

TG: Stuffing and mashed potatoes.

MR: Where do you want to retire to?

TG: Either Maine or Hawaii.

MR: If you could meet one athlete, who would it be?

TG: Dick Butkus from the 1960s Chicago Bears.

MR: Who was your favorite athlete growing up?

TG: Carl Yastrzemski of the Red Sox.

MR: Who is your favorite music artist?

TG: Blake Sheldon.

MR: What is your favorite sport?

TG: Football.

MR: Where did you grow up?

TG: Shelburne Falls, Mass.

MR: Who was your role model growing up?

TG: My football coach, Dave Bodenstein.

MR: What is your favorite part of this job?

TG: I love working with students, and the connections I make.

MR: Where did you work last?

TG: Franklin Tech, for one year. Before that, I was assistant principal in Greenfield, Mass.

MR: Would you rather go to the beach or a city, and why?

TG: The beach. I don’t like big crowds in the city. I don’t really like the beach, either!



HOLLYWOOD from page A1

A casting call in December had invited union and non-union actors to audition for the parts of Detective Carrie Brown, a “confident, devoted single mother,” Solomon Goodblood, “a member of the Pocomtuc tribe” and “clandestine disciple of the... Great Spirit,” and Ava, aged 10 to 13, “potential victim to an ancient curse.” The advertised pay was the Screen Actors Guild’s “ultra low budget” rate of \$125 per day.

“Roughly 30 or 35 people came out” from California for the shoot, according to a man named Tristan, who was working double duty as a personal assistant to Grayhm and tutor for the film’s three child actors. “We’ve got people buildings sets in the middle of the woods,” he said. “They’re building a large firepit for the final scene.”

Tristan added that d’Angona, an

industry veteran credited on IMDB as first assistant director for 60 projects, was “the grease that keeps everything moving around here.”

D’Angona was also willing to share more details about the script. “It’s a small town story about a woman police detective who decides to move to a small town and make a better life for her daughter,” she told the *Reporter*. “While she’s here, she stumbles on a cold case, unwittingly, that has some paranormal roots. It’s a detective thriller.”

The shoot is scheduled to return to Turners Falls this Sunday to film interior scenes at the Black Cow Burger Bar. The selectboard has approved the use of the sidewalk to take an “establishment shot” of the restaurant after night falls.

As of press time, Grayhm was unavailable for a follow-up interview due to continued filming.



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GILL from page A1

expenses related to the FirstLight cases, and to an ATB case with Kearsarge Gill LLC involving Kearsarge’s solar installation at Northfield Mount Hermon school (NMH).

Purington noted that NMH is not involved in the case, which is between Gill and Kearsarge, the company which owns the solar installation. Purington said further information on both articles would be forthcoming.

Recycling

Purington presented more information for the board to consider in response to the hike in disposal fees for recyclables at the Massachusetts Recycling Facility (MRF) coming on July 1. On that date, the MRF’s base fee on receiving recyclables is going to change from free to \$93.50 per ton.

Purington provided a chart showing that Gill had 145 tons of recyclables hauled off in 2018. The town is currently billed by its hauler, but receives a small credit from

the MRF for recyclables.

As one option for addressing the impending rise in costs, the board reviewed a quote from Gill’s current trash hauler, USA Waste & Recycling, for switching from the current dual-stream collection system, in which recyclables are kept separate, to a single-stream system, in which recyclables are treated the same as other trash.

Purington said he has not fully analyzed the quote yet, and needed to look at the whole picture of services USA Waste provides to the town before commenting on it more substantially. He described the quote as a “Plan B,” however, and said that he hadn’t heard good things about single-stream recycling. He said it would take a “pretty big financial difference” for it to be the right decision, adding that even then, it might be “regrettably right,” as he felt single-stream collection was more detrimental to the environment.

The deadline for signing a new contract with the MRF is January 31. Purington recommended the

board wait two more weeks before making a decision on how to proceed, and said he was continuing to work with Jan Ameen of the Franklin County Solid Waste District on coming up with more options before then.

Other Business

Purington reported there was no news on the proposal by Access Plus Communications to install a fiber-optic cable running to NMH on town-controlled utility pole space, but said he is looking at a sample agreement for ideas on the wording of a possible agreement, and what to include in it.

The board re-appointed Isaac Bingham to the Gill Cultural Council for three years.

Purington reported that 2019 year-end state budget adjustments resulted in Gill’s 2020 Chapter 90 highway funding being increased by \$14,791, bringing the total for FY’20 to \$162,696.

The board approved the use of town hall by Ray Steele and others for an informal discussion of the

Gill Special Town Meeting

GILL – There will be a Special Town Meeting on Wednesday, January 22 at 6:30 p.m. at the Gill Town Hall, 325 Main Road. Voter registration for the meeting will be held by the Town Clerk on Monday, January 13 from 2 to 4 p.m. and 7 to 8 p.m., and during her regular office hours prior to January 13.

The meeting will act on the following two articles:

Article 1: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen, on behalf of the Town of Gill, to negotiate and enter into a payment in lieu of real property taxes agreement pursuant to the provisions of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 59, Section 38H for real property identified

as Assessors’ Parcel ID Map 101 Lot 120 (located along Riverview Drive) owned by FirstLight MA Hydro LLC f/k/a FirstLight Hydro Generating Company, upon such terms as the Board of Selectmen shall deem to be in the best interest of the Town; or take any other action relative thereto.

Article 2: To see if the Town will vote to transfer from available funds a sum or sums of money to be used for legal and other expenses related to the defense, appeal, or settlement of cases with FirstLight Hydro Generating Company and Kearsarge Gill LLC at the Appellate Tax Board and other courts, or take any other action relative thereto.

history of roads in Gill, to take place next Thursday, January 16 at 7 p.m. The discussion is open to the public.

The meeting closed with a public service announcement: Gillbilly

t-shirts remain on sale at the town hall for \$15, with proceeds to benefit Agricultural Commission.



WENDELL from page A1

sequestration” – the removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. “Although some in Wendell do advocate for the cessation of logging on public lands,” the letter continued, “we’ve heard from many other residents who disagree with this approach and support DCR’s forest management practices.”

The portion of the January 8 meeting devoted to public responses to the letter lasted for an hour and a half. The vast majority of speakers opposed the position taken by the board, and some questioned its right to send such a letter.

The central argument repeated by almost every speaker was that DCR’s management

Dan Leahy also called on those in the room to “turn down the temperature in language.” “Everyone in this room is aware of the climate mess we are in,” he said.

practices that include logging contradict the state goal of reducing greenhouse gases by undermining carbon sequestration in forests. Many pointed to statements by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change expressing alarm at the worldwide reduction in forest lands to support this position.

Janet Sinclair of Shelburne Falls began the discussion with a 20-minute presentation in support of the bill. Like a number of speakers who would follow her, she distanced H.897 from recent protests against DCR-approved logging at Wendell State Forest. The basic concept contained in the bill, she said, had been part of a proposed ballot initiative a decade ago, and was not a reaction to any recent project.

Sinclair also argued that the bill had been “misinterpreted,” and was written to leave the state a good deal of “flexibility” to manage forests endangered by fire or disease. The basic provisions of H.897 were taken from DCR’s current policies for forests in the “reserves” category, where logging is generally prohibited as a management tool in order to promote carbon sequestration. State law regulating forestry practices, she said, had not been updated for nearly a century.

Several other supporters of H.897 questioned the process by which the board decided to send a letter opposing the bill. “Did anyone outside of Wendell talk to you about this?”

asked Jim Thornley.

Selectboard member Dan Keller said he could not recall speaking to anyone from outside the town about the letter.

Morgan Mead said he saw “no pressing need for the letter,” and that it brought “no benefit” to the town. He criticized the board for “usurping the prerogatives of the office,” and said the issue should be brought before town meeting for a vote.

Although they appeared to be a distinct minority, several speakers supported the board’s letter, and opposed H.897.

Dan Leahy, who has been in the forefront of opposition to large-scale solar projects on forested lands in Wendell, said that logging is a “small but important tool in the management of state forests.” Leahy described the “visioning process” that had produced current DCR policies a decade ago, and called on those at the meeting to help reactivate that process.

Leahy also called on those in the room to “turn down the temperature in language,” citing the tone of a recent letter in the *Montague Reporter*. “Everyone in this room is aware of the climate mess we are in,” he said.

Ray DiDonato also sat at the front table to oppose H.897 and support the selectboard’s letter. He said the board regularly takes positions and sends letters on state-level policy issues “of all kinds,” and he criticized supporters of the bill for rhetoric portraying “climate science as spot on, but forest science as ‘junk science.’”

DiDonato, whose partner Laurie DiDonato is a selectboard member, agreed with Leahy that the visioning process for state forest policy should be revived, and suggested that the amount of forest land in the “reserve” category should be increased.

After the discussion, a number of those who spoke on different sides of the issue told this reporter that they felt there was a lack of data and good research on the impact of DCR’s forest management policies on carbon sequestration.



AG’s Bid to Nix Alliance Lawsuit Hangs In Limbo

BY JEFF SINGLETON

On Tuesday, state Superior Court judge Mark Mason declined to rule immediately on a motion by the state attorney general’s office (AG) to dismiss a case brought by 29 plaintiffs against the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). The plaintiffs were opposed to a forest management project recently completed in the Wendell State Forest.

In a detailed legal brief, assistant attorney general Kendra Kinscherf, which represented DCR, argued that the project was already completed and did not violate state statutes.

The supporters of the lawsuit, represented at the hearing by seven members of the Wendell State Forest Alliance, combined legal arguments with warnings about global warming and complaints that DCR had violated their civil rights.

The meeting was attended by over 30 opponents of DCR’s policies, who packed the limited number of seats in Courtroom Number 4. Prior to the forest hearing, the crowd waited through hearings on four criminal cases involving men in restraints, including a cook fired from the Alvah Stone restaurant who was accused of threatening its owner in an anti-Semitic tirade.

During the discussion of state forest policy, the audience frequently expressed audible but muffled reactions to statements about the dangers of logging to the environment. These were not deemed sufficiently disruptive to elicit warnings from the judge. The highly technical presentation by assistant AG Kinscherf did not generate an audience reaction.

In debating the motion to dismiss the lawsuit, both Kinscherf and the lawsuit’s supporters rehashed many of the argu-

ments made in September when project opponents sought an injunction against DCR. For example, the AG denied that the logging plan violated the state Global Warming Solutions Act, which sets emissions targets to reduce greenhouse gases. Kinscherf argued that the law, as currently implemented, does not apply to DCR forest projects because the state Department of Environmental Protection has not issued regulations that apply to forests.

Similarly, Forest Alliance spokespersons Gia Neswald and Glen Ayers again complained about the “absurdity” of DCR evaluating potential appeals of permits it has applied to itself for. But Kinscherf, in her motion to dismiss, noted that appeals to forest cutting plans under state law can only be made by “an applicant landowner or a licensed timber owner,” which does not include members of the alliance.

Judge Mason appeared most intent on discerning whether the logging opponents had clearly elaborated what “relief” they were seeking through their lawsuit, as well as evidence that DCR had ignored public comment.

Several Alliance members stated that they were not looking for monetary relief, but sought recognition that DCR’s actions violated state law in order to prohibit similar logging projects in the future. They also stated that there was “no evidence,” in Neswald’s words, that DCR took into consideration public comments by opponents of the Wendell project.

Judge Mason said it would take him “60 to 90 days” to make a decision on the AG’s request. He urged those bringing the lawsuit to consider “other venues,” particularly legislative efforts to change existing laws and regulations, which he described as “complex.”

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MONTAGUE from page A1

optimistic that we can identify new and promising candidates.”

Optimism springs eternal, but Ellis and the board seemed a bit disconcerted by Meals’s sudden decision, particularly after he told the board in early December that he had been angling for the job at the Montague plant, where he had formerly worked, for quite some time. He was profuse in his compliments of the Montague facility and its staff. Meals and the town formally agreed to a contract on December 16, with no hint that he might reconsider.

Reached by phone at the Hatfield facility, Meals called his decision “personal,” and said it was not a reflection on the Montague plant. Ellis also declined to comment, or “speculate,” about the reasons for Meals’s change of heart.

On Tuesday the search committee, which includes town hall and WPCF staff, as well as former superintendent Bob Trombley, discussed a number of options. These included reorganizing the facility to be administered without a superintendent and drawing on candidates from the previous search process for consideration.

In the end, the committee decided to begin a new search for a traditional superintendent, but discuss reorganization at future meetings.

Center Festival

The abrupt WPCF bombshell followed a lengthy discussion of next summer’s “Barbès in the Woods” event, a global music festival scheduled for August at the Montague Center property of Kathy Lynch and Dean Garvin. Last year’s festival generally received highly positive reviews from formerly wary local resi-

dents, a dozen of whom attended the selectboard discussion.

Cassandra Holden and Kyle Homestead of Laudable Productions, which organizes the event, sat at the front table to present plans for the upcoming festival. They proposed that the concert be held on August 8 from 1 to 11 p.m. On that date, unlike last year, the festival would not coincide with the village’s traditional Old Home Days celebration.

Montague police chief Chris Williams, who is from Montague Center, echoed the residents’ positive comments, but suggested that most of Center Street, where Lynch’s property is located, should be closed to parking this year.

Holden and Homestead were agreeable to this proposal, noting that a Center Street resident had provisionally opened his property for parking. There were a number of suggestions from the audience about improving parking and access to the event.

While those at the meeting were supportive of the festival’s proposed date, several residents questioned the projected turnout, the number of tickets to be sold, and the proposed event hours. Sally Pick of Union Street, who said she had originally feared attendees would walk on her flower garden but now supported the festival enthusiastically, suggested that the event end at 10 instead of 11 p.m.

Homestead said that a 10 p.m. end time was early for summer music festivals, but said that the proposed hours were not cast in stone.

The board did not formally issue a permit, given the uncertainties about hours and attendance, but gave Laudable Productions unanimous head nods to advertise the August 8 date for the festival.

Esleeck Update

In a “Southworth Update,” Ellis reported that the company that purchased the former paper mill in late December has paid off the various back taxes and fees that its previous owner owed to the town, as well as to the Turners Falls water and fire districts. Ellis said that the approximately \$300,000 returned to the WPCF “is really going to be critical to the operational stability” of the plant. The town will “realize \$100,000 in paid back real estate taxes,” he said.

Ellis told the selectboard that he thought the building should perhaps not continue to be called Southworth, because that nearly defunct company no longer owns it. However, new owner Tom Cusano recently told the *Reporter* he planned to continue to use the name until a new tenant is found.

Former town administrator Deb Radway, who attended Monday’s meeting, told the board she felt the building should be called Esleeck, the name of the company that owned the mill throughout most of the 20th century.

Ellis requested, and the board approved, several amendments to the grant agreement with the state that will fund the reconstruction of the Fifth Street foot bridge that leads to the former paper mill and other buildings in the canal district. The board also approved a memorandum of understanding with the Massachusetts Historical Commission for the bridge, which is considered a historic structure.

Other Business

In other news, Ellis told the board that the General Pierce Bridge between Montague and Greenfield, which has been reduced to one lane

of traffic since last fall due to safety concerns, is “on track” for reconstruction, probably in the coming year. The bridge is currently in the “75% design phase,” he said, and the state Department of Transportation wants to hold a public presentation and input session for residents of the region.

The current plan is to hold that hearing on Tuesday, February 4 at 6 p.m. at the Shea Theater, according to Ellis. He said interested residents should check the town website or this newspaper for any changes in the date or time.

Similarly, the board agreed to schedule a special town meeting for “late in February,” with the exact time and place currently uncertain.

The board approved a request by police chief Williams to apply for an “underutilized” grant from the US Department of Agriculture to pay for up to 55% of a new police cruiser.

The board also approved a request by a Los Angeles company called Mulholland Productions to film in front of the Black Cow Burger Bar on Avenue A on January 8 and 11. The company is produc-

ing a film by a writer-director with local ties, about a police officer who moves to a small town to start a new life and discovers a “spiritual, paranormal” cold case, according to assistant director Lynn d’Angona, a representative of the company.

Ellis announced that due to a “substantial surplus” in the state budget, cities and towns will be receiving additional Chapter 90 highway aid this fiscal year. He estimated that Montague would receive an extra \$48,928.

“It’s a drop in the bucket, but it’s not,” Ellis said. “It’s a significant amount of money when we consider projects like the ‘Complete Streets’ project, where we consider projects that had a \$300,000 budget... This gives us some new flexibility.”

Ellis also said the town had received word from Standard and Poor’s that the company had “re-affirmed” Montague’s AA bond rating, which will help it borrow for projects such as the new DPW highway garage.

The next scheduled selectboard meeting will be on January 13.



LOOKING BACK:
10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here’s the way it was January 7, 2010: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

Montague Moves to
Take Strathmore Mill

The town of Montague has decided to pull the curtain on John Ancil’s dream of developing the former Strathmore paper mill into a state-of-the-art television and video school and production facility. In a unanimous vote at a special afternoon meeting on Tuesday, January 5, the selectboard authorized tax collector Patti Dion to expedite tax taking proceedings in Boston land court on the 244,482-square-foot mill complex, built in 1871.

Tax taking proceedings on the property have been on hold since April of 2008 to allow Ancil time to realize his development plans at the mill and begin paying the back taxes. Dion said the town should now be able to come into clear title and ownership of the Strathmore Mill within 30 days.

No taxes have been paid on the property since 2003, when Jerry Jones bought the former mill from International Paper for \$40,000. Jones used the sprawling complex as a warehouse for his paper recycling business, and as a private residence.

As the town of Montague moved to take the property in April of 2008 for back taxes due, Jones sold the mill to New York state salvage contractor James Bent for \$1. Bent, in turn, transferred title to Ancil in the same month for \$50,000. Ancil has since employed Jones to handle maintenance at the mill.

Dion said the town of Montague is owed more than \$530,890 on the Strathmore, in a combination of back taxes, interest, legal fees and money invested to stabilize the property following a disastrous arson fire set by a former employee of Jones on May 26, 2008. That fire destroyed the four-story, 19,000-square-foot

Building #10 at the Strathmore, leaving a pile of asbestos-tainted rubble in its wake.

Concerns over building security, the maintenance of the sprinkler system, and the safety of neighboring businesses – even more than the issue of unpaid taxes – prompted the selectboard to hold the meeting with Ancil on Tuesday, and finally pull the plug on his ownership of the mill.

School Committee Caucus
Discusses Race to the Top

The Franklin County School Committee Caucus, with 14 members in attendance, met Monday evening to prepare for a conference in April on “Big Ideas” in education, and to debate the state’s pending Race to the Top application to the federal government, and whether local districts will sign a memorandum of understanding to participate in that application.

Glenn Koocher, director of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, was at that meeting, and advised the local committee representatives to sign the MOU with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, to remain part of the discussion on Race to the Top funding.

Koocher said the state expects to receive \$250 million in federal Race to the Top funding for educational innovation over four years, “half of which will be sent to districts with high Title 1 populations and chronically underperforming status.” He said Gill-Montague, therefore, stands to gain a good share of funding, if they sign the MOU to participate in the state application.

But Kip Fonsch, chair of the Leverett school committee, said, “I’m confused why your organization would encourage us to sign a pact with the devil, when there are so many unanswered questions.”

Koocher replied, “I’m saying, ‘Pick up the phone and talk to the devil.’”

OBITUARY

Doe (née Doris) C. Brousseau
March 22, 1930 – January 2, 2020

WENDELL – Doe Brousseau died, poetically, where she was born: at Sturdy Memorial Hospital in Attleboro, MA, leaving this world on the birthday of her second-eldest son, Sturdy Memorial’s 1955 New Year’s baby.

The last of eleven children in her French Canadian family, Doe surprised her parents, Wilfred Oswald and Marie Louise Brousseau (Antaya), who thought they were done! She loved attending St. Clare’s, a French-Catholic boarding high school in Woonsocket, RI, and was her class valedictorian. While attending St. Clare’s, Doe earned an award for her watercolor paintings – one of her favored creative outlets outside of perpetual knitting projects.

Doe’s independent spirit was an inspiration to everyone who knew her. Living off-grid in a trailer in the Wendell woods for forty years was “heaven on earth” to her, and she said that she would only leave “feet first” – which she very nearly did. Doe was whip-smart, well-read, strong-willed, open-minded, and accepting of everyone. She loved political dramas, The Rachel Maddow Show, and WAMC public radio.

She would rearrange her schedule to not miss a Sunday trip to Wendell’s Good Neighbors food pantry, whose social scene was as important to her as the food pick-up – if not more so – and she would bring the leftover scraps home to her prized chickens. Doe was also the impetus for a Wendell Free Library senior exercise group.

An adherent of reincarnation and a pagan in her later years, Doe got to skydive twice in her forties, and said it felt like “Mother Earth was opening her arms to me.”

Doe was predeceased by her dear friend and companion David Star (née Daniel Flynn), her brothers Omer, Louis, Philip, Laurence, and Ernest Brousseau, and her sisters Lee Waterman, Edna Bryan, and Frances Pimentel. She is survived by sisters Olive Prunier of Oxford, MA and Catherine Manning of Brentwood, NH.

Predeceased by a son, Scott Higgins, in 1989, Doe



leaves children: Marc Brousseau and his wife, Dorothy Brousseau of Claremont, NH; Jacki Pinger and her husband Andrew Pinger of Brattleboro, VT; Twyla Higgins of Pawtucket, RI; Jerri Higgins and her partner Andrew Kostecki of Montague Center; and Clarke Higgins of Springfield, MA; along with her beloved grandchildren Amealia Brousseau and Austen Higgins-Cassidy.

Those wishing to honor Doe are encouraged to donate to the non-profit Good Neighbors: PO Box 222, Wendell, MA 01379.

A celebration of her life is planned at the Wendell Town Hall at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, March 21.

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SPORTS from page A1

games. Most of the losses were by double figures. But on December 19, Powertown lost to Putnam in Springfield by a single point, 37-36.

Marvell’s team didn’t have to wait much longer to record their first win. On January 2, Turners beat Southwick 38-35 to match their win total for last season. Then on Monday the sixth, Pioneer Valley edged them out 43-38.

So the Thunder Ladies are currently 1 and 7, with 11 games left to play. Expect more close games – and perhaps a couple of lop-sided losses – but at this point, there’s nowhere to go but up!

Boys’ Basketball

The Turners Falls Blue Man Group is currently 2 and 6. They started by dropping their first two games against Lee and Monson, but rebounded in their next two, defeating Mount Greylock 69-66 down at UMass and then handily beating Franklin Tech at home 81-49. Since then, they dropped four straight games.

The Turners boys’ basketball team suffers from size issues. On a good night, Blue suits up eight players. Against Belchertown, played on Friday January 3, Coach Mullins



Golden arch-rivals: Turners Falls’ Anthony Peterson drives to the hoop between Hopkins defenders Addison Phifer (left) and Aidan Michalak (right) on Tuesday night.

was forced to compete with just seven bodies, because Chace Novak wasn’t dressed for the game.

Then on Tuesday, January 7, Powertown hosted Hopkins Academy. The Academy, by the way, has 14 players on their roster, and their coach substitutes liberally.

In that game, Turners thundered back from an 8-2 deficit to pull within a point after one quarter, 11-10. The first half stayed competitive, and Turners held a 22-21 lead going into the break.

“They’re ahead for now,” one woman in the stands remarked. And she was right: the exhausted Powertown players seemed to hit the wall in the third quarter. From a 27-27 tie, the Academy went on a terrific run to take a 44-27 lead.

As the game went on, Hopkins accumulated more fouls than Turners, but were able to substitute players to prevent individual foul trouble. On the other bench, players with three fouls had to sit, forcing the rest of the octet to stay on the court longer.

“They must be exhausted,” one of the fathers said as the score and the game began to slip away in the fourth. In each of the last two quarters Hopkins outscored Blue 17-5, winning the game 55-32.

Powertown might still be able to make the playoffs. Before the Hopkins game, one fan was trying to figure out in his head and on his fingers whether Turners could finish with a .500 record. It’s still possible, and never count out a Gary Mullins team.

This Thursday, the Blue Boys travel down to Springfield to take on Baystate Acade-

my, and on Tuesday the 14th they host the Mahar Senators.

Swimming

The Powertown swim teams have had five meets so far this season. The Girls’ record is 4–1, and the boys are at 3–2.

On Tuesday they had a combined meet against Holyoke at Turners Falls High School. For whatever reason, the Holyoke Purple Knights have very few kids on their swim teams, and the Thunder rolled away with the victory. The boys won 36-7, while the girls’ contest was a little closer, with Turners winning their meet 45-35.

Bradley Bonnet, Cameron Bradley, Nik Martin, Sumner Martin, and Austin Summer swam for the boys, and Hannah Dziedzic, Hannah Marchefka, Gracie Rosenberg, Jade Tyler, Allison Wheeler, and Olivia Whittier competed for the girls.

Playoffs work a little differently for swimming. Last season several of the swimmers competed in individuals and western Mass competitions. So the teams’ winning records are somewhat overshadowed by individual competition.

Next week: Tech!



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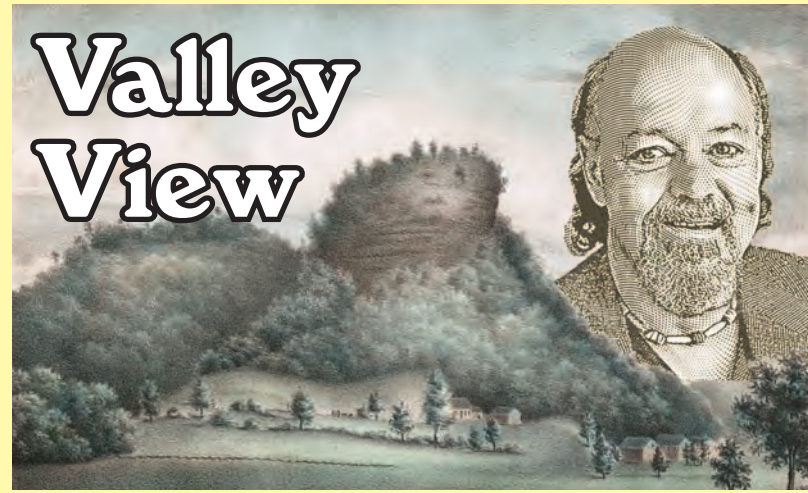
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By GARY SANDERSON

GREENFIELD – Mastodon remains in the neighborhood? You betcha! Long ago. Just two miles north of my home. Then – presto! – the ancient remains move even closer in a genealogical vein. Surreal. Why does this stuff happen?

I suppose such discoveries are bound to become more frequent when aging out in a place where one’s roots lie deep. So, I guess this is an example of that, demonstrating once again how small one’s place can be. Spooky small. At times, mind-boggling.

Six weeks ago, I had no clue that a mastodon tooth had been found in the fall of 1871 in a frosty Colrain “muck bed” not far from home by farmer Elias Bardwell, reported by Professor Edward Hitchcock, Jr., who identified it. Hitchcock reported that Bardwell intended to revisit the site in the spring of 1872 to look for additional remains. Whether that ever happened is not known.

Now, after a little research, this discovery has become a family matter. But let me return to that later.

I became aware of this forgotten Colrain mastodon tooth during the final week of November, just before Thanksgiving. I was visiting the South Deerfield home of friend Bud Driver, who was hosting a couple of PhD archaeologists – Richard Michael “Mike” Gramly of Andover and Stuart Fiedel of Amherst. We were there to discuss mastodon-bone artifacts in the possession of Gramly, who was passing through on the last leg of his trip home from Kentucky and Ohio.

Toward the conclusion of our rambling three-hour discussion, we turned to the subject of Fiedel and Driver’s ongoing study of historic mastodon discoveries in the western half of Massachusetts, beginning with a South Egremont site known to scientists as “Ivory Pond,” with which I was vaguely familiar. There, in June 1982, landowner Thomas Marino was excavating a pond and discovered skeletal remains of a mastodon.

With a collection of bones still in his possession, they were in need of the latest, most-accurate radiocarbon dating. So, Fiedel, Driver and Robert Feranec of the New York State Museum in Albany recently visited the site and

retrieved from Marino’s collection a collagen sample that yielded an AMS radiocarbon date of 11,885 plus or minus 30. That calibrates to between 13,580 to 13,770 calendar years before present (BP).

Now, Fiedel has the radiocarbon date for mastodon remains found in 1884 in the central Massachusetts town of Northborough and is near completion of a soon-to-be-published report. Next, the three diligent researchers, committed to studying the peopling of the Americas and its effects on the native mammals of the continent, intend to focus on Bardwell’s Colrain discovery, recognized as Massachusetts’ first known unearthing of mastodon remains.

When our pre-Thanksgiving discussion turned to the mysterious Colrain find, Fiedel inquired if I knew Shearer Road? His examination of an 1871 county map suggested that the Bardwell farm was located on that road.

Yes, of course I knew the road. It was at the top of the hill behind my upper Greenfield Meadows home. Not only that, but I had hunted deer and turkeys there, and once ran my dogs there daily. So, yes, I even knew the contours.

Familiar with the landscape but not any details about the 1871 find, I immediately suspected two adjacent sites that fit the type of habitat where most mastodon skeletons have in the past been found. To me, the two most likely sites were what I refer to as “spring holes,” that is, the swampy headwaters of two small, spring-fed brooks in the western, upland Green River watershed.

The first, Punch Brook, rises atop Smead Hill and runs about a mile into Hinsdale Brook just downstream from my home. The second, Workman Brook, rises slightly north and west of there, on Randolph family acreage east of Van Nuys Road in East Colrain, running more than two miles before emptying into Green River just south of the Nelson Road-Green River Road intersection in the town’s southeast corner.

How exciting. The chase was on. Right in my backyard, no less.

I took a ride to East Colrain with Driver to show him the layout, then studied 1858 and 1871 maps that identify family homes along the roads. The maps showed

By NINA ROSSI

The first quarter of the 19th century was a time of great income disparity in the US. Even though chances for success were better here for white males than in Europe, ten percent of the citizens in most cities controlled 80 to 90 percent of the wealth. Wealth was seen as the only way to change one’s status in society, which promulgated a get-rich-quick mentality.

With their promises of easy money, lotteries proliferated, largely supported by the poorest citizens. In 1833 in Philadelphia, there were more than 200 lottery outlets handling \$30,000 in weekly sales from a population of eighty thousand. Such widespread popularity, coupled with a lack of institutional oversight, brought with it fraud and corruption. Lottery companies in Pennsylvania returned a measly \$27,000 to the state out of a \$5 million 1831 campaign, and kept \$800,000 for themselves.

The famous circus promoter P.T. Barnum learned the “art of humbug” (a lighthearted name for shameless, deceitful promotional

tactics) from his grandfather, who ran a lottery to benefit the Fairfield, Connecticut Episcopal Society in 1819. Back then, the lottery relied on the sale of tickets which were placed in one of two wheels. At the drawings, tickets were drawn from one wheel, and then a prize – or a blank – was drawn from the second wheel.

The elder Barnum advertised that this lottery would contain “no blanks” as prizes, and that almost every player would get half their money back. With 12,000 \$5 tickets sold, this meant that 11,400 received \$2.50 back. Put another way, this meant that 95% would lose half their money. In the fine print, there was also a handling charge of 15% on every payout of \$2.50.

Does \$5 sound like a lot of money for those days? Tickets could be broken down into “shares” that made the gamble more affordable for some people. Barnum, inspired by his grandfather’s success in this scheme, worked lotteries in Connecticut himself for many years.

While fraud helped turn popular opinion against lotteries, there was also a lot of growth in the banking



Two modern kiosks.

industry which took away the necessity for this method of raising capital. By 1820 there were more than 300 chartered banks lending money, and by 1860, over 1,500. Many lottery managers moved into being brokers, issuing paper as capital in the form of bank notes, securities, and stocks.

The rise of the banks thus see **LOTTERY** page B2

ArtBeat

by Trish Crapo

Large-Scale Intimacy at the BMAC

BRATTLEBORO, VT – When I first saw a detail of Marlboro, VT artist Doug Trump’s work on the Brattleboro Museum and Art Center (BMAC) website, it struck me as having come from a large painting – I’m not sure why. There was an urgency to the marks and a boldness in the color (in this instance, two slashes of strong red) that just seemed large to me. So I was surprised to find that the twelve works in the series, “By Rail,” were made on pieces of narrow window trim that range from 4 to 5 and 3/4 inches wide, by 11 to 37 inches long.

Trump salvaged the scraps from

the building of his studio, layered them with Polaroid photos that he obscured with oil paint, then painted and drew over them with ink and pencil. The result is a series of collaged works that invite close study. The repetition of the Polaroids, especially given the exhibit’s title, invoke train windows, but Trump hadn’t intended the works to be viewed only through that lens. The panels also resemble individual frames from a movie reel, introducing elements of movement and time.

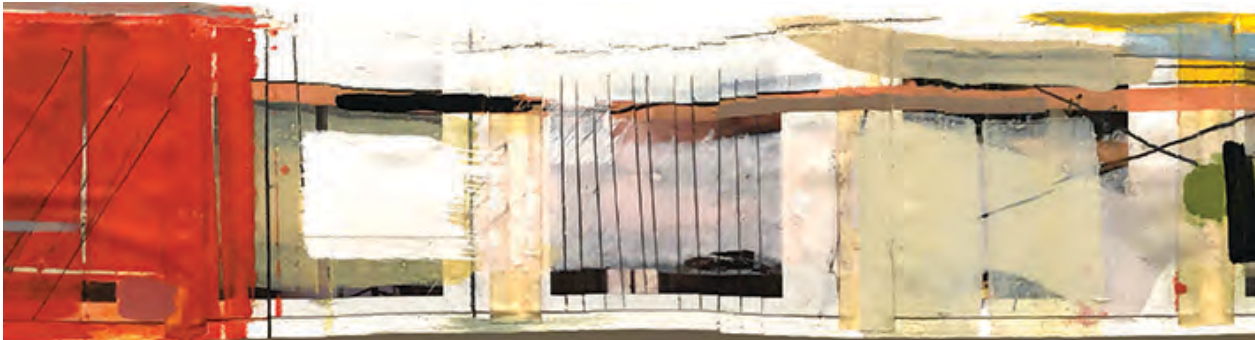
Coming in close to the pieces in order to “read” them was a bit like spying over the artist’s shoulder, an

experience that struck me as more intimate than standing back and looking at larger works.

“These things are intimate,” Trump agreed. “Making art is an intimate experience. There’s no way around intimacy.”

But he pointed out that the drawings that French painter Henri Matisse made from bed near the end of his life, using charcoal attached to a 12-foot stick of bamboo to draw on sheets of paper taped to the walls, are quite large yet unquestionably intimate. So, scale wasn’t everything.

I wondered what it might be like see **ARTBEAT** page B8



Detail from “Untitled #9, 2015,” from the series “By Rail,” by Doug Trump. Oil and mixed media on wood panel.

Pet of the Week



IMAGE COURTESY DAKIN HUMANE SOCIETY

“DANDELION”

Dandelion is so small and fluffy, he looks like a stuffed animal that you could just pick up and squeeze, but don’t! He has the heart of a lion. Intrude on his turf and you’re likely to find out just how sharp bunny teeth can be.

Dandelion will be most successful in a home with an experienced bunny guardian with the patience

and know-how to tame a feisty beast and nurture his sweet side, but is not a good choice for small children or someone new to house rabbits.

This Dandelion may be the bunny for you. He hopes to meet you soon! If you’re interested, contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at (413) 548-9898 or at info@dpvhs.org.

LOTTERY from page B1

coincided with a turn of opinion against the lotteries. The successful financing of the Erie Canal by the New York Bank for Savings proved that public projects could be financed in a more stable manner than by using lotteries. Tariffs, excise taxes, and land sales also helped fill the coffers of the growing country.

States attempted to control fraud by licensing lottery vendors, restricting the sales of out-of-state lottery tickets, and banning the sale of lottery tickets by mail. But by the time of the Civil War, lotteries were banned in all but three states (though some of the Southern states revived them in order to fund reconstruction in the difficult post-war years).

Civic reformers and moralists began to attack the games as being detrimental to business and public welfare. Moralists believed that unearned wealth destroyed character, and the case of David Ackers’ suicide in Massachusetts in the 1830s helped to fuel a movement banning lotteries in our state. Ackers was a young clerk who was found dead in his apartment with a suicide note that explained that he had a secret addiction to playing the lottery, which had caused him to steal \$18,000 from his employer.

The note ended with “Oh wretch! Lotteries have been thy ruin. I cannot add more.” Months afterwards, Massachusetts made lottery participation an offense that could put one in prison.

The Octopus

In 1868, New York gamblers John Morris and Charles Murray bribed Louisiana officials to set up a 25-year contract for an exclusive lottery in that state. In an effort to add psychological appeal, the public face of the company was a pair of Confederate generals, and the promoters used orphans to draw the daily tickets.

MOVIE REVIEW

Going Up With *The Aeronauts* (2019)

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – *The Aeronauts* is a movie originally produced by Amazon, which will be on Amazon Prime. It also appeared in selected theaters. Luckily, the Garden Cinema was able to get it, and I saw it the premiere weekend of December 6, 2019.

In the movie, a pioneering meteorologist named James Glaisher and balloon pilot named Amelia Wren team up to undertake an expedition to chart the weather, which James believes can be done. At the same time, they would be setting records for highest a person can go in a hot-air balloon.

The movie starts out with them beginning that expedition. As this goes on, we are treated to flashbacks of how they got this started, along with what their lives are like at that time. James is not taken seriously by his scientific peers because of his belief that the weather can be predicted. He can’t even get funded for the expedition. Amelia is mourning the loss of her French balloonist husband, and not really living a life.

The two ended up meeting at a party, and James tries to get Amelia to help him go up in a balloon for his work. She decided to help him, but then backed out because of being haunted by what happened to her husband. For good reason – we learn why later in the film. But a friend of James convinces her to help him.

Like I mentioned in the beginning, the journey does happen. The two go up to, and above, 26,000 feet in the sky, a new record for that kind of adventure at the time. There is a saying in Latin on the balloon they used which means “truly, the sky lies opened.” It is very appropriate for what they are undertaking, and the sky indeed opens up for them.

But dangers do occur. They face insane cold, and



A late 19th-century lottery ticket issued by the state of Louisiana.

With a statewide monopoly and the practice of bribing state officials and politicians, this Louisiana Lottery grew very quickly, conducting business through the mail with customers in states where lottery games had been outlawed. Some politicians even introduced bills threatening the Octopus, as it was nicknamed, so that they could take bribes to withdraw them. While the Octopus took in millions of dollars, the state of Louisiana received a fraction, and with many politicians and judges on the dole, it seemed unstoppable.

When the charter for this giant lottery was up for renewal in 1890, President Benjamin Harrison urged Congress to pass a bill outlawing the sending of lottery materials through the mail. Arrests were made. The Octopus bought approval with bribes from the Louisiana legislature for another 25-year term anyway, but then was turned down in a popular vote against it.

Not to be deterred, the Octopus went to Honduras and used private mail couriers to conduct business with customers in the US. Interstate trafficking in lottery materials became a crime in 1895, and then the company operated illegally until repeated raids shut it down in 1907.

After the Octopus was killed, there were not any state-sponsored lotteries until 1964.

Numbers Games

Of course, people still had the urge to gamble, and illegal numbers games called “policy games”

flourished. Costing only pennies to play, these games appealed to marginalized communities and became extremely popular in urban areas, especially after WWI.

These numbers-picking games were run by policy “kings” who bribed city officials and police to look the other way. Winnings helped fund businesses and buy homes, and policy kings often invested their wealth back into their communities. Eventually, gangsters got into the numbers games, and by the 1950s, they were mostly controlled by the Mafia.

The fact that players could pick their own numbers in these policy games led to superstitious beliefs in lucky number combinations. “Dream books,” which allowed users to translate imagery from their dreams into number sequences, became very popular items.

Dream books are still being made and used – see brittsindustries.com, a website selling what they call an “entertaining and informative line of novelty publications” consisting of monthly and yearly lottery picks in three, four, and five digits, as well as Powerball, Lotto, and Mega Millions numbers. Viewers can even click a button on the website to receive an annual “free email lucky number” from the company, if they also agree to receive monthly email offers.

Superstition has not changed much over the years!

Part III of *Looking at the Lottery* will look at modern state-sponsored lotteries.



Senior Center Activities

JANUARY 13 THROUGH 17

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 1/13

8 a.m. Foot Clinic (by appt.)

1 p.m. Knitting Circle

Tuesday 1/14

10:15 a.m. Chair Yoga

Wednesday 1/15

9 a.m. Veterans’ Agent

12:30 p.m. Bingo

Thursday 1/16

9 a.m. Tai Chi

10:15 a.m. Chair Yoga

1 p.m. Cards, Games, & Pitch

4 p.m. Gentle Yoga

Friday 1/17

12 p.m. Breakfast at Noon

1 p.m. Writing Group

ERVING

Erving Senior Center, 1 Care Drive, Erving, is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. for activities and congregate meals. Lunch is at 12 p.m., with reservations required two days in advance. Call (413) 423-3649 for meal information and reservations.

For information, call Paula Better, Senior Center Director, at (413) 423-3649. Transportation can be provided for meals, shopping, or medical necessity. Call to confirm activities, schedule a ride, or find out about the next blood pressure clinic.

Monday 1/13

8:45 a.m. Stretch & Sculpt

10 a.m. Healthy Bones & Balance

No Lunch Served

12:30 p.m. Card Pitch Game

Tuesday 1/14

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

10 a.m. Stretching & Balance

11 a.m. Reading 2nd Grade

12 p.m. Grinder & Chips Lunch

Wednesday 1/15

8:45 a.m. Line Dancing

10 a.m. Chair Yoga

11 a.m. M3 Games

12 p.m. Congregate Lunch

12 p.m. Bingo & Snacks

Thursday 1/16

8:45 a.m. Aerobics

10 a.m. Healthy Bones

12 p.m. Congregate Lunch

Friday 1/17

9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Quilting Workshop

9:30 a.m. Fun Bowling

12 p.m. Congregate Lunch

LEVERETT

For information, contact the Leverett COA at (413) 548-1022, ext.

5, or 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 programs, or for a ride.

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Bud's War, Part 8

By JERRY “JINX” COLLINS

TURNERS FALLS – Jerry “Jinx” Collins wrote about his youth growing up in Turners Falls in his memoir “Jinx: A New England Mill Town Urchin’s Life, the Depression through 1952,” which we have excerpted from previously.

Now, Collins is sharing the experiences he and his brothers had during active duty in the armed services in excerpts from his latest memoir, still in progress, “Transition: A Journey from Youth to Manhood.” In this installment, Jerry continues to learn about what Bud experienced during the war, many years later.



The author's brother, Bud Collins, in his Navy days.

The modern train glided slowly up to the platform in Greenfield, Massachusetts where Bud and I had waited patiently for its 20-minutes-late arrival. The 20 minutes seemed like nothing when compared to the delay of this trip, as it was initially planned over a year ago, and then again six months later.

The whole idea of this excursion began in early 2016 when I first found out that one of the things my brother would like to see before he ventured into his next life was the World War II Memorial in Washington, DC. He had gone to DC with a bunch of other area veterans when President Bush dedicated it. However, the area was so crowded with dignitaries and they were seated so far from the memorial that they could not even see it. Disappointed with the venture, the busload of vets returned home.

Bud had served on the destroyer Henry A. Wiley during both battles fought at Iwo Jima and Okinawa. As of February, 2017, only seven of the ship's original crew of 350 men, including my brother, were still alive. After discovering this, I decided that I needed to take him to DC to see it in the fall, when I made my usual October trip to Turners Falls for my wife's annual memorial mass.

The original plan called for the two of us driving to New Jersey, staying overnight at a hotel, and then proceeding to DC for a two-night hotel stay. As Bud was 91 years old and not in the best of health, I felt that he would not be able to accomplish more than visiting the memorial which we would do on day number three of the journey. Then we would make another overnight hotel stay on the way back to his apartment.

Upon arriving in Turners Falls, it was evident that Bud's health and various necessary medical and financial appointments were such that trying to accomplish this trip during the month I could be there was out of the question. The World War II Memorial would have to wait until at least the following spring (2017), when I would return again.

May arrived and I returned to Turners. But the best-laid plans of mice and men often go awry, and Bud was again in the same situation – doctor and financial appointments – so we would have to postpone the desired trip.

It became apparent that it was more important to spend the three weeks I could allocate in aiding Bud's acceptance into the VA system for medical conditions. His hearing was such that he was almost deaf, and it was evident that he needed hearing aids. His eyesight had

changed so much that obtaining new glasses was also the order of the day.

But I was determined to make the trip happen when I returned in October. I arranged for an Amtrak round trip from Greenfield, plus a two-night stay at the Star Plaza Hotel situated just a short walk away from the memorial.

On the Train

There he sat, a Henry A. Wiley baseball cap replacing the green eyeshade that I envisioned he would have worn in the old days of his accounting career. He was the consummate image of a “Bean Counter.” He stared down with intensity at the crossword puzzle, another one of the two that he worked on almost daily since his retirement over 25 years ago. Statistics seemed to be his passion, as he kept them on numerous things including the percentage of crossword puzzles he'd correctly completed (over 70%).

The multiple three-ring binders Bud had accumulated in his apartment contained all types of detailed accounting records from over the years, and there were two file cabinets that included every federal income tax he'd ever filed. On one of my earlier visits, I had suggested that we needed to get rid of these returns. His reply was, “I haven't got enough years left to shred them all, and I won't just throw them in the trash with all my personal information in them.”

But I wasn't going to let this deter me, and I persuaded Bud that we could have his niece's husband, Steve, build a fire in the snowy backyard of his home in the country and burn them.

While going through all of his papers, after his passing, a guilty feeling came over me. A vision of the Gestapo burning all those books entered my mind and all I could say to myself was, “What have I done?” All those records, along with all his papers, were like reading his autobiography, and should have been kept in the family archives forever.

As the Vermonter came to a smooth stop in Washington DC nine hours after boarding in Greenfield, Bud looked up and, appearing somewhat astonished, asked “Are we there already? Boy that sure was a great ride! ... And it sure was nice that we were able to move around and have a beer and a sandwich in the dining car.”

I agreed and added, “You're right.” We hadn't had anything to eat since breakfast until we left New York's Penn Station.

Then, flashing a big grin, he finished with, “And I didn't even fall asleep.”

Praying Man On K Street Suspiciously Dressed As Priest; Animal Abuse Investigated On Grove Street; MeetMe

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Sunday, 12/29
9:45 a.m. A 31-year-old Turners Falls man was arrested on a straight warrant.
10:22 a.m. Caller from Fourth Street states the fire alarm is going off in the apartment next door. TFFD dispatched. Small fire on stove from a pizza box. Fire is out; fire units clear.
5:51 p.m. Landlord reporting sewer backup in the basement of his building on Federal Street. DPW foreman notified.
Monday, 12/30
7:20 a.m. Greenfield PD reporting 911 misdial from a Masonic Avenue address; the third time they called back, a person answered sounding asleep and stated it was an accidental dial. Officer spoke with people in building, none of whom placed call. Multiple elderly females are all still sleeping. No male known at that address.
9:30 a.m. Caller states a male was breaking into the Five Eyed Fox. Officer advising male party secured. Preliminary breath test results .295. Court will not take party due to alcohol level. Party placed in cell; later transported to court. A 31-year-old male was arrested and charged with misdemeanor breaking and entering.
1:12 p.m. Caller from First Avenue states that yesterday she found a cat; took cat to vet, and it doesn't have a chip. She wants to report it because she doesn't want to steal the cat, but she has it at her house and is feeding it. Smaller-sized tiger cat. Animal control officer notified.
1:44 p.m. 911 open line with poor connection; attempted callback and heard male in background yelling “Hello?” Confirmed misdial.
3:37 p.m. Report of shoplifting at Food City; female stole several meat items, put them in a reusable shopping bag, and left as a passenger in a vehicle operated by a male. Party identified on surveillance footage. Officers following up at suspect's residence. Female was Mirandized, admitted involvement, and the stolen items were recovered and returned to Food City by officers.
4:03 p.m. Report of batteries stolen out of two work vehicles at Shanahan Construction Supply. Investigated.
9:14 p.m. Caller reporting two suspicious males walking on K Street saying the Lord's Prayer and Hail Marys; advised one of them was dressed as a priest. Caller did not feel that the men were in the right frame of mind. Last seen heading toward Avenue A. Officer clear; unable to locate.
10:49 p.m. Caller from

South Street reporting possible gas leak in her apartment; reports having a headache. Advised to leave apartment if it is safe to do so. They will be removing animals as well to a vehicle outside. MCFD advised.
Tuesday, 12/31
12:44 p.m. Caller from Avenue A states that his vehicle was vandalized again; tires slashed. Report taken.
6:50 p.m. Caller from Central Street reporting that his neighbors are being very loud, possible domestic situation; caller states there are kids in the apartment and he knows the people are being evicted. Officer advises no domestic situation; kids were just playing, which was causing the noise.
10:43 p.m. Fire alarm system sounding at Shea Theater. TFFD and officer advised; investigated.
Wednesday, 1/1/2020
2:44 a.m. Officer advising of a hit and run at the Smokehouse on Federal Street; states they had a delivery done earlier and the truck took out a state sign that was posted near the lot. Investigated.
2:54 a.m. Caller from West Main Street reporting that her neighbor is playing extremely loud music. Officer advised male party of complaint; music was very loud on arrival but has since been turned off. Caller called back stating the neighbors are playing music again. Officer returned to scene to advise male again about the complaint; states music was loud and their voices were really loud. Advised male that there will be charges if a third call is made.
6:03 a.m. Caller from Pine-wood Circle reporting that her neighbor is outside again yelling and screaming; advises this happens all the time. Spoke with neighbor, who will stop.
9:18 p.m. Caller from Central Street states that his neighbors are being loud; does not know if it is a do-

mestic or if they are just being really loud trying to control their children. No kids in apartment; resident was doing plumbing work and was advised of the complaint.
Thursday, 1/2
3:16 a.m. Shelburne Control advising Erving PD requesting backup at a motor vehicle stop; occupants are becoming hostile. Services rendered.
9:34 a.m. Two complaints received reporting four tractor-trailer units blocking one lane near entrance to new DPW facility on Turners Falls Road. One caller reported motorist was trying to help direct traffic. Officer spoke with superintendent; TT units will be moved to the transfer station to stage and come up as each truck is ready to be unloaded. Officers assisting with traffic while vehicles are moved.
11:55 a.m. Report of hit-and-run accident at New England Wound Care on Burnham Street. Report taken.
1:50 p.m. Report of animal abuse/neglect on Grove Street. Animal control officer will follow up; advised he will request a police escort when he goes to the residence. ACO and officers off at residence; negative contact. Will return later in day.
2:27 p.m. Report from Fourth Street of loud verbal altercation between at least one male and two or three females; caller states she can hear yelling and crying and people arguing about drugs. Peace restored.
4:10 p.m. Caller from Oakman Street reports that in the past day or so someone was walking around in her yard and up to her shed; advises there are relatively fresh boot prints. Investigated.
4:34 p.m. Caller from Turner Street reports that his neighbor was just yelling at his elderly mother. Caller was still engaging with neighbor while on

the phone. Advised caller to return inside and wait for officer to respond. Caller advised officers that he generally walks his dogs off leash and sometimes the dogs go to the neighbor's house; one of them has been aggressive. (Pit bull is the aggressive one; the other is a German shepherd.) Officer requesting copy of call be left for ACO to follow up.
4:40 p.m. Caller reports receiving threats against her life from a woman who has a child with a man she met on the app “MeetMe.” Caller thinks that the man may be from New York but he is currently in North Carolina with the female on the run from a warrant. Advised of options.
Friday, 1/3
1:29 p.m. Caller from Smokehouse reports that last week someone passed two counterfeit \$100 bills at his business. Bills have already been turned over to the bank. Officer following up.
7:44 p.m. Caller from Fifth Street states she went to a wake and when she came home, her door was open and things were turned on. Advised of options.
Saturday, 1/4
3:22 a.m. Walk-in party states that he lives in Greenfield and that at his home tonight he heard shuffling above him in the attic space, as if someone was up there, and then heard what he thinks was a gunshot. Party unable to say how he ended up at MPD. GPD advised of call.
6:12 a.m. Male party calling on business line repeating statements and asking over and over if dispatcher was aware what a sociopath was. Caller refused to answer any questions. Call disconnected; officer contacted Clinical Support Options, who stated they have also been getting repeated calls from the same party.

Montague Community Television News At Home and Abroad

By MICHAEL SMITH

We hope your new year is off to a great start! We here at Montague Community Television have a couple of videos from our archive that we've recently posted on our Vimeo page called “Swedish Christmas.” This two-part series follows the adventures of a local man and his family as they enjoy the holiday season in Sweden. You can access the video by clicking the “latest video” tab on our website montaguetelevisi.org.

We also have the latest Montague selectboard meeting, as well as the Gill selectboard meeting. Stay up to date on what's happening in your local government by keeping an eye on our website montaguetelevisi.org or our Facebook page!

Also, MCTV would like to remind anyone who's interested in a career in video or film that we are here to help get you started! The biggest challenge to anyone trying to advance their interest in film is getting access to equipment, and training on how to properly use it. Stop in sometime, and you could walk out with everything you need to start making your own videos!

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, infomontaguetelevisi@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!

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VALLEY VIEW from page B1

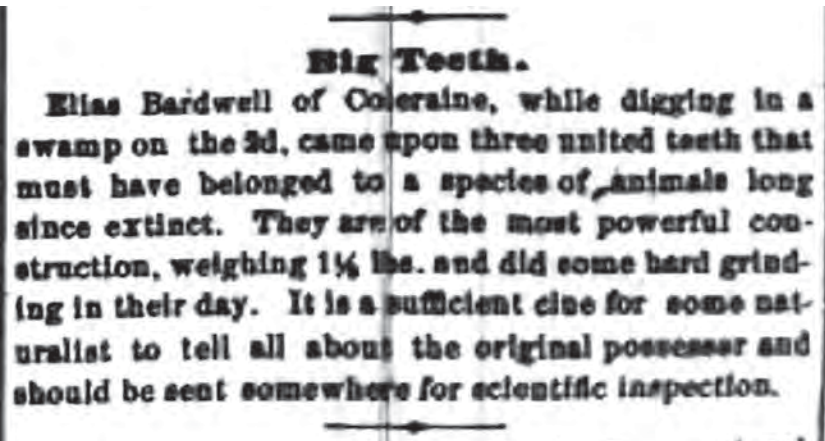
two East Colrain Bardwell farms, likely contiguous: one atop Shearer Hill, the other off East Colrain Road along the northwestern base of Shearer Hill. Then I researched the Colrain Bardwells to figure which was the “Elias Bardwell farm” referred to in records of the tooth discovery.

What was confusing was that the first Bardwell to call Colrain home was named Elias (1763-1818), and he obviously could not have been the man who found the tooth. Further research showed that Elias had a grandson named Elias (1837-1915), son of Amos (1792-1875), who was undoubtedly the “A. Bardwell” identified on the maps as the owner of the East Colrain Road farm. The “B. Bardwell” in the farm atop Shearer Hill was Amos’s younger brother Baxter (1803-1888), who, according to Deerfield historian George Sheldon’s genealogy, “settled on the old homestead.”

I contacted Greenfield surveyor and map merchant Dave Allen, who I knew had an important connection to Shearer Hill. Maybe he knew something about the old Bardwell acreage. If not, maybe the topic would stir his curiosity and him into action.

Mission accomplished. Allen soon embarked on deed research, a staple of a surveyor’s work, and concluded that the Elias Bardwell farm where the tooth was found was not atop Shearer Hill as we first thought. Instead, it was off East Colrain Road, overlooking Workman Brook to the south, the brook crossing East Colrain Road and traversing wetland on both sides of it.

Further genealogical research bore personal family fruit with closer links than expected. I knew from the start that I tapped into the Connecticut Valley Bardwell family through my second great-grandmother Abbie Bardwell of Shelburne/Montague/Whately, wife of Thomas Sanderson of Whately. Not surprisingly, that Bardwell branch was distant.



This item appeared in the December 11, 1871 Gazette and Courier.

Not so with another Colrain family I tap into. Little did I know that a much closer relationship to Elias Bardwell existed through my paternal grandmother Merriam Snow, whose great-grandmother and Elias’s mother were sisters. That, from my perspective, is not a distant relative. My grandmother likely knew of her Bardwell relatives on East Colrain Road when, as a child, she spent summers at her grandparents’ farm and orchards off Fort Lucas Road, a short distance west.

Enough of the genealogy, though. Back to Ice-Age mastodons (*Mammut americanum*), to which I can honestly say I never gave any serious thought before 2014. That’s when friend Gramly started excavating skeletal remains from a Middletown, NY, marsh. His dig recovered bones and ivory from the ancient proboscidean beast dubbed John Charles in his 2017 monograph, “Archaeological Recovery of the Bowser Road Mastodon, Orange County, New York.” Among the recovered bones were some he identified as artifacts – a daring assessment that went against the grain.

I clearly recall Gramly checking in by telephone from time to time during this 2014 dig to enthusiastically report new discoveries, observations, and hypotheses. So excited was he that I could seldom get a word in edgewise, so I listened and learned.

But still, despite his intellectual excitement, my own personal interest remained lukewarm. “Why should I be interested in ancient North American elephants last roaming the continent 12,000 years ago?” I pondered. “What was the allure? What did it mean to me; to the Connecticut Valley?”

Then came the grappling hook that set the barbs and pulled me. Gramly seized my fascination during an evening phone conversation from his motel room when he introduced the human element – better still, hunter-gatherer ritual and spirituality.

“The prevailing wisdom has been that these beasts came to water during the late Pleistocene, got mired in mud, and died. I say that’s pure hooey,” he said. “There are human hands all over this site. In my opinion, John Charles was killed by hunters and, get this: I believe there’s evidence of ritualistic offerings right there in plain sight among the skeletal remains.”

What he was referring to were notched *atlatl* blades crafted from mastodon ribs and, he said, intentionally broken in half as grave offerings when new rib bones were salvaged from the fallen beast as raw material for new blades. Gramly’s cutting-edge and very controversial hypothesis is that these grave offerings were left in respect for the fallen prey by young hunters participating in their first kill – an important rite of manhood

versus a dangerous beast.

Gramly suspected that if he reviewed other collections of North American mastodon remains, they would reveal the same, previously overlooked, broken *atlatl* ribs and other bone and ivory artifacts. Well, guess what? His hypothesis was confirmed by searching through stored remains in upstate New York, Ohio, and Kentucky. Bingo! There were other broken *atlatl* blades, not to mention other artifacts crafted from mastodon bones and ivory. Not certain of all the artifacts’ function, he’s still working on identification and trading ideas with Fiedel and other colleagues.

For years, experts have cited the absence of stone tools – Clovis points, scrapers, celts, and other tools – as proof that there was no human association to the mastodon remains found over the years east of the Mississippi River (in contrast to the presence of stone tools at western proboscidean kill sites).

Gramly begs to differ. He says archaeologists’ focus is too narrow, that the absence of stone tools could be irrelevant. Bone and ivory tools were routinely used by Old World hunters dating back far beyond 13,000 years. So, why not in the New World? Aren’t we dealing with some of the same gene pools?

That kind of open-mindedness is what separates Gramly from many other American archaeologists, and

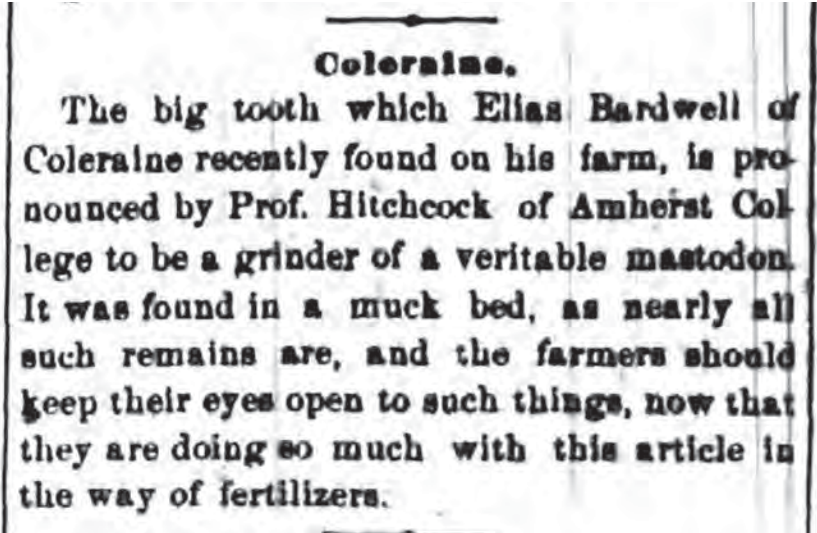
creates friction with some who are no more educated, experienced, or credentialed than him but far more rigid. Gramly has one great advantage over his detractors: the guts to challenge conventional wisdom.

So here I sit, formerly unenthused about extinct proboscidean beasts, when suddenly, out of the blue, I learn of this long-forgotten mastodon tooth that showed up in my neighborhood. Not only that, but it was discovered by a previously unknown close Bardwell relative of mine who had it in his possession into the 20th century and likely until his death.

Who knows where this tooth is today? It could be resting in plain sight on a Colrain shelf, an attic drawer, a library cellar, or offered for sale without provenance for the third time on eBay. Then again, it could have been trashed long ago by someone ignorant of its importance.

It would appear that the only way to learn more about this mastodon tooth is to somehow find the site from which it was pulled, and probe for more evidence. Skeletal remains could still be recoverable there.

The search could start as early as spring, with landowner permission. Fiedel, Driver and company just want a bone, a tooth, or an ivory tusk that can be radiocarbon dated. All I can say is that I’d love to watch this fascinating process unfold.



The paper’s follow-up on January 8, 1872.

Montv

MONTV / MUSIK / MOUNTAIN

Issue XV: Anthony Pasquarosa

Interview by J. BURKETT

TURNERS FALLS – Anthony Pasquarosa is a songwriter and musician living in Belchertown. He has been part of many local scenes for awhile now: old timey, punk, folk, metal, and basically any genre you can think of. And his newest release was actually a Christmas LP!

He took time off from his busy schedule recently to talk to us. Go see him ASAP, and say hi for us...

MMM: So... Your newest self released solo album was recorded

at home, right? How do you record? Have you recorded solo in a bigger studio?

AP: I try to record all my solo music and projects at my house. It fits my erratic ways of working on whatever I feel like at any given moment. I record on my couch or on the floor in piles of stuff, usually. It ends up being a complete mess most of the time, and a lot of the time I have to get out of there and take a drive or something...

I recorded solo in my friends’ studios for the very first Crystalline Roses tape: I recorded at Dead Air

Studios, and at a pre-Disappearing Mountain Kevin Gebo’s spot in Holyoke. I work and am friends with both of them to this day, they both make amazing music and are always down to help me with a cause.

Kevin really helped me understand mixing, so a lot of the solo stuff I have recorded, especially if it has overdubs, has been mixed with Kevin. And Chill Will (Dead Air) mastered this current record for me, and is always down to help me!

MMM: This one seems like a departure from your other albums... What do you think?

AP: Well, if we are going with records under my own name, I would say it is a little departure from the last one, which was an imaginary spaghetti western soundtrack... But I think even with that one, they have all had a similar sound. To me it’s the sound of introspection.

This record is a continuation of ideas from the *Astral Guitar Projections* demos, which were released on CDRs.

MMM: Is your solo stuff inspired by other artists? Or connected to your other projects?

AP: Far too many to list. Everything inspires the music when you are making it, it seems like all I can think about... With this particular LP I was really into ideas of repetition, and certain atmospheric ideas which

can come from anywhere, or really any kind of music.

I am fortunate enough to have friends constantly turning me onto things I have never heard – “hey, if you like this, listen to this” – and because of record stores like Electric Eye in Florence, Mystery Train in Amherst, or John Doe Jr. in Greenfield, all run by friends and great surveyors of music from all over the globe, it is easy to find stuff or get another recommendation on the spot.

Books are also a great inspiration to me. The title of this LP, *De L’Infinito Universo Et Mondi*, is a book I was reading by Giordano Bruno while I made and messed with the track/ideas for “An Angelic Interference,” which brought the LP to completion.

I think everything is connected with my music in some way; either in its ideology or in its sound. Most of my music, even when instrumental, is against a robot-smartphone-internet-based society where everyone is happily being stripped of will and independent thought...

MMM: Do you find it’s different to record solo at home and to play live?

AP: Yes, very different to record at home vs. playing live. Playing live freaks me out a lot of the time – I will be hanging talking to people, then all of a sudden sitting there wanting to

crawl into a hole and hide.

At home I record when I feel like it basically, no pressure. When you record in a studio though it can be equally as stressful as recording live, even when I’m recording with my friends; it’s still the date looming in your mind, and then the pressure of getting a decent take of an idea...

MMM: When you record vocals, do those come first, or does the music?

AP: When I record or write songs with vocals, I always do it after the music, or sometimes at the same time, like a track strumming and singing then build.

But the majority of the time, recording the vocals is almost the last thing.

MMM: Any plans to release more solo stuff soon?

AP: I just had a Christmas LP come out on VDSQ Records. This new LP isn’t officially “out” *per se*, but they are around locally, and I brought some with me on tour this summer...

After that, nothing immediately under my own name, but there is new stuff coming under various aliases, solo and collaboratively. Definitely no intention of slowing down: at least 4 LPs that are in progress or complete. They will probably be released as tapes or CDRs, but who knows...

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WARREN ONDRAS PHOTO

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- Lisa McLoughlin, editor

GREENFIELD SOLAR STORE

Porcupines Vs. Lions, and Hedgehogs Vs. Porcupines



This is a porcupine. (Courtesy of the National Park Service.)

By LISA MCLOUGHLIN

NORTHFIELD – We have a lot of porcupines around here. Last winter I observed one eating branches in a tree at the Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust’s headquarters, Skyfields, in Athol, and last summer I saw one sleeping along a branch in a large oak in Northfield. They also make great tracks in the snow with a tail drag in between their prints.

There are versions of our type of porcupines that live in Africa. A recent article in the *Journal of East African Natural History* by Julian Kerbis Peterhans reviews porcupine-lion interactions. The study, based on a literature and media review of lion-porcupine interactions, found that recorded incidents go back to 1656, when a Cape Town colony diarist recorded three different lions that had been stuck with porcupine quills.

The study found that if a lion attacks a porcupine, the lion can be killed or be injured in ways that affect its hunting for the rest of its life, and lead the lion to go for easier prey which they normally would not eat, including cattle and humans.

Young male lions are especially prone to making the mistake of attacking a porcupine, and lions that lived in harsher, drier climates where other food is less available went after them. Surprisingly, lions who have help from another lion can remove the quills, but many young males are solitary and don’t have help.

The researchers went further and scanned the skulls of lions that had been speared with porcupine quills, finding issues like bone infections (where quills penetrated tooth and bone) and impaired ability to smell (with quills in the nose). Finally, the study shows that lions only go for porcupines when large hooved animals are not available. This shows that environmental problems like drought lead to hunting problems for these top-of-the-food chain carnivores.



GIBE PHOTO

A hedgehog.

Hedgehogs

In England they have hedgehogs, which are also spiny, but not related to porcupines. All 29 species of hedgehogs are classified as rodents. You don’t see hedgehogs in America, and also not in trees; without a tail they are unable to climb. Porcupines range from 20 to 36 inches long, plus an 8- to 10-inch tail, and have many more and longer quills than hedgehogs, whose bodies are only 4 to 12 inches long.

Their defensive behavior is different, too. English hedgehogs roll into a ball to defend themselves, while American porcupines arch their backs, fluff up their quills, and flip their tails around. While they cannot shoot quills, porcupine quills easily detach and get stuck, and their reverse barb makes them very painful to remove.

Hedgehogs’ quills are softer and can’t detach. Hedgehogs would have a harder time of it in New England; porcupines are only preyed upon by fisher cats and traffic here. They get hit by cars a lot because being so well-protected, they don’t run away from danger.

These two animals also eat different food. Porcupines are herbivores; in the winter they just eat bark and branches (and, according to one source I found, plywood). Hedgehogs eat slugs, insects, mice, and even snakes. Because of this they are highly prized as “garden pets” for English people who are a bit obsessed with gardens.

Yet, it is the English obsession with neat gardens that is contributing to hedgehog decline. A 2018 study by the UK government shows that hedgehog populations declined 66% over the past 20 years. Along with pesticide use and road deaths, the elimination of their natural habitat of tangled undergrowth and leaf litter is a problem for hedgehogs.

Hedgehogs are nocturnal and hibernate in winter, while porcupines are active all year. Hedgehogs live only 2 to 7 years, while porcupines can live up to 27 years in the wild. (Note: if you have a hedgehog as a pet, do not “kiss” it, as they have germs that are very detrimental to humans.)

The short answer on how to tell what animal it is: you see a spiky animal in the wild and you’re in America or Africa, it’s a porcupine.

If you’re in England, it’s a hedgehog.

Celebrating the Wheel of the Year

By LISA MCLOUGHLIN

NORTHFIELD – Our year on the planet Earth is dictated by our orbit around the sun. We can divide the year by the time it takes to make that journey, or by the distance we’ve travelled. These very closely coincide, because our orbit is almost a circle – almost, but not quite. As Johannes Kepler calculated in the 17th century using observational data from Tycho Brahe, planets travel in an ellipse around the sun, not in the perfect circles that previous astronomers had posited.

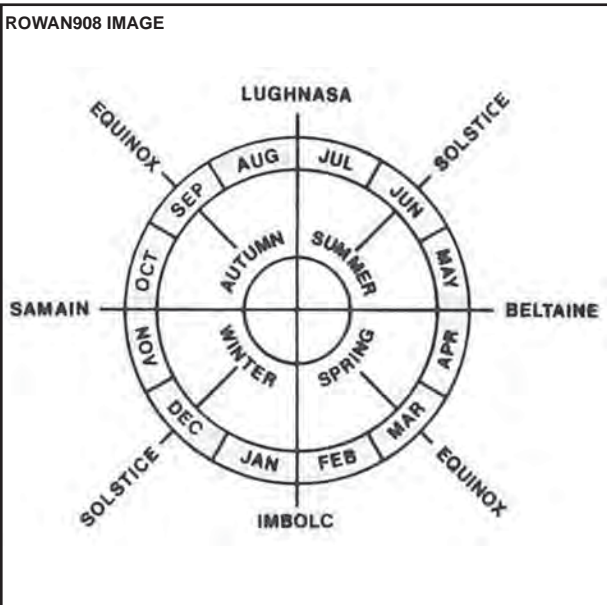
The major events that mark the quarters of the year are measured by the interaction between the sun and Earth: solstices are the longest and shortest days of the year, and equinoxes are the days the sun shines equally in both hemispheres.

Because these are astronomical events that depend on our distance around the sun, they are measured by distance, and thus can change a little bit in how they fall date-wise on the calendar from year to year; not that our distance around the sun changes year to year, but our calendar is imperfect. We don’t like to have partial days in our calendar year, so our calendar has built-in messiness because our journey around the sun does not take exactly 365 days, whereas our calendar is exactly 365 days long.

This is partly corrected by leap years, but it means there is always some misalignment between dates and distances in our solar calendar. In short, it’s this imperfection of our calendar that causes these astronomical events to fall on different calendar dates. In 2020, spring equinox will be on March 19 at 11:50 p.m., summer solstice will be on June 20 at 5:44 p.m., autumnal equinox will be on September 22 at 9:31 a.m., and winter solstice will be on December 21 at 5:02 a.m.

Some people also like to celebrate the “cross quarter” days; that is, the days that fall halfway (by distance, or by time) between the quarters of the year marked above.

For the purposes of this article I’m going to use



The wheel of the year.

Celtic names for these days, but they have other names in other traditions. And here it gets extra tricky, because most of these days are considered “fixed” on the calendar.

Here’s one you probably know: *Samhain*, also known as Halloween. Samhain has by some convention become fixed: it’s celebrated on October 31. But if you want to celebrate the actual day that the Earth has made it halfway between autumnal equinox position and winter solstice position, then you need to do a correction for the elliptical nature of our orbit.

This involves some heavy duty math, so I use the site archaeoastronomy.com, which has these dates calculated out for us. Our cross quarter days for 2020 will be: Imbolc on February 4 at 3:55 a.m., Beltane on May 4 at 8:49 p.m., Lughnasad on August 6 at 9:04 p.m., and Samhain on November 7 at 5:56 p.m.

Whenever you decide to celebrate, happy new calendar year...

WEBSITE REVIEW

Dark Matter , an Environmental Journal

By LISA MCLOUGHLIN

I’ve been enjoying reading this creative, free online journal, *dark-matterwomenwitnessing.com*, edited by Lise Weil from Goddard College. According to their publishing statement, the journal publishes “writing and artwork created in response to an age of massive species loss and ecological collapse” and is a home

for “dreams, visions, and communications with the non-human world, especially those that seek to heal our broken relationship to the earth.”

The journal sees itself as a home for many voices and welcomes writing in all forms and genres, and artwork in all mediums. In a section called “After•Words,” writers offer responses to books, films, artwork, and cultural events that they feel

make an important contribution to the mission of the publication.

A column called “Aftermath 11/9” features “dreams, visions, nightmares or communications with nonhuman beings that respond in some way to this era of escalating danger and damage and ideally provide clarity and/or guidance.”

See the website for details and submission guidelines.

January 2020 Moon Calendar

First Quarter
Thursday, January 2

Last Quarter
Friday, January 17

Full Moon
Friday, January 10

New Moon
Friday, January 24

2013 “supermoon” behind the Washington Monument

NASA/BILL INGALLS PHOTO

There will be four so-called “supermoons” in 2020: February 9, March 9, April 8, and May 7. A supermoon is when a full moon occurs at the same time that the moon is closest to Earth in its orbit, a position called “perigee” at about 226,000 miles distant – as opposed to the farthest, called “apogee,” at about 253,000 miles. This is because the moon’s orbit is an ellipse, not a perfect circle, thus it is sometimes closer and sometimes farther away. Also, the perigee and apogee of the moon’s orbit can vary a little from orbit to orbit depending on the position of the Earth relative to the sun and other planets and thus their gravitational pulls. Perigees and apogees that are very close or very far are called “extreme,” and are also times of extreme ocean tides.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

EVENTS

THURSDAY, JANUARY 9

Asbestos Farm, Hadley: *Deer Scout, The Duchess, Jesus Vio, and Gilt*. 8 p.m.

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

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Drag Queen Bingo*. \$. 8:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 10

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Windborne*. Quartet of singers currently performing a collection of music from working class movements for people's rights in the US and UK over the past 400 years, rearranged in rich four-part harmonies and sung for the struggles of today. Coffeehouse concert with refreshments available; suggested donation of \$6 to \$15. 7 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Future-folk Dance Party* with *DJ Quils*. Disco, funk, international, soul, hip-hop. 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Kaliope Jones homecoming, with Sodada*. \$. 8 p.m.

Majestic Saloon, Northampton: *Nemesister, La Neve, DJ Gus*. 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Holy Basil, Joe deGeorge's Sax Machine, Scare City, Mary Jester*. 9 p.m.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 11

St. James Church, Greenfield: *Greenfield Drum & Dance*. African dance, followed by a Drum and Dance instead of the usual Dance Spree. \$. 6 p.m.

Mt. Toby Meetinghouse, Leverett: *Yosl Kurland*. Founding member of the Wholesale Klezmer Band performs songs illuminating a Jewish perspective on social justice in Yiddish, Hebrew, and English. *Aaron Bousel* accompanies on accordion. \$. 7:30 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Matt Valentine, Willie Lane, and Head of Wantastiquet*. Guitars and introspective psychedelia. 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Bombtrack*. Rage Against The Machine tribute. \$. 8 p.m.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *Tether, Noise Nomads*. Noise and experimental show, with a closing ceremony for Lauren Pakradooni's multimedia exhibition, *Describing Sunset to a Robocaller*. 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 12

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *You Are Here*. Performance and opening reception for this month's art show, which fea-

tures work by more than 30 artists on the theme of maps. 1 p.m. Exploded View will perform new work at 2 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Traditional Quebecois Session*. 3 p.m.



ARTHUR MAG PHOTO

Southern Vermont-based psychedelic guitarist Matt Valentine, half of MV+EE and formerly of classic rock supergroup Tower Recordings, has two Massachusetts dates scheduled: this Saturday, January 11 at 10 Forward in Greenfield, and the following Friday, January 17 at Belltower Records out in North Adams. Hit the trails!

120 Birge, Brattleboro, VT: *Mergoat Benefit Gala* featuring *Dogspaw, Spice World, Paper City Picture Show, Hood Rat, Felt Star*, and *Not I Than Who Then*. Potluck and dance party. No creeps. \$. 6:30 p.m.

Looky Here, Greenfield: *Cold Rain Band, Omega Vague, Dei Xhrist*. 7 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Jake Klar, Laura Wolf, Ciarra Fragale, and Groundskeeper*. \$. 8 p.m.

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

MONDAY, JANUARY 13

Stone Church, Brattleboro: Movie double feature: *Wayne's World*, 6 p.m.; *Wayne's World II*, 8 p.m. Free entry; full bar and flatbread pizza available. Doors at 5 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Shout Lulu*. 8 p.m.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 14

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Music in the Morning*. Chil-

dren's music series. Live, interactive music by educator *Marcy Gregoire*, accompanied by movement specialist *Hilary Lake*. Puppets, costumes, musical instruments. 10 a.m.

Guiding Star Grange, Greenfield: *Contact Improv Class & Dance*. Class at 6:30; dance jam with live music from *Panthalassa* from 8 to 10 p.m. \$. 6:30 p.m.

Shea Theater Arts Center, Turners Falls: *Young Shakespeare Players East presents A Comedy of Errors*. Free admission. All-youth cast. Opening night of an eight-show run. 7 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Comedy with Jon Ross*. In the Wheelhouse. 8 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15

Centre Congregational Church, Brattleboro: *An Evening with Bill McKibben*. 6:30 p.m.

Shea Theater Arts Center, Turners Falls: *Young Shakespeare Players East presents A Comedy of Errors*. Free admission. All-youth cast. 7 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Owsley's Owls*. Weekly Grateful Dead family night. 9:30 p.m.

EXHIBITS

Brattleboro Museum & Art Center: Exhibits include *Fafnir Adamites: Interfere (with); Doug Trump: By Rail; Maria Elena Gonzalez: Tree Talk; Gordon Meinhard: The Lives of Tables*; and *Thelma Appel: Observed/Abstract*. Through February.

DVAA Gallery, Northfield: *Season of Light*. Member holiday show. Through January 12.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *You Are Here: A Juried Community Art Ex-*

hibit. Work by regional artists in multiple media exploring maps, the significance of place, and movement across boundaries, curated by Exploded View. Where do you live? Where are you from? Where do you dream? How do you find your way? Where are your borders? Do maps lie? January 5 through February 29 in the Great Hall. Reception Sunday, January 12.

Greenfield Gallery: *Paul Hoffman, Paintings and Illustrations*. Poetic dreamscapes in-

formed by a lifetime of world travel. Through January 18.

Hosmer Gallery, Forbes Library, Northampton: *Marty Espinola*, photographs; *Jon Bander*, metal sculptures. January 8 through February 4.

Shelburne Arts Coop, Shelburne Falls: *Tiny Treasures* group show. Paintings, ceramics, leather, paper cuts, jewelry, wood and ornaments by member artists. Through January 27.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 16

Shea Theater Arts Center, Turners Falls: *Young Shakespeare Players East presents A Comedy of Errors*. Free admission. All-youth cast. 7 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Half Shaved Jazz*. 7:30 p.m.

The Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Shamarr Allen & The Underdaws*. Hailing from the Lower 9th Ward of New Orleans, Allen has influences in jazz, hip hop, rock, funk, funk blues and country. \$. 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 17

Belltower Records, North Adams: *Matt Valentine Preserves*, with *Center* (mems. Headroom, Nagual). \$. 7 p.m.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro, VT: Screening, *Agnes Varda: The Gleaners and I*, followed by discussion facilitated by film scholar Leo Cortana. 7 p.m.

Shea Theater Arts Center, Turners Falls: *Young Shakespeare Players East presents A Comedy of Errors*. Free admission. All-youth cast. 7 p.m.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 18

Shea Theater Arts Center, Turners Falls: *Young Shakespeare Players East presents A Comedy of Errors*. Free admission. All-youth cast. 1 and 7 p.m.

Looky Here, Greenfield: Opening reception for *Looky Here 2020* submission-based art show. 6:30 p.m.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro, VT: *Gavin Klein: Pipes from Shore to Shore*. Concert of European and American music for the organ, performed on the Sanctuary Estey Opus 300. Pieces by Bach, Elgar, Buxtehude, Anderson, Boëllmann, others. Presented by the Estey Organ Museum. Suggested donation. 7 p.m.

Wendell Free Library: Movie screening, *Forbidden Planet*. 7:30 p.m.

Mt. Toby Meetinghouse, Leverett: *Annie Patterson, Ben Touseley, Swing Set, and Anne Louise White*. Benefit for the meetinghouse's restroom project. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Bridge of Flowers, Hung Truck*. 9:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 19

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Jazz Brunch* with *Masala Jazz*. 11 a.m.

Shea Theater Arts Center, Turners Falls: *Young Shakespeare Players East presents A Comedy of Errors*. Free admission. All-youth cast. 1 and 7 p.m.

CALLS FOR ART

Nina's Nook in Turners Falls invites artists to submit erotic art for Triple SSS 2020: Sensual, Sexual, Smut. Submit up to three jpegs to eroticart2020@gmail.com by January 15 for the February show. A \$10 participation fee is asked at drop off to help with expenses relating to the reception.

Sawmill River Arts Gallery will host another community Small Works Show of original 2- or 3-dimensional art in February, 2020. Non-juried show open to all ages, all mediums. Limited to two pieces per artist, 10" in any direction, including frame (if framed); at least one will be exhibited. Details, application form available at the gallery and online at sawmillriverarts.com. Bring form, \$5 fee per piece, and art work to the gallery between January 12 and 26. Art work must be for sale. Contact Louise Minks, (413) 367-2800, or Louise@LouiseMinks.com.

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9:30P **Scare City, Sax Machine, Holy Basil**

SUNDAY 1/12
3P **Traditional Quebecois Session**
9P **Karaoke!!**

MONDAY 1/13
8P **Shout Lulu**

WEDNESDAY 1/15
9:30P **Dead Night w/ Owsleys Owls**

THURSDAY 1/16
7:30P **Half Shaved Jazz**

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ARTBEAT from page B1

from an artist’s perspective: how was it different to work on smaller works versus larger ones?

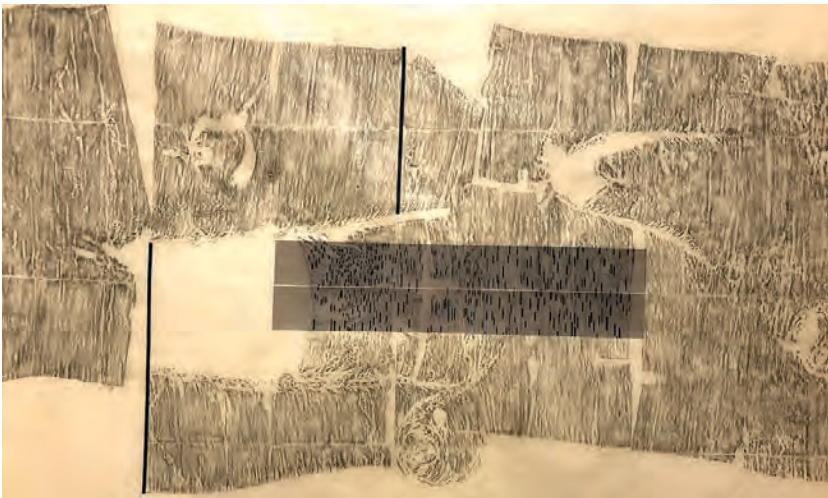
“When a larger piece determines its independence, there’s an intimacy that’s different than the little ones,” Trump said. “It’s a kind of bathing, a feeling of being enveloped. Unlike a four-inch piece. A four-inch piece I’m kind of going down and snuggling right up.”

“But why not look at something from two inches away?” I asked.

Trump described looking at art as, “an opportunity to be alive, being there in its presence. It ain’t about anything,” he said. “It’s a moment, and it’s forever.”

He laughed. “I start pontificating,” he said, “and I apologize. But I really believe these things.”

Trump will be holding a conversation at the museum on Thursday, January 16, at 7 p.m.



A detail from one of González’s rubbings, indicating an area she chose to be laser-cut into templates for the rolls.

Tree Talk

María Elena González’s “Tree Talk” is a multisensory, multimodal installation that fills the museum’s main gallery as well as the smaller Ticket Gallery. Struck by the visual similarities between the

cylinders of birch trees and the cylinders of player piano rolls, and the rows of horizontal marks on each, González began to explore the idea of creating rolls that would play the music she imagined notated on the trees.

González, who spoke to me from her home in Brooklyn, says the idea came to her in 2005, while she was on the faculty at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. “I’d have coffee by the lake, and there were all these birches,” she said. “I saw the resemblance. It was that simple.”

González peeled the bark from fallen birches and unrolled it, studying the marks.

“Come on bark, talk to me, talk to me,” she said, as she made rubbings and tracings.

“I became very, very intimate with it,” she said. “I know every square inch of that bark. I know every marking, every goosebump. I’ve been looking at them for a long, long time. Whether by hand or by eye, I have caressed those trees up and down and sideways.”

González began to make rubbings from the bark as a first step in creating templates that could be used to laser-cut the markings from three birch trees onto player piano rolls. It took her from 2006 to 2012 to get the first roll, which she finally was able to listen to in 2013. What

she heard surprised her so much, she said, “There wasn’t forehead enough left for my eyebrows.”

The first tree, *Skowhegan Birch #1*, sounded atonal and contemporary, like improvisational jazz. “It was astonishingly coherent,” González said, though she admitted that to the traditional player piano crowd, used to hearing penny arcade and ragtime tunes, the birch’s music was most likely “an insult to their ears.”

Each of the three trees had a distinct sound. Of *Skowhegan Birch #2*, González said, “That tree is melancholic. And #3 is almost like a marching band.”

Though she hadn’t known it when she began the project, a grouping of three birches resonates through various cultures, González said. “Tree Talk” won the Grand Prize at the 30th Biennial of Graphic Arts in Ljubljana, Slovenia in 2013, and at that ceremony, González played a recording of the three American birches to three birches in Ljubljana’s town square.

One scientific detail that González didn’t learn until partway into her project is that those markings on birch trees that had captured her interest are known botanically as lenticels, loose aggregates of cells that allow for gases to be exchanged between the air and the underlying tissues of the bark, essentially enabling the tree to breathe.

“So, the tree breathing in and the piano player exhaling and depressing the key – I give nature and luck all the credit, when it comes to that,” she said. “These are the kinds of things that have blown me away to the point that it has kept me interested for all these years. It’s so rich. You turn one corner and find the plaza you were looking for but it turns into a portal into something else.”

In addition to audio recordings of the three birches, the exhibit also includes a one-minute video entitled “Tempo,” large sections of the bark González worked with;

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A section of birch bark that Brooklyn artist María Elena González used to create player piano rolls to play the music suggested by the bark’s horizontal markings.

rubbings she used to create templates for the player piano rolls; the rolls themselves, which, suspended floor to ceiling, are surprisingly beautiful; and a series of prints based on the birch’s distinctive patterns. There’s also a player piano on which, by pumping the pedals with your feet, you can play a traditional player piano tune.

Also on view at the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center: “Interfere (with),” an installation by Fafnir Adamites, and “The Lives of Tables,” paintings and drawings by Gordon Meinhard, both through March 7; and “Observed/Abstract,” paintings by Thelma Appel, through February 9.

At the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center, 10 Vernon Street, Brattleboro, VT. For information contact info@brattleboromuseum.org; (802) 257-0124.

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