MILLERS FALLS

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 18 – NO. 16

also serving Erving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

FEBRUARY 20, 2020

Logging Bill Folded Into Forest Study Proposal

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG



State forest management policy questions may be sent to a 12-member commission.

By JEFF SINGLETON

BOSTON - H.897, the controversial state House of Representatives bill which would have effectively banned logging in most state forests, has been moved to the back burner for the time being, or even off the legislative table.

The legislature's Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture, which held hearings on the bill last fall, has replaced it and three others with legislation that would establish a commission to study state forest management practices. The new bill, H.4415, has been reported favorably out of the committee to the Joint Committee on Rules.

State representative Susannah Whipps of Athol, an original sponsor of H.897, told the Reporter that the decision to propose a new com-

mission was preferable to having H.897 put aside "for study," which had appeared to be its fate. "I think we've started a very important process," she said. "I'm pleased we're going to have a discussion with all the stakeholders. You can't do it with just one idea."

Many supporters of H.897 have been critical of state forest management policies for not being linked to the carbon dioxide reduction goals embodied in the state's Global Warming Solutions Act, arguing that logging in state forests significantly reduces "carbon sequestration." While H.897 only applied to state-owned land, the new commission would be charged with investigating management practices on private as well as public lands.

According to the new bill's text, "The scope of the commission's

see BILL page A8

GILL SELECTBOARD

Gill Settles Tax Dispute With FirstLight

By GEORGE BRACE

The Gill selectboard signed a tax agreement with FirstLight Hydro on Tuesday, putting an end, for now, to a lengthy dispute between the town and the power company over property tax assessments. The board also conducted a public forum on the town's hazard mitigation plan featuring a presentation on its purposes, action items, and changes from the previous version of the plan.

The board signed a Payment In Lieu Of Taxes (PILOT) agreement with FirstLight Hydro LLC for the parcel of land in Gill that contains the dam owned by FirstLight. The PILOT agreement, which was authorized at a special town meeting in January, reduces the valuation of the parcel from \$14,717,900 to \$13,599,340 for 2020 and 2021 property tax purposes.

The agreement was the final component of a settlement the town entered with FirstLight resolving a backlog of tax appeals by the company for its bills from 2014 to 2018, and echoed an agreement Montague and FirstLight signed last year. In addition to the PILOT agreement, the town will also abate approximately \$45,000 in back taxes. In exchange, FirstLight agreed to withdraw its appeals, and not contest the

see GILL page A4

Greenfield Nears Deal For Anaerobic Digester

By SARAH ROBERTSON

GREENFIELD – City officials are close to finalizing a \$4.1 million deal with a private contractor to build an anaerobic digester that would process the city's sewage waste and churn out natural gas and compost.

"We're real close to an agreement," Greenfield department of public works director Marlo Warner said on Tuesday. "We hope to have signatures within the next few days."

Building an anaerobic digester is

an effort to combat the rising costs of sewage sludge disposal across the state and beyond. The shrinking capacity of offsite disposal facilities, rising transportation costs, and stricter environmental regulations are making it more expensive to dispose of the residual waste generated by municipal water treatment plants.

This year sludge disposal will cost Greenfield \$540,000, according to Warner, a \$70,000 increase since last year. "The biggest problem is the

see **DIGESTER** page A6

THE BIG PICTURE The New Head of Housing



Gina Govoni brings a "holistic housing background" to the top job at the HRA.

Cooperators Opt to Stick It Out

By JEFF SINGLETON

LEVERETT – After an hourlong meeting that both lacked the contentious atmosphere of its predesors and more closely resembled a pep rally, the board and membership of the Leverett Village Co-Op voted on Wednesday not to dissolve the organization, but to remain open with a combination of volunteer labor and fundraising.

to dissolve the coop?" asked new board president Julio Mendez, calling for a show of hands. Virtually all the 50 or so members in attendance, who filled most of the seats in the upstairs meeting room at Leverett town hall, voted in the affirmative.

"That's why we came here," shouted a voice in the crowd.

The meeting was a sharp contrast to February 5, when former board

"Do we have a consensus not president Susan Linton and treasurer Julie Shively, one of the coop's founders, had argued that the organization was so deeply in debt that it should dissolve and perhaps sell the North Leverett store to pay off vendors, back taxes, and other debt. When that proposal failed to garner support, Linton, Shively, and board clerk Pat Fiero resigned.

> They have been replaced by see COOP page A7

High School Sports: The Week in Review

By MATT ROBINSON

The regular season ended for high school basketball this week, as three teams from Franklin Tech and Turners Falls prepare for the playoffs. The Turners Falls boys await their seeding for the MIAA playoffs, and both Franklin Tech teams have qualified for two tournaments.

In the MIAA boys' tournament, both Turners Falls (10– 10) and Franklin Tech (14-6) qualified in D-IV, and in the girls' tournament, the Franklin Tech Eagles (17-3) also qualified. Tech Teams will compete in the Massachusetts Vocational Playoffs while they wait for their MIAA rankings.

And the Turners Falls girls' team got to play their last two games for fun!

Vocational Playoffs

The Massachusetts Vocational Playoffs begin today, Thursday, February 20. This is a four-team tournament that boasts the top four vocational high school teams in the state. With apologies to William Shatner, I prefer to call this tournament "Tech Wars."

The tournament begins, and hopefully ends, in Turners Falls. The FCTS boys are currently ranked second in the

see **SPORTS** page A7

Turners Falls High School "flyer" Madison Fritz returns to earth in a basket toss stunt. The cheer team began a busy month of competitions with a win at Chicopee on February 6.

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By MIKE JACKSON

TURNERS FALLS - I had been meaning to get in touch with Gina Govoni, hired last summer as the executive director at the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority (FCRHRA), for several months for an interview in these pages. But when she and I met a few weeks ago to speak on a panel on downtown livability, we realized we already knew each other.

Govoni was my supervisor 15 years ago, for about a month. A temp agency had sent me to work at the Massachusetts Housing Partnership (MHP), a quasi-public entity that works with communities and banks to finance working-class homeownership across the state.

We finally caught up for real last week at Govoni's office in the former Hallmark Photography building on Millers Falls Road now occupied by the FCRHRA.

Govoni's main program at MHP gave "soft" second mortgages to first-time homebuyers and supported them with financial counseling, and I had always wondered what became of it when the housing market tanked in 2008. She told me that story in detail, though we didn't end up talking much about her next major role - four years as the vice president of homeownership and financial education at WayFinders, a Springfield housing nonprofit.

Govoni's new job at the head of the FCRHRA is complex. The housing authority administers nearly 600 Section 8 housing vouchers, manages 265 units of affordable housing including the Crocker, Cutlery, and Moltenbrey apartments in Turners Falls and senior housing in a number of communities, runs the Community Development Block Grant process for most of the county's towns, and engages in development through its Rural Development, Inc. (RDI) arm.

The following is an excerpt of our discussion, reordered and edited somewhat for clarity.

MR: So you're from Springfield originally, and you went to UMass? I looked at your LinkedIn.

GG: Yup. And then my husband worked... for the Steelworkers union, so we lived in Pittsburgh for three years. His title was "strategic projects" – his job was really to go out and help striking Steelworkers, or mostly Rubber Workers who had become Steelworkers, save what they could of their pensions and retirement benefits.

I had actually been working in Amherst before that. I worked for HCAC, which has since been rolled into Community Action Pioneer Valley. I loved it, but it was 20 hours a week and I couldn't afford to live, so I also worked at Rising Tide/Kindred Spirit in Florence, which was a hippie factory. They bought and sold lots of hemp-type wear and Kokopelli candles and jewelry, and I also worked in their store in the mall for a while....

I temped for probably 6 months when we moved to Pittsburgh. The first job I interviewed for was for a community loan fund and neighborhood organization. They were looking for somebody with language skills I didn't have, but one of the loan officers ended up recommending me for a family savings account program job I ended up getting.

I ended up running a loan program for low-income workers, who were transitioning off "welfare to work," throughout the three more rural counties outside of Pittsburgh/ Allegheny County.... I marketed that program, even though it was a car loan program, in a lot of firsttime homebuyer classes.

MR: It was specifically a car loan project?

GG: Yeah. Transportation was a big issue there; low-income families needed a car or they couldn't work at all.... You had to have bad credit, or no credit, to be in the program. I started to love financial literacy, trying to educate people about their finances, and how this

see **BIG PICTURE** page A5

The Montague Reporter

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Bella, Blackhawk, and Pote hope for treats from owner Dennis Lombardi on a snowy day in Leverett.

Don't Let Bird Killers Off the Hook

"I'd like my life back," said BP chairman Tony Hayward at the height of the BP Deepwater Horizon environmental fiasco. If perished migratory birds could speak, they'd have a better argument. US Fish and Wildlife will soon attempt to allow the murderous destruction of hundreds of thousands of migratory birds in the name of Wilbur Ross – and the almighty dollar.

On December 22, 2017, the Principal Deputy Solicitor of the Department of the Interior, exercising the authority of the Solicitor pursuant to Secretary's Order 3345, issued a legal opinion, M-37050, "The Migratory Bird Treaty Act Does Not Prohibit Incidental Take."

"Incidental Take" is a soft word, isn't it? How about "Keep Interior Legally Liquidating" (KILL) instead? The proposal to eliminate any penalties for industrial carelessness and callousness, and a continuing lack of concern for all of nature, is outlandish and criminal in itself. It is, in fact, an atrocity.

The regulatory change proposed indicates that these companies will self-police themselves, and that US Fish and Wildlife may more easily "regulate the regulations" or some baloney like that. That's like saying a despotic piece of garbage leader has "learned his lesson."

According to the New York Times of January 30, 2020, in a story titled "Trump Administration Moves to Relax Rules Against Killing Birds,"

"Removing the threat of punishment, [the Trump administration] said, would bring regulatory certainty and eliminate legal disputes over whether the law covers birds killed unintentionally, whether from an oil spill or the blade of a wind turbine."

How does removing punishment from someone or some group that has just slaughtered thousands of birds, either purposely or not purposely, bring about regulatory certainty? Does it matter how the incident happened? It happened.

I have read the part about removing punishment at least five times to attempt to understand it. Apparatchik speak, I guess. I understand the words, but the meaning is lazy, uncaring, and cruel.

The US Fish and Wildlife service has become an active leader in climate destruction. One just has to open their website to begin seeing all the lies being espoused. The service flaunts saving wildlife on the first page, but underneath, on subsequent pages, lay many of the lies being told to the US populace.

Protecting migratory birds, if the proposed change to the regulations is approved, will just join the thousands of other lies the US Fish and Wildlife Service must be extremely proud of. As a United States citizen, this is appalling.

If Deepwater Horizon, where hundreds of thousands of birds were killed, were to happen again following the approval of this unfair and disgusting regulatory

change, BP wouldn't face a fine? It was just a mistake, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior, et al. would opine for them?

The New York Times indicates that the despot Trump wants to codify this regulation to make it difficult to change, once he has killed all of wildlife and polluted all the air. Do the citizens of Massachusetts agree with this? I hope not.

I strongly urge everyone reading this to aggressively fight the proposed change to the current regulation. Act in concern of the migratory birds, not in concern of Aurelia Skipwith, acting director of US Fish and Wildlife, the Interior Department Solicitor's Office, and her intentionally polluting, legally liquidating, corporate friends.

Please consider making a comment on the Federal Register regarding this issue, known as "Migratory Bird Permits; Take of Migratory Birds; Environmental Impact Statement" at regulations.gov/comment.

> Paul DiStefano **Montague Center**

Trauma Should Be Addressed at its Roots

In the February 13 Montague Selectboard article on page A7, the sweet "Comforting Proposal" title understates the need or desire to have a "comfort dog" for the Gill-Montague School District, as well as other appropriate situations which could extend to other animals, but I digress.

I'm not sure anyone else's ears pricked up - besides the comfort dogs' - but principal Joanne Menard stating that she had "worked in five school districts and 'this is the one that has the most trauma need and social and emotional need, by far" is extremely concerning!

I think a comfort animal is an amazing addition - the sooner the better – but let's figure out how to cut down on the need, please.

Saying that sounds hollow, because trauma is long and deep, but addressing the support needs in our community is imperative. The "how" feels onerous, but we are graced with dedicated and knowledgeable trauma experts in our midst.

The Women's Center in Turners Falls and its sister in Greenfield came out of a decade-long federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAM-SHA) study whose mission was to assess the correlation between poverty and violence against women specifically, along with best practices to address the consequences of that violence and trauma, and developed trauma-informed practices in use today.

We owe it to our children, and our future, to include trauma-informed practices at all grade levels, of which comfort animals are a part of addressing.

As a trauma survivor and expert, it is vitally important that our goal be helping families and individuals cope with their trauma in healthy ways - breaking the cycle of abuse and trauma, rather than just trying to manage it.

> Jerri Higgins **Montague**



Clarification/Correction

Ashley Arthur (at right), now sole owner of the Five Eyed Fox restaurant, let us know that we made errors in our February 6 article Five Eyed Fox to Reopen With New Business Partner.

While the Fox has partnered with Josh Goldman, the building's new owner, it should be clarified that Goldman is not himself a partner in the business. Furthermore, our misreading of public records led us to state that key Community Development Corporation loans for upgrades were made to Goldman, when in fact Arthur took them out herself. She has also been joined by two new investors in the venture.

We apologize for the errors, as well as the resultant shift in focus from the most relevant news.

The re-equipped and re-staffed Fox held a "soft opening" Sunday night, and opens for regular business this week, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., Tuesdays through Sundays.

Published weekly on Thursdays.

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

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Compiled by NINA ROSSI

Greenfield Savings Bank announces another entertaining event at their Turners falls branch office on Avenue A: **Brother-sister duo Ken and Corki** are coming back "by popular demand" this Saturday, February 22 at 10 a.m. "The range and variety of their songs span across the music world which will definitely result in some toe-tapping and hand-clapping" reads the press release. This is a free event, with light refreshments courtesy of the bank. Drop by anytime between ten and noon, and stay for a song or the whole concert.

The next movie in the Sci-Fi/Fantasy/Horror movie series at the Wendell Free Library is "The Addams Family" on Saturday, February 22 at 7:30 p.m. The movie brings to life cartoonist Charles Addams' macabre family and their detached hand of a servant. In this movie, a crooked accountant tries to rob the family vault by infiltrating them with a false Uncle Fester.

Before the movie at 7 p.m., they will screen an episode of the original Addams Family TV series, "Green-Eyed Gomez." Free admission.

The Bear Country radio station and Franklin County 4-H club are teaming up to form a local **Stand Up Comedy 4-H club** open to all youth ages 12 through 18. Students will learn the basics of storytelling, stage presence, and develop five-minute sets for auditioning. The club will meet at the radio station on Woodard Road in Greenfield on the first and third Saturdays of the month.

If you're interested, find out more at a session this Saturday, February 22 at 10:30 a.m. at the Montague Police and Fire Station, 180 Turnpike Road, Turners Falls. No registration is required. For additional information, call the 4-H office at (413) 545-0611.

Come out to the Great Hall at the

Great Falls Discovery Center this Sunday, February 23 at 1 p.m. to discuss the topic of "Surveillance In Our Lives" with *Montague Reporter* managing editor Mike Jackson. This will be a discussion of the growing record of our movements, actions, and associations, as well as the impact on our lives of the knowledge this record is being kept.

Or perhaps you would prefer to contemplate the blueprint of your life with Rev. Barbara M. Hardie at the National Spiritual Alliance (TNSA) workshop on Sunday, February 23 at 1:30 p.m. Participants at this workshop, called "Path of the Soul and Reincarnation," are invited to consider the cycle of life, death and rebirth and "ways to learn our lessons and balance the Karma during our physical life." There is an educational fee of \$25 and it will be held at the Spiritualists' temple at Lake Pleasant, at 2 Montague Avenue near the Bridge of Names and Post Office.

Also on the TNSA calendar is a leap-day **Psychic Fair** on Saturday, February 29 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Come get a reading by one of the members practicing various divination modalities: Tarot cards, channeling, spirit painting, Psychometry, etc. Twenty minutes for \$20.

This coming Tuesday, February 25 from 7 to 9 p.m. the LAVA Center in Greenfield is offering a free workshop called **Making Documentary Theater Together.** Participants will adopt a topic and quickly assemble components that can be used in documentary theater: headlines, stories, songs, speech excerpts, etc., and then perform it! Jan Maher leads the workshop. For more information, visit *localaccess.org*.

The Franklin County Bar Association's Community Fund is hosting a Trivia Night on Thursday, February 27 from 5 to 7 p.m., upstairs at Taylor's Tavern in Green-

field. Individuals and teams of up to five players can compete for pride and prizes. All are welcome. A \$20 suggested donation benefits the **Thomas W. Merrigan Memorial Scholarship** for Franklin County college-bound seniors.

Also, two scholarships of \$1,000 each will be announced in May, and applications are open. To qualify, an applicant must be a Franklin County resident, a senior in high school, and in pursuit of post-secondary education of any kind. The application is available at franklincountybar.org, and the submission deadline is April 1. The Scholarship Committee will consider academic achievement, as well as the quality of an essay on the American Bar Association's Law Day 2020 theme: "Your vote, Your voice, Our Democracy: The 100th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment."

For questions about the award or about Trivia Night, contact Jennifer Lively at *fcbar2@franklincountybar.org*.

Farther afield on Thursday, February 27 is a free-form discussion on the Connecticut River at the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center: its history, and our relationship to the river and to each other. Leading the discussion are artists Elizabeth Billings, Andrea Wasserman, and Evie Lovett, Rich Holschuh of the Vermont Commission on Native American Affairs, and Connecticut River Conservancy river steward Kathy Urffer.

The artists currently have a community art and creative place-making exhibit at the Museum which includes large cyanotypes, a wall of reflective discs that form tessellations mimicking river patterns, and community-made cyanotype postcards. Viewers are encouraged to write messages on the postcards and place them within the exhibit. The talk is free, and begins at 7 p.m.

Also, start polishing up some writing to share at an **open mic on February 29**, also hosted by Exploded View at the Great Falls Discovery Center, from 1 to 3 p.m. Do you have work to share about mapping, the significance of place, movement across boundaries, or other place-related themes? Each reader will have five minutes.

This is the last program at the

Center in conjunction with our community art exhibit, *You Are Here*, on display in the Great Hall during January and February. A video created by MCTV is available at *montaguetv.org* with interviews of the artists in exhibit, as well as Exploded View's performance at the opening reception in January.

The Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association is celebrating its 150th birthday with free admission to the **Commemoration of the 1704 Raid on Deerfield** on February 29 and March 1. There will be a battle reenactment on Saturday from 2 to 3 pm. on the Deerfield Academy soccer fields at the end of Albany Road.

The Memorial Hall Museum and the Indian House Children's Museum will both be open with free admission, and there will be refreshments and a shuttle bus around town. See the full schedule of events at *deerfield-ma.org*.

Hawks & Reed in Greenfield is hosting weekly **Trivia Nights with Dan Williams** on Wednesdays from 6 to 8 p.m. Promoters say the questions are "a bit more engaging and challenging, sometimes requiring puzzle solving, teamwork, and brainstorming 'Top Ten' lists."

Bring the whole family for a good time and a chance to win a cash prize, gift cards, or tickets to a future show at Hawks & Reed. The cost is \$5, with proceeds from each trivia night to be donated to local charities. Stick around after 8 p.m. for karaoke hosted by DJ Phony Danza.

Last year a large number of movies, books, songs, scientific articles, artworks and other copyrighted materials passed into the public domain, the first time since 1998 that a large trove of published work entered the domain in the US, because in 1998 Congress extended copyright by 20 years. Copyright currently extends 70 years after an author's death, or 95 to 120 years for corporate works such as most films. Last year the public domain welcomed all works published in the US in 1923.

"Unlocking the Past: A Public Domain Exhibit" featuring some of these newly released works is on view at the Leverett Library during February. The traveling exhibit features work by Willa Cather, Agatha Christie, Sigmund Freud, Cecil B. DeMille, Robert Frost, Kahlil Gibran, and many others.

The exhibit is the basis of a talk on Thursday evening, February 27 with UMass copyright and information policy librarian Laura Quilter. The free talk is at 6 p.m. followed by an exhibit reception.

A new Greenfield-Montague Youth Choir school is starting up for youth ages 8 to 18. The school will be directed by Robert Heath, director of the choir of Our Lady of Czestochowa, Saint Gregory Choir, in Turners Falls, for over 20 years. Students will learn to read and sing music and will meet as a group once a week.

The music will be classic choir compositions, secular and religious, by composers like Byrd, Lasso, Palestrina, Des Pres, and others. Customized .mp3 files will be provided to students for "homework" to help them learn the music. Practice will be held in Greenfield until a permanent location is found. Those interested in enrolling should email Robert Heath at gmycs@gmx.com.

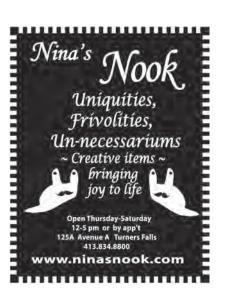
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Fox and rabbits: Above left (on facing page), Ashley Arthur shows off the Five Eyed Fox's new \$35,000 exhaust system. Above, Buckingham Rabbits Vintage owner Alex McGuigan holds court last Saturday at the store's new location at Third Street and Avenue A, the former site of Rooney's Shoes & Clothing, Arnie's Wholesale, Madison on the Avenue, Stuff, and Flourish. The two businesses reopened within a week of each other in downtown Turners Falls.

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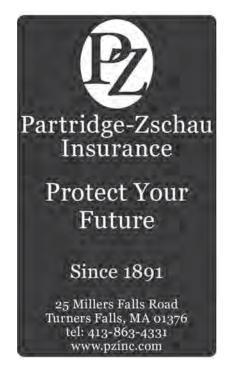


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GUEST COLUMN

A Response to Anti-H.897 Letter

By MICHAEL KELLETT

CONCORD – The *Reporter* recently published a letter from some Wendell residents in opposition to the bill H.897, "An Act Relative to Forest Protection." The letter makes a number of incorrect and misleading statements. Here are the facts.

The letter lauds the 2009-10 Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) "Forest Futures Visioning" process, which determined the management classifications for many state lands. I was directly involved in this process as a member of the citizen advisory committee, and the claims in the letter do not square with my experience.

- The Forest Futures process involved only about half of state land holdings. Despite vigorous objections from many on the citizen advisory committee, DCR refused to include the Quabbin and other watershed lands or the many wildlife management areas in the process. So, half of our public lands have had no meaningful public review or involvement in their management.
- The process was heavily influenced by special interests. Forest industry advocates and their allies in the agencies pushed hard to keep lands available for logging. Meanwhile, public pressure for protection was held back because most people did not know the process was even happening. As a result, although the Nature Conservancy stressed that reserves need to cover at least 15,000 acres to preserve an entire ecosystem, the largest area designated is 11,400-acre Mount Greylock, and no others come close. The Harvard Forest called for 7% of New England to be protected as reserves, but the Forest Futures process only classified 2% of our state as reserves,

and kept 63% of state lands open to logging.

• The process almost completely ignored climate change. It was done long before recent studies that stress the urgency of fighting climate change by protecting more forests within the next decade to keep carbon out of the atmosphere. The Forest Futures process mapped reserves without considering this critical factor. Instead, most forests with large trees were devoted to logging, not to carbon sequestration and storage.

I was also a co-author of H.897. The letter is largely wrong on the provisions and impacts of the bill. For example:

- Massachusetts land management laws, written many decades ago, did not anticipate the climate emergency, the extinction crisis, and concerns about the loss of public connections to nature. H.897 would update these old laws to address all three of these urgent issues.
- Commercial logging on state lands is an economic loser. Taxpayers are forced to subsidize this logging, because the cost of administering this expensive program is far higher than the meager timber revenues received. H.897 would save the public millions of dollars, which could be redirected to underfunded visitor centers, picnic grounds, trails, educational programs, and land and wildlife protection programs.
- H.897 takes a balanced approach. It would simply expand to all state public lands two designations that already exist parks and reserves. The bill explicitly provides flexibility for vegetation management if historically or scientifically shown to be necessary for public health and safety or environmental reasons. This is similar to the management of our National Parks. Few people

would argue that we should open our National Parks to commercial logging.

• Under current laws, parks and reserves – ranging from Walden Pond to Mohawk Trail – have only provisional protection. These designations can be weakened or abolished by an agency bureaucrat with the stroke of a pen. H.897 would, at long last, give permanent protection to these areas under the law.

Yes, H.897 was written primarily by citizen activists. But the bill was introduced by Rep. Susannah Whipps and 15 other legislators, who represent thousands of constituents. The bill has promoted an open, public discussion of critical issues affecting our public lands. This is important, because most Massachusetts citizens do not even know that state forest lands are being logged.

Bill opponents would rather keep the management of our public lands under the control of a few agency officials and special interests, with little public scrutiny or involvement. I believe that as more and more people learn the benefits that H.897 would provide, most of them will support this kind of positive change rather than maintaining the outdated status quo.

The concerns addressed in H.897 are only going to become more urgent. The people of Massachusetts deserve to have accurate information and an honest discussion of these issues so they can make the best decision on the future of our public lands. For more information, go to www. savemassforests.com.

Michael Kellett is executive director of RE-STORE: The North Woods, a nonprofit organization based in Concord, Massachusetts.

GILL from page A1

2020 and 2021 valuation.

Board member Greg Snedeker said that Montague's settlement "basically forced our hand," as the two towns had originally stood together in the dispute.

"I don't like the precedent," said board chair John Ward, expressing concern that it could open Gill up to other companies seeking PILOT agreements when they don't like their taxes.

Town administrator Ray Purington replied that he was not an expert, but felt the types of situations where such agreements can be sought are very limited. "It's not like any property owner, any homeowner, any business owner can do one of these," he said, adding that power generation was one of the few situations where it was possible.

When a vote of board members in favor of the measure was called, board member Randy Crochier said, "I'd prefer you said 'all those not opposed'," but said "aye."

Ward said he was still considering his vote as Snedeker and Crochier signed, then ended the matter with, "It was the will of the people at town meeting. I will sign."

Multiple Hazards

The board conducted a public forum to hear comments on the town's updated Local Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan. Alyssa Larose, a land use planner at the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG), outlined the plan's purpose, the action items it called for, and changes from the previous 5-year plan Gill adopted in 2014.

The purpose of the plan, Larose explained, was to identify hazards, reduce potential losses from future disasters, and coordinate the implementation of measures to achieve these goals. The update was developed by FRCOG and a committee which included the heads of Gill's police, fire, and highway departments, representatives from the Gill-Montague school district and

Northfield Mount Hermon School, and town administrator Purington. Their work began early last year, and was funded by grants from the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Larose said one significant difference from the 2014 plan was increased attention to climate change. She said the state has fully integrated climate impacts into its own hazard mitigation plan, and has asked towns to do the same. Climate events such as storms, flooding, and unusual changes in temperature and precipitation need to be addressed as hazards in and of themselves, she said, but also exacerbate existing vulnerabilities.

Larose presented some statistics from the state's Climate Change Clearinghouse, "resilient MA," an online database of information and resources on climate change created by the state in 2018 for the use of planners, policymakers, and the public.

By mid-century, resilient MA projects an annual increase in precipitation of three inches, a rise in average temperature from 45 to 50 degrees, and 18 more days of over 90 degrees each year. She noted that these were the median increases expected, but that all projections show increases. She also provided a statistic showing a 71% increase in "heavy rain" between 1958 and 2012, and shared projections that extreme and unusual weather events will likely increase in frequency.

Gill's mitigation plan lists three top priorities: winter storms, extreme temperatures, and invasive species. Action items listed for priority attention include the reliance on Route 2 for emergency travel, the need for backup power at Gill Elementary School and other public buildings, and the need for better systems to provide shelter in emergencies. The document also calls for more work on planning to help vulnerable populations, such as the elderly.

League of Women Voters Plans Census Awareness Event

GREENFIELD – The League of Women Voters of Franklin County (LWVFC) will hold a 2020 Census Awareness informational forum at 1 p.m. on Sunday, March 1. The event will be held at 170 Main Street in Greenfield.

During the forum, LWVFC will provide details about what the Census entails and answer questions. State representative Paul Mark (D-2nd Berkshire District), chairperson of the House Committee on Redistricting, will discuss how the 2020 Census affects the redistricting process.

"The Census impacts us in more ways than we can imagine, from political representation, to funding for schools and housing, and even the maintenance of roads and highways," remarked Marie Gauthier, president of LWVFC. "With so much at stake, the League is committed to doing its part to educate and motivate residents to participate in the 2020 Census."

LWVFC's Census Awareness

Public comment on the plan, which can be found on the town website, is open until March 2. Comments may be submitted online, or to Ray Purington at (413) 863-9347 or

administrator@gillmass.org.

Other Business

The board signed the warrant for the Tuesday, March 3 presidential primary. Voting will take place at the fire station from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Early voting will take place at the town hall from 1 to 4 p.m. on February 24, 25, and 26, and from 1 to 6 p.m. on February 27.

Barbara Watson was appointed as an election worker through June 30.

The board approved 2020 public gathering permits for events at the Schuetzen Verein including clam bakes, car shows, and grounds rent-

campaign also includes distributing copies of *We Count!*, a 2020 Census counting book, to Franklin County's elementary schools during the first week of April. Gauthier says, "An estimated 5% of kids under the age of 5 weren't counted in the 2010 Census. We want to do what we can to improve those numbers!"

This event is handicapped accessible, free, and open to the public, with complimentary refreshments.

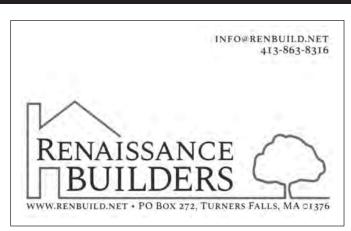
The League of Women Voters of Franklin County is a nonpartisan grassroots political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The League works to provide objective information on critical public policy issues and conduct debates and forums to increase awareness of candidates seeking office. For more information, visit LWVFC online at lwvma-franklincounty.org.

als. Crochier, a member of the club, recused himself from the vote. The board also discussed a potential conflict of interest with highway superintendent John Miner being a trustee of the club. Based on the club's location, and the prior history of events held there, the board decided no conflict of interest involving the highway department needed to be addressed.

The meeting closed with public service announcements, after which the board went into executive session to discuss litigation. Applications for Gill Fireman's Association scholarship program are available at the town hall and on the town website, and are due April 1. Surveys on the town's open space and recreation plan have been mailed out, but are also available at the town hall.

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BIG PICTURE from page A1

could really help them build what is the only asset that most low- and moderate-income people have, their home.

But I didn't know what I was doing. I remember going back and forth between an income statement and a balance sheet, and I was like – I just want more people to do this work!

So I went to grad school. I ended up going to Brandeis and doing an MBA in nonprofit management: business-focused, how to run things.

MR: Did you go right from there to the Mass Housing Partnership?

GG: I did – it was the first job I applied for while I was still in grad school. I accepted before I graduated. I just felt like I made the best decision ever, but I literally found it through an ad in the newspaper. Because back in 2002 or '03, you still looked in the newspaper for jobs.

MR: [Sighs.]

GG: "SoftSecond Loan Program Manager" – what was that? There were little houses on the bottom.

MR: What I remember, probably from what you explained to me 15 years ago, is that the fund MHP was sitting on comes from when any bank headquartered in the state is consolidated into one headquartered outside the state, a percent of the sale is diverted into this fund. And this goes back to the Dukakis era.

GG: Exactly. And there are very little bank funds left from that. 0.1% of the assets of the exiting bank – it's tiny. But this resulted, for example, in a \$549 million loan from Bank of America to MHP as a result of the acquisition of FleetBank. We had 10 years to spend that money when they made that loan commitment....

So Citizen's Bank, they're a good example: they would be financing 97% of a person's mortgage, and MHP would provide a loan loss reserve to defer the losses that might come on that 20% second mortgage, and also subsidize someone's payment. In total, the goal was to make sure that no one was paying more than 28% of their income toward housing, in total PITI [principal, interest, taxes, and insurance].

The goal was to have agencies like ours actually call and reach out to a homeowner and say "Hey, you're late on your mortgage. We're a nonprofit, we're here to help you – give us a call if you need help." Not a collector, just a soft, more approachable point of contact.

MR: I was called in because you needed to assemble a bunch of town-by-town data and put it together in a map. I was like, "I would be doing this in my free time."

GG: You should check out MHP's website, because [executive director] Clark [Ziegler] has now developed something called DataTown, which is his dream....

MR: You must have been there for a long time after we crossed paths!
GG: Ten years total. I was there from '03 until 2014.

MR: All the way through the foreclosure crisis...

GG: That's right. I'm proud of my work there. What was the SoftSecond Loan program when you were there morphed into what is now known as the ONE Mortgage program. I was a part of that evolution.

One of the unintended consequences of Dodd-Frank was that it ruled the SoftSecond structure as a predatory loan. The second mortgage was interest-only for the first 10 years, and subsidized, so while

there was no balloon payment and it was done with the utmost care, with affordability in mind, it didn't jive with the way the law was written.

MR: The law just viewed it as something with a time bomb built in?
GG: Yeah. So at that point we said, "we need to restructure this." A host of lenders worked with us, and when we transitioned the program, we had to get them all to sign onto the new terms. It was a heavy lift, and we lost some banks in the process...

There's no longer an interest-only second mortgage. It's a 97% LTV single mortgage, still offered at a discounted interest rate - basically, they look at 30 basis points less than prime.... It's mostly borne out through competition: in all first-time homebuyer classes, we will educate people to say "go to three banks, see what rates they're offering," and it usually varies a little bit based on each bank's rate sheet. That is still a part of the program. Some banks continue to do more of a discount... but in addition to that, we restructured the loan loss reserve.

Prior to my coming to MHP in 2003, there had been two losses

MR: What did it feel like when that started upticking in, I'm assuming, 2007?

GG: Really anxious. We all want to feel like the change agent is the education, and that if you create this combination of education, counseling, and affordability, meaning a low rate and a good product, that you're going to have success. Nobody wants to see failure.

And it was very difficult. There's a lot of very sad stories. There was a bubble bursting, but nobody knew quite how far down we had yet to go.... In 2007 I remember getting claims, and sometimes you start to – as a quasi-public instrumentality of the state *slash* lending institution – question the collection tactics, and motives, of lenders. And that was when you find out that there wasn't a whole lot to the loan-loss reserve policy.

So from 2007 to the time I left MHP, that became our job: trying to keep the program alive. The new loans coming in, new homebuyers coming in, but administering a growing loan-loss reserve program.

MR: So coming into this role – obviously you've not been executive director of a housing authority before?

GG: I was a commissioner: I was on the board as a state appointee in Natick, which is where I lived for seven years, from '07 until I moved out to Northampton in '15.

MR: Looking at your career overall, it strikes me that a lot of state and nonprofit intervention in housing is either targeted at transitioning people from houselessness and the shelter system into rental housing of their own, or first-time homeownership, transitioning people from renting into owning. It seems like there's two separate buckets?

GG: They might seem like buckets. But the other important thing here is that we, through our CDBG work, did \$1.5 million in home rehab loans, targeted to homeowners in the county who are struggling financially enough that they qualify for that program. When it's possible, we partner with Community Action to make sure they're accessing weatherization funds as well.

There's a huge amount of need from low-income homeowners here. RDI has done a tremendous amount

for homeownership. HRA continues to run the rehab program. In the lead-up to Solar Village, RDI developed over a hundred units of single-family homes. I don't think a lot of people remember that – I've certainly met a lot of the homeowners.

MR: The HRA does so many different things...

GG: When I was at the Natick Housing Authority, Deval Patrick put the idea of regionalization of the housing authorities out there for the first time, at least in my working lifetime. It hit with a thud, because it wasn't an approachable idea.

There are only four states in the country that have state-aided public housing: Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, and Hawaii. None have a larger state-aided public housing system than Massachusetts. There are 242 local public housing authorities in Massachusetts. In many other areas in the country, you have a countywide system.

The initial attempt was trying to create something like six regional housing authorities, and it flopped, because you can't really look at a map and have it work. But now DHCD has put an inquiry out for regionalization, and because [FCRHRA was] the first regional housing authority in the state, we are interested in pursuing it a little bit further.

Right now, Shelburne Housing Authority is an independent housing authority, with 46 units. They have had a management relationship with us for 40 years: we do an audit for them, an audit for us; a login for them, a login for us.... There are no independent staff at Shelburne Housing Authority; it is HRA.

MR: They have their own board? **GG:** I have six boards.

So last night, at the Shelburne Housing Authority meeting, the board voted in favor of exploring the regionalization initiative. The DHCD has put out technical assistance dollars to say you can hire someone to help you through the legal, financial, and operational questions.

MR: How many other housing authorities are there in the county?

GG: Greenfield, Montague, and Orange – which is kind of co-located with Athol. It's worth pursuing at some point. I'm proud of Shelburne for taking this step; I think it's a good step to help us look at

streamlining our operations....

MHP is sponsoring a full-day workshop for rural housing on April 16 that we're going to take part in in a few different ways. Valley CDC is going to be speaking about our Sunderland project. I'm going to be talking on a homeowner rehab panel, on CDBG.

MR: This Sunderland project is a fresh build?

GG: Yeah. Sunderland has been a project, on paper, since 2016.

There's a vacant farmhouse [just north of] the intersection of 116 and 47. Basically, we're renovating that house and extending it to have three units in the front, and then building a three-floor, 30-unit senior housing

development in the back of the lot....
It's been a really expensive site to build.... We're in what the state calls a one-stop financing round. This is the second time we've gone up for funding for this project. It's the state's one-stop opportunity for subsidy soft financing for projects, and also for tax credit. We're hoping for LIHTC, low-income housing tax credit, dollars for this – we're hoping for 9% credits, which will actu-

LEGAL NOTICE of PUBLIC HEARING TOWN OF WENDELL

Notice is hereby given that the Wendell Planning Board will hold a public hearing on Monday, March 2, 2020 at 7:30 p.m. at the Wendell Town Offices to review a proposed Bylaw change adding a Marijuana Moratorium to last until January 31, 2021 during which time no applications will be accepted for both medical and recreational marijuana growing, processing, or selling. During the moratorium period, the Town shall undertake a planning process that addresses the potential impacts of marijuana installations in Wendell on health, safety, and welfare of Wendell's citizenry, to determine how the Town shall reasonably regulate marijuana installations and, finally, to create a marijuana bylaw. The full text is available at the Wendell Town Offices during regular hours and on the town website at www.wendellmass.us.

ally fund the gap so we can make this marginally profitable.

It's needed in the community. This is 33 units, one building with one little house in the front – we're maintaining its historic look to keep in line with the town's village atmosphere and guidelines – but it's all going to be restricted to 30% and 60% AMI [area median income] seniors.

Right now there is *no* housing for low- and moderate-income seniors in Sunderland; they have a "0" on the Subsidized Housing Inventory. With the advent of Sugarbush, a huge 40B development in South Sunderland – it's roughly 150 units – that's bringing, I think out of the 150, maybe 20 to 25 units of housing for 80% of AMI. Sugarbush will probably put them up to "1" – you want to be at 10.

Ten should really be seen as the starting point, but for many communities it is a goal.... Sunderland decided to use their CPA [Community Preservation Act] funds to support this project, so kudos to them for investing \$345,000 to procure the site for RDI so we could start this.

MR: Are there other towns in the county that have CPA and are leveraging it towards housing?

GG: We do have a program in Leverett, with CPA funds....

We're going to be talking more about that at the April 16 forum, and ways in which communities can do more. But I don't like the idea of local programs; I wish that we could have more things that are regional like this. That's part of the reason why I came to this job – I think that regional administration of housing programs is important.

MR: Do you see this fox? [A fox has appeared just outside the floor-to-ceiling window beside us.]

GG: Oh my God! What's he here for?

MR: That was beautiful.

GG: Really pretty. Puffy little guy.

MR: Is this the first time you've

GG: I worked with Franklin County a little bit through Wisdom Way [in Greenfield] when I was at MHP. That was a dicey time to be developing affordable-homeownership condos – it hit the market in 2008....

I was concerned with not knowing enough about rural policy before coming here, but I've learned a lot in the past six months, and the board weren't as concerned about that as I thought they would be.

I think having known HRA and RDI as a partner, and having a more holistic housing background, was part of why they wanted me here.

MR: Is your sense that the people you're supporting in housing tend to have roots locally?

GG: By and large, yes.

MR: Transportation is a key part of housing affordability. What kind of conversations is the HRA involved in around transportation regionally? GG: I just got myself invited to the regional transportation steering committee. It's coordinated by the COG, it's something that [FRCOG director] Linda Dunlavy, who's the president of the RDI board, mentioned, because we've had an unusually high level of vacancies at Ashfield House.

Α5

They're talking about a new mode of transportation to Ashfield, which is something I'd love my property management director to get engaged in, to make sure it's addressing our residents' needs – where are they going during the day?

MR: There's an increasing need here for senior housing – the Sunderland project addresses that –

GG: That's step one. There's a lot of other communities that still need senior housing, Montague included. There's been other communities that have specifically RFP'ed properties, but there's a lot of other opportunities for us to look into.

Right now, as RDI, we are just looking at developing capacity.... we're working with Valley CDC, and I have another fantastic partner based in Rochester, New York who is helping look at properties. She actually walked Railroad Salvage with me in the snow – she sees potential there.

MR: There's two sub-basements full of burned-out beams!

GG: But there's location, there's structure, and there's accessibility to Food City; it's very close to our Winslow-Wentworth. And it's so close to Avenue A. If the pedestrian access is improved, which I know is being worked on, that could be a great opportunity. And that's not the only site that Montague is looking at – there's a lot of potential.

MR: We aren't expecting to see a population increase since the last census, but I still hear a lot of people talking about the longer-term trajectory of this county, expecting a lot of people will arrive here sometime soon. Is that something that you think is realistic?

GG: I think it's too soon for me to comment. I would love for that to be true. I think it's a fantastic place to live... the quality of life is great, and I'm just enamored of this town.

I would hope that others outside of the area, and even outside the state, would see that charm and want to come here. I see such fabulous work happening at the FRCOG, and in different circles – Montague has fantastic public administrators, and there's really thoughtful planning and work happening. I would hope there would be "if you build it, they will come."

MR: If you regionalize, would you shorten the acronym?

GG: You know, it's like an act of God to do that.

I think we should have a different name, to some degree, that makes it so my title doesn't have ten words in it: "Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority and Rural Development, Inc." My dad still doesn't know where I work!

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NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Saving On Little Things Adds Up

By JERRI HIGGINS

Leverett highway boss Matt Boucher, who was first on the agenda for a budget hearing at Tuesday night's selectboard meeting, came late, after being held up at the scene of a town sander truck oil leak.

Reached by telephone Wednesday, fire chief John Ingram, who was also early on the scene, said the incident happened during sanding at the top of January Hill Road. Sand was spread to contain the hazardous waste, and it was removed by backhoe during Tuesday's slushy storm, Ingram reported, adding that the state Department of Environment Protection was notified.

Boucher wrote Wednesday that the leak was caused by a failed motor gasket, and that the truck was being towed for repair.

"No damage was done, and the spill has been cleaned up completely," Boucher wrote, noting that the incident occurred around 5:30 p.m. and took about four hours to clean up. Besides his run-over phone, Boucher wrote that there were no injuries, and that the leak looked larger than it was at the time due to the heavy rain.

Speaking with the selectboard and finance committee, Boucher said he would like Leverett to look at the cost of owning an excavator outright, rather than hiring contractors and renting equipment. The FY'21 budget request he submitted shows how Leverett could save approximately \$10,000 a year by owning a multi-purpose machine.

Boucher's proposal cited the end of an Eversource program which used an "over-the-rail" mower to keep roadsides, telephone poles, guardrails and curbs trimmed. The mowing will now be local towns' responsibility.

"Our ten-wheeler dump truck is due for a replacement in 2032," Boucher added, "and that truck is built to go a million miles." Boucher said the truck "will need about \$40,000 to \$50,000 worth of work within the next five years," but that it could last another 40 years if taken care of. Fixing the current truck, he argued, is far better than spending roughly a quarter of a million dollars for a new one.

Boucher will bring his proposal to the capital planning committee, and said he would also like to see capital funds put in for restoring or refurbishing equipment.

Fire and Police Budgets

Fire chief John Ingram presented a request for a \$19,643 increase to the fire department's budget in FY'21. Salaries for Ingram and deputy chief Brian Cook accounted for a \$12,220 increase over the current year. Ingram said that the department wants to stay within the requested 1% budget increase, but

that he and Cook are averaging 25 hours a week, six hours over their official time budget.

"What did the personnel board say about that?" asked selectboard chair Peter d'Errico.

"They are supportive of it," Ingram said, "as long as there is money available."

"If we look at the bottom line here without the salaries, it's about a 20% increase," said finance committee member Ann Delano. "I just don't know, when we look at all the departments, if we can do all of this."

Ingram presented color pie charts showing the department's call volume. The Leverett fire department responded to 163 calls in 2019, including 84 "rescue and emergency" calls, 30 for "hazardous conditions," 12 for false alarms, and 9 fires.

Ingram recommended more *per diem* shifts on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and said he is working on a partnership plan with the UMass-Amherst student EMS program to help cover Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. He said the program would charge the town \$10 per call, and that he is finalizing a proposal with its director.

Asked by d'Errico if he saw any new trends in the calls, Ingram said he didn't, but noted that "it's an older population now, so those calls are going up – but they're serious."

"Stop using colored ink, it's really expensive," Delano suggested, referring to the pie charts.

Selectboard member Julie Shively agreed that "saving on little things all adds up."

Police chief Scott Minckler alerted the board that the new 800 MHz digital radio system is coming, and could be in use by late spring. He said he had been warning the town of the region's switch from UHF systems. "This is the third year that I've brought it up, and now I'm here to tell you that the first police departments are going to the new system sometime in May of this year," Minckler said, adding that he wants the town to be ready for the switch.

The police department's FY'21 budget requests "less than 1% of the total expense budget," Minckler wrote. He cited an increase of \$300 for online officer training classes, saving time and fuel, and another increase of \$18,412 for two part-time officers working full weekend days, allowing his full-timers to work until about 1 a.m. Sundays through Thursdays, with an additional two or three hours on weekends.

Minckler said he would be remiss in his duty if he didn't highlight the need for police coverage during those hours, even though the town budget may not allow for the extra coverage.

The department currently has three part-time active officers, and a fourth who hasn't come in to fin-

ish his training, Minckler said. "I'm going to end up putting on at least three more part-timers, just to fill shifts now, while that person is in the Academy," he said.

Dirt Road Advisors

Planning board member Richard Nathhorst and resident Rich Brazeau spoke to the selectboard about Leverett's dirt roads.

"This isn't rocket science," said Nathhorst, holding a copy of a book of Massachusetts' standard specifications for highways and bridges. "This is nothing new."

Nathhorst described the problem of the town's dirt roads not having "a good crushed stone road bed beneath them." That and a lack of good drainage turns the roads to mud, he said, with the through roads taking the worst beating.

Dudleyville and Jackson Hill roads see a lot of through traffic, and Nathhorst said it has greatly increased in recent years with residents, delivery trucks, and ever more vehicles traveling on them.

Nathhorst said he wants to avoid a repeat of last spring, when muddy conditions made the roads impassable for four days, and that he, Brazeau, and other residents are looking to help, knowing that Leverett doesn't have money in the budget to address the problem.

The group recommends the town seek climate change adaptation funds and other state money to fund a study. Nathhorst said he had spoken with engineers, state representative Natalie Blais, and planners at the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG). "What we need to do to go after climate change money – or any other state money – is to have some kind of engineering study with a stamp on it," he said.

Other Business

The selectboard appointed Tessa Dowling as Leverett's conservation commission agent.

Members discussed a request to use the Leverett transfer station shed to fundraise for the Leverett Village Co-op. The town's current policy is to allow non-profits to fundraise at the transfer station. Shively indicated that the policy needs updating to address legal issues and any other concerns for all use of the transfer station shed. No vote was taken.

Town administrator Marjorie McGinnis said she was looking into a health insurance plan for town employees that might save the town money after its current contract with the state Group Insurance Commission (GIC) ends next year. The board directed her to check in with town counsel Donna MacNicol on the subject.

The selectboard's next meeting will be held Tuesday, March 3 at the public safety complex.

DIGESTER from page A1

lack of facilities for the whole area to take sludge to," he said.

Greenfield, along with eight other municipalities through the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District (FCSWMD), pays a hauling company to bring its sewage sludge to a treatment facility in Lowell. Last year that facility received six million gallons of sludge from western Massachusetts, the *Lowell Sun* reported, a significant revenue stream for that city.

Jan Ameen, director of the FCSWMD, says it will cost the nine towns in her service area \$1.2 million to transport and dispose of sludge this year, compared to \$850,000 just last year. The volume of liquid sludge being disposed of has stayed relatively constant over the past few years, she said, but hauling costs are rising.

"In order to cover their cost, they have to raise their sewer rates, and that affects the residents," Ameen said. "When does that become unsustainable, from the cost perspective?"

The FCSWMD, which handles sludge disposal from water treatment plants in Deerfield, Erving, Northfield, Orange, Sunderland, Ashfield, Greenfield, Hadley, and Hatfield, has struggled to find and keep partnerships with disposal facilities that will accept their sludge. Ameen said she has pursued cheaper options closer by, only to be met with closed doors. "They're at capacity." she said.

Until 2012, the FCSWMD sent sludge to an incinerator in Fitchburg, but when the EPA tightened regulations on air quality emissions, that facility shut down instead of making costly upgrades. Ameen turned to another facility in Rhode Island, the Upper Blackstone Water Pollution Abatement District, but that partnership was discontinued in 2016.

The Lowell plant, a costly last resort, charges by the liquid gallon, not just solid waste content, Ameen said. Typically, treated sludge is transported from municipal wastewater treatment plants to outside facilities where it is dewatered, treated further, and separated for reuse or incineration. Many dewatering facilities prefer to receive thicker sludge, around 7% solid content. Franklin County's watery sludge, according to Ameen, measures around 2.5% solids, due in part to the age and inefficiency of some local plants.

Montague, meanwhile, uses a special press that turns sludge into "cakes" that are about 17% solids and cheaper to dispose of. The town has budgeted \$155,000 this year to have Veolia Wastewater haul the cakes away.

"We are concerned that it is not sustainable," said town administrator Steve Ellis, "and we are actively considering other approaches that may help us to contain costs in the future."

A Regional Solution

Greenfield has budgeted \$4.1 million for the planned digester, and the department hopes for future govern-

ment grants that will later expand the digester's capacity to accept sludge from other area towns.

During anaerobic digestion, bacteria break down organic material in the absence of oxygen, producing methane gas and a nutrient-rich digestate. The gas is captured and burned for energy, while the digestate can be used as organic fertilizer or landfill, as long as it meets state and federal health safety standards.

"It originally started as an inter-municipal project, but we hit a few snags in the process," Warner said. "Eventually [we could] build out to include other municipalities."

In the meantime, other towns have been looking for sustainable solutions to their sewage waste problems.

Last year Montague set aside money to study the feasibility of a sludge-composting program. "We won't be looking to conduct that study until we have [hired] a permanent superintendent by this spring," said Ellis. Taxes owed at the now-shuttered Southworth Paper Mill property, totaling nearly \$300,000, will soon be returned to the sewer district to replenish its reserve fund.

"Montague sees real promise in anaerobic digesters as one means to resolving the sludge disposal conundrum," Ellis said. "Although they still do result in some leftover waste."

A meeting in Whately last November, organized by Rep. Natalie Blais and Sen. Jo Comerford, brought state officials, municipal leaders and sewage treatment plant operators together to talk about the problems plaguing rural water wastewater operators. Major points of discussion included aging infrastructure, the rising cost of sludge disposal, and a lack of qualified plant operators.

"We emphasized the fact that many of our communities don't have the capacity to research and fill out grant applications," Blais said. "The DEP committed to hosting a daylong workshop for our towns on all grant opportunities that might be available to them."

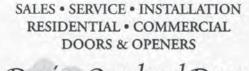
Last week Blais met with the state Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to discuss issues outlined in the report and plan next steps. The state is encouraging towns to leverage regional Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness, or MVP, grants to improve water treatment infrastructure.

Ellis said Montague is already using an MVP grant to address a persistent flooding problem on Montague City Road, and pointed out that state grants must often be matched by local funding.

Montague, he said, has "expressed interest in an aerobic digester that appears likely to be constructed, but we have not received a clear cost proposal for that multi-million dollar project. It may offer the greatest certainty of a sustainable solution for disposal of Montague's sludge, but the associated cost is not yet known."

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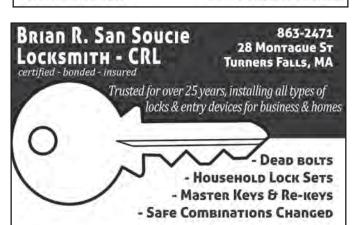


Devine Overhead Doors

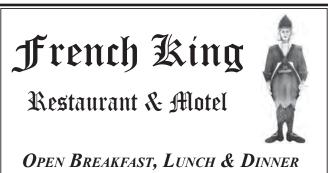
Gerry Devine

106 West Street Hadley, MA. 01035 Hampshire: 586-3161 Franklin: 773-9497









Wednesday - Sunday 7 a.m.

COOP from page A1

Mendez, Jeff Lacy as vice president, Jono Neiger as treasurer, and Karen Traub as clerk. Also sitting at the front table on Wednesday were board members Jean Bergstrom and Lori Lynn Hoffer who are in charge of membership communication and development. The coop reopened its doors immediately after the February 5 meeting, and has primarily been operating with volunteer staff, including former manager Paul Rosenberg.

Virtually all of Wednesday's meeting was devoted to reports and motivational speeches by board members and Rosenberg. "The community galvanized itself over the past few weeks," said Mendez, who said he comes from New York City. "I am beyond proud. The community has opened up its heart."

Traub said working at the coop's register over the past few weeks had been a "magical time" after the stress of the February 5 meeting. She noted that the Greenfield cooperative Real Pickles had donated boxes of pickles and sauerkraut to the coop.

Rosenberg, who said he felt "like the Star Trek captain," announced that he was excited to come out of retirement and help reorganize the coop. "My nose is getting longer," he added.

"You're still in retirement," said his partner Patty Townsend. "You're not getting paid."

Jeff Lacy, pitching for members to sign pledge cards

handed out at the meeting, said he was going to do his "Alan Chartock imitation." Most of the audience appeared to be familiar with Chartock, an announcer for National Public Radio's Albany affiliate, WAMC.

The board did not present a new business plan to the membership at the meeting. Neiger, who heads a finance committee, said the organization is still "in a really hard position, in a deep hole." He said the committee was developing a short-term plan to stabilize the coop and make sure stock was on the shelves, but that a long-term plan might not be ready for months.

"I didn't come here with a lot of facts and figures," Neiger told the members.

"The old board was not lying about this," said Mendez, referring to the coop's financial condition. But he said that member Sam Lovejoy, who Mendez called "heroic," had been able to secure a \$25,000 loan for the organization. In addition, a "generous donor" has reportedly pledged two \$5,000 "challenge grants," to be released when the coop reaches targets of \$20,000 and then \$50,000. So far, \$16,000 has been raised toward the first target.

Mendez said the coop should look for a modest loan to consolidate its debt. "I'm not looking for \$300,000 to go into the bistro or restaurant business," he said. "We are trying to be reasonable and find something that works for all of us."



LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here's the way it was February 11 and 18, 2010: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

Montague SB Supports Greenfield Road Bike Bridge

Hopes to reconnect Greenfield Road over the Pan Am Railroad tracks came up for vote, as a motion to reconfirm the proposal to use Hatchery Road over to Turners Falls Road and make a new pedestrian bike bridge with enough capacity to allow a police car or an ambulance to cross over the railroad tracks.

The motion was approved on a 2-to-1 vote, with Mark Fairbrother voting nay. "I'll buy dinner when that bridge is built," said Fairbrother. "When and if that bridge is built, I'll buy dinner; I'll be happy to."

Fairbrother said that at a meeting with transportation officials on February 5, he felt the Massachusetts Department of Transportation officials gave the town the runaround. "They said exactly what I expected them to say," he said. "They don't want to do it. You'll be lucky to get any sort of bridge out of that."

Fairbrother supported the idea of having a graded crossing across the railroad tracks.

Pump Test at New Well a Success

On Friday morning at 11 a.m., after about 16 years of planning and permitting, the Turners Falls Water Department started pumping water from a new well off Green Pond Road. The well is 253 feet deep, and it was pumping 1,040 gallons a minute on Friday.

"Its theoretical yield is 3,000 gallons a minute," said Stantec project manager David Harwood, consulting with the department on the new well. "We're not pumping at anything near its potential."

He called the first day of the "constant rate test" a success, and said the water was pure. "There are no contaminants."

The Turners Falls Water Department supplies tap water to customers in all of Montague's villages except Montague Center, which uses its own well, located on Main Street opposite the property formerly owned by Rodney Beauchesne. The wells the Turners Falls department relies on are located off of Center Street in Montague Center.

What Is Proposed For Our State Forests

After four hours of fervent but civil dialogue about state forests Tuesday evening in Amherst, the prospects may have shrunk for biomass-electricity harvests on state land, but sentiment favored continued timber harvesting on a reduced portion of them. The wish for even more "reserve" (land exempt from tree harvesting) was heard, as was the perhaps contradictory desire to supply more of our own forest products in-state.

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) used Amherst Middle School to present a draft report of its nine-month-long Forest Futures Visioning process, one of four statewide public comment sessions. Attending were several hundred citizens from western and central Massachusetts.

The "visioning" process arose out of upset with DCR practices and policies – initially a rebellion at the marking of trees for cutting at Robinson State Park in Westfield, but soon growing to include a level of public unhappiness with cutting practices at other forests and in the Quabbin, where cutting is managed by DCR in conjunction with the Division of Water Supply Protection.

Vermont Yankee Vote Next Week

In a decision that will impact residents and towns in Massachusetts and New Hampshire within the evacuation zone of the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant, Vermont state senate president *protem* Peter Shumlin (D-Putney) announced this week he will call a vote on February 24 to determine whether the Vernon plant will be given a 20-year extension on its operating license, or retired on schedule by March 2012.

For Entergy Vermont Yankee to prevail in its bid to secure a 20-year extension on its license, a yes vote would be needed in both houses of the Vermont legislature, to instruct the Vermont Public Service Board to certify the license extension is in the "public good."

A no vote in either chamber would forbid the issuance of the certificate of public good Vermont Yankee needs to continue to operate past 2012. A no vote would be impervious to a veto from Republican governor Jim Douglas, a major supporter of Vermont Yankee.

SPORTS from page A1

state, and will host the third-seeded Old Colony Maroon Cougars out of Rochester. Hopefully, after they beat the Cats, they'll take on the winner of Lexington's Minuteman Tech (4) versus Southshore Voc of Hanover (1) on Friday.

On the girls' ticket, the Franks hold the number one overall seed in the state, and they will host the fourth-seeded Lynn Tech White Tigers at 7 p.m on Thursday. If they tame the Tigers, the Franklin Ladies will take on the winner of Old Colony (3) and Southshore (2) in the state championship game on Friday in Turners Falls.

Turners Boys' Basketball *Mahar 59 – TFHS 55*

Mahar 59 – TFHS 55

On Monday, Turners dropped their last game of the regular season out in Orange against the Mahar Senators.

The first time Turners played Mahar this season, Powertown needed the win to stay alive in the playoff hunt. That January 15 win, halted a three-game losing streak and propelled the Thunder through the midseason, and was a big reason

that they made the playoffs.

In Monday's game, with the playoff ticket in their pocket, Blue was just jostling and jockeying for their berth. Although Big Blue dropped the game, they held their own against a fellow playoff contender.

Turners held a three-point lead, 14-11, after a quarter, but the Senators came back to take a 24-22 lead at the half. Mahar poured it on in the third to take a five-point lead, heading into the final quarter 40-35. Blue chipped away, but the Senators prevailed, and stole the game 59-55.

Three Turners players hit double figures in this game: Chace Novak (18), Anthony Peterson (17), and

Marcus Sanders (12). Three others – Jaden Whiting (3), Brendon Driscoll (3) and John Fritz (2) – also put up points for Powertown.

With their 10–10 record, Turners will probably travel for their first playoff game. But never count out a team run by Gary Mullins.

Turners Girls' Basketball

In the second year of the Marvell Age, the Turners Falls girls' basket-ball team improved on last years' one-win record. With Dabney Rollins out for the season, several young girls had to step up and play varsity this season.

I have no doubt that Eddy Marvell's team will continue to improve, because these youngsters all gained valuable playing time experience.

> Next week: Tech Wars, and Turners girls' basketball stats.



OBITUARY

Barbara A. Edson-Greenwald (1958 - 2020)

Barbara Anne Edson Greenwald, 62, of Gill passed away unexpectedly on Thursday, February 13, 2020. She was born in Brattleboro, Vermont on March 21, 1958.

She graduated from Pioneer Valley High School and went on to attend both GCC and UMass-Amherst, obtaining a BA in Science. She started her career as a registered nurse working at the Beacon Clinic, then went on to work at the Stoneleigh-Burnham School and Applewood Rehabilitation Center. Later on in life she became a Licensed Real Estate Broker, first working for Pam Veith Realty in Northfield and later working for Maniatty Real Estate in Greenfield.

Barb was the rock of her family. She loved her daughter and grandchildren with all her heart, and adored her husband. She reached out to all of her extended family, showering them with gifts, food and love. Gatherings with family and friends were of the utmost importance to her. Just as important were four-legged family members, who sometimes took precedence over the two legged members of her family.

Barb loved to travel to exotic places, especially those involving beaches, fishing and luxury accommodations. When at home she loved sitting around the pool with friends and family, drinking wine and telling stories with much laughter. Barb always had a good story to tell.

She is survived by her husband Stephen Greenwald of Gill; her daughter Devon Edson and her husband Mark Putnam of Northfield; her two grandchildren Alden Campbell and Korben Putnam of Northfield; her brothers Douglas Edson (Debra) of Gill and Michael Edson (Jane) of Athol; and many nieces and nephews. Her parents Alden and Lucy Edson predeceased her.



In lieu of flowers, please make any donations to Dakin Humane Society, 163 Montague Road, Leverett, MA 01054 (www.dakinhumane.org); or Monadnock Humane Society, 101 West Swanzey Road, Swanzey, NH 03446 (www.monadnockhumanesociety.org).

There will be a Celebration of Life at the Blue Heron Restaurant on March 21 at 2 p.m. Arrangements are by Kidder Funeral Home, 1 Parker Ave., Northfield, MA 01360, www.kidderfuneralhome.com.

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BILL from page A1

inquiry shall include, but not be limited to, the study and investigation of the extent and adequacy of the management of state-owned and privately-owned forest land in the commonwealth, the study of the ecological soundness of different approaches to timber cutting, and policies as they relate to climate change, the role of biomass as a renewable or alternative energy source, the economic impact of the forestry industry, and chapter 132 of the General Laws, known as the forest cutting law."

The commission would be composed of 12 members, including chairs appointed by the Speaker of the House and President of the Senate; two representatives of the minority party; representatives of the offices of Energy and Environmental Affairs and Housing and Economic Development; the commissioners, or their designees, of the departments of Conservation and Recreation and Fisheries and Wildlife; and four members appointed by the governor.

The gubernatorial appointees would include a licensed private forester, a representative of a land trust, an individual with "experience in the management of forest land," and a person "from a community with more than 30% state forests within its boundaries."

The bill charges the commission with meeting at least four times and submitting its report, as well as drafts of pertinent legislation, by January 1, 2021. Whipps said this timeline could be extended

if H.4415 is not approved by the legislature until after this spring's budget season.

In addition to replacing H.897, the new legislation also replaces bills that would take burning biomass (forest products) out of the "portfolio standard" which encourages renewable energy in the state, and a bill to extend the licensing period for companies qualified to harvest forest products from one to three years.

Chris Egan of the Massachusetts Forest Alliance, a group which supports logging in state forests, said he was perplexed by the decision to fold the licensing bill, which "everyone seems to support," into H.4415. However, he said he did not oppose the creation of a commission to study the impact of logging on carbon sequestration, because "we think the science comes down on our side of these issues."

Troy Wall, a spokesperson for the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), told the Reporter that his agency "does not comment on pending legislation," but that "the Baker-Polito Administration will review any legislation that comes before Governor Baker's desk for approval." Wall also said that the state "continues to implement selective forest management projects in an effort to promote the health of woodlands and diverse habitat across the state, and increase forest resilience to climate change impacts."

Janet Sinclair, an activist from Shelburne Falls who helped write

MONTAGUE REPORTER ON THE ROAD



Our correspondent Anna Gyorgy outside of a biodynamic beekeeper's workshop in Berlin, around the corner from the historic renovated former state-owned farm where she stayed last month while reporting on a demonstration against industrial agriculture.

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

H.897 and testified in favor of the bill before the Wendell selectboard last month, said she was supportive of H.4415. "I am pleased that the ENRA Committee listened to the thousands of supporters of H.897, and decided on the idea of setting

up a Commission to carefully review how our public forests play a role in biodiversity, climate change mitigation, and public health," she wrote in an email.

Whipps suggested that there needs to be more research on the

climate impact of state forest management policies, an issue she agreed was "complex." "We have brilliant people on both sides of the issue," she said. "Let's do

what's best for the Commonwealth."



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Downtown Turners Falls







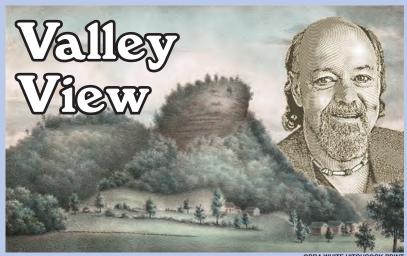
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Above: A handmade sign on Avenue A in Turners Falls.

by Trish Crapo



By GARY SANDERSON

GREENFIELD – I didn't know Jimmy Cooney. He didn't know me. But I did know *of* the man, 20 years my father's senior, and did experience his strong presence at two or three social gatherings involving mutual West Whately friends.

My most memorable Cooney encounter was at an afternoon May Day celebration, probably 1970 or '71, me a teen, soon to be 17. If my memory serves me, he was not tall, had a heavy build with strong shoulders and wore a navy beret or fisherman's cap, probably the former. Don't hold me to it, though. The finer details get foggy 50 years and many dead brain cells later.

Those who knew him said Cooney was irascible, and indeed he was all worked up about something that fine spring day, wildly gesturing in animated conversation with friend, neighbor, and radical fellow-traveler Marshall Kitchener Smith, who was hosting the event and offering samples of his homemade apple, pear, plum, rhubarb and/or dandelion wine, some of our western hills' finest of the day.

I'm sure there were hundreds of topics the two pals and political soulmates could have discussed in a peaceful manner but, no, they had traipsed into disagreement. Maybe the wine had an influence. Or maybe it was Knickerbocker Natural, Marshall's beer of choice. Then again, maybe it came down to genes and roots: Marshall was English, Jimmy Irish. Isn't that more than enough to ignite argument?

Both men owned 200-year-old homes, both were avowed pacifists, and both were card-carrying Sixties peaceniks with a hand in organizing Sunday peace vigils protesting Vietnam, one in Northampton, the other in Amherst. They had also both been members of famous communes – Marshall at Scott and Helen Nearing's back-to-the-earth settlement in Jamaica, Vermont, Cooney at iconoclast Hervey White's community in Woodstock, New York.

So they were cut from the same cloth, so to speak, which didn't mean they had to agree on everything. Maybe they were discussing something as benign as teenagers, hedgehogs, stray cats, or how to

roof a henhouse. No clue. I kept my distance. Was young. None of my business.

Smith, who grew up in Turners Falls, was the first organic home farmer I ever observed up close and personal. He was trained well, by the very man (Nearing) who wrote Living the Good Life, a Sixties bible for homesteaders fleeing urban life for rural nirvana. Smith raised chickens for eggs and meat, kept a well-maintained compost pile to fertilize his gardens, fruit trees and berry patches, heated and often cooked with wood, and fermented his own wines of various potencies, stored on damp wooden shelves on both sides of steep, open stairs descending to the dirt-floored cellar. He even maintained an outhouse tucked away in back of the barn, just in case it was needed.

I was all eyes and ears around Marshall. Though a tad peculiar, he was bright, well read, and interesting. My lasting impression is him seated in an old Windsor chair at his round, wooden reading table in the fireplaced room off the kitchen. An independent carpenter and handyman, he had chosen to live an alternative lifestyle and was an activist in the radical politics of the Vietnam era that put the nation on the edge of rebellion, especially after Nixon joined forces with Dixiecrats in the name of law and order to win the 1968 election. He could sense trouble on the horizon, and go figure, now that Dixiecrat voting bloc backbones the Republican Party.

Smith taught me to be skeptical, a cynic, cautioning that it was unwise to believe what you read in the newspapers and heard on the nightly news. He would often send me home with issues of Ramparts magazine and I.F. Stone's Bi-Weekly, radical publications he had already read. Once in a while I'd sleep over, maybe during a snowstorm, waking to a big, festive country breakfast with delicious home-baked bread, fried or scrambled eggs, and bacon prepared either in the oven or atop the cast-iron wood cookstove.

To show my gratitude, I'd occasionally stack wood in the shed just outside the kitchen door. He'd come out from time to time to check my progress and slip me a Knick Nat as a thankful gesture. see VALLEY VIEW page B4

ASHFIELD - On one of the coldest days of February, Ashfield artist Jamie Young and I sit in the kitchen of her 250-year-old farmbouse and talk about her unusual

house and talk about her unusual landscape paintings depicting native trees being engulfed by invasive vines, an invasion Young says has escalated with the onset of climate change. The paintings, some of which you can see now through March 14 at William Baczek Fine Arts in Northampton, are alive with tangled energy, both beautiful and dark with apocalyptic warning.

Bathed in gorgeous light, depicted with Young's calligraphic brush strokes, is the earth's most basic struggle: the struggle between life and death.

"Yeah, there's a darkness to them," Young says of the paintings. "It's a little bit scary. It's complicated. It's chaos. But you know, like in chaos theory, there are patterns that emerge. So I relate that to these big tangles – there are all these different patterns going on. There are big leaves, and little leaves, and the patterns of the trees underneath them. And the patterns of the vines' leaves. And they intermingle. And one thing is dying, and one thing is growing. Which I think is fascinating."

Born in 1953, Young grew up near a wooded area in the outskirts of Longmeadow, when the town was easily just a third the size it is now. She describes long afternoons exploring the woods with her five siblings and their large collie.



Jamie Young, Tomorrow, 70 by 70 inches, oil, 2020.

"My parents would just let us go," she says, and the collie would always bring them home at the end of the day. The woods offered special solace as she entered her teenage years, with all of their "hormones and emotions." Young became a landscape painter at 15, and has been painting ever since.

"It's an emotional compulsion. I have to paint," she says. "If I didn't paint, I would probably do something else, like be a musician, although I'm not musical at all. Everything's gone into painting. If I don't paint,

I feel ungrounded. I feel muddled."

Young's impulse to create and her love of the woods evolved naturally into her interest in landscape painting, which she sees not only as a creative outlet but as a documentation of the world around her. It's through this close study of the landscape that she's recognized the effects of climate change. Even 30 years ago, she says, she'd go out into the meadows near the airport in Northampton and see invasive vines sprawling across the ground and up into the trees. But

see **ARTBEAT** page B5

New Documentary Highlights (413)ART

By DINA STANDER

TURNERS FALLS – Filmmaker Sofia Taylor's series of nine visits with local artists, (413) ART, will premiere as a documentary on Friday, February 28 at the Shea Theater in downtown Turners Falls. (413)ART investigates the local arts scene through filmed interviews with a multi-generational and diverse selection of the region's artists working in a variety of disciplines, following each into their studios to hear their stories and observe their practices.

Taylor's active collaboration with her subjects and her talented production team are the shining threads that weave through each of the stories. We never hear her ask a question, and I can only imagine the hours of material left on the virtual editing floor. Instead, we see her subjects' thoughtful responses.



Stills from the documentary film.

Taylor's questions and skillful editing have the effect of coaxing these artists into bloom before our eyes.

Each is encouraged to tell us the story of their art making process. As they share the small intimacies of choosing materials, centering intention, and creating a weld or a line or a color or a new curve in stone, we're drawn into the exhilaration of making, and might believe that we, too, exist in creative relationship

with everything.

Taylor grew up in Argentina and South Deerfield, and graduated in 2017 with a combined degree in Film Studies and English Literature from Wesleyan University. She worked in television in New York City and then returned to the Valley to recover from a traumatic brain injury. She has spent the last year working on this project.

see **PREVIEW** page B5

Pet of Week



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Do you want to make a dif- head butts and maybe even a bedtime buddy. But there are no guarantees. Your visitors will never see them because they'll quietly slip away and disappear into a closet.

> Are you ready to make a difference in a special kitty's life? Stop by and speak to an Animal Resource Counselor. Contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at (413) 548-9898 or at info@dpvhs.org.

Senior Center Activities FEBRUARY 24 THROUGH 28

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 2/24 1 p.m. Knitting Circle Tuesday 2/25 10:15 a.m. Chair Yoga 1:30 p.m. A Matter of Balance Wednesday 2/26 12:30 p.m. Bingo Thursday 2/27 9 a.m. Tai Chi 10:15 a.m. Chair Yoga 1 p.m. Cards, Games, & Pitch

ERVING

Friday 2/28

4 p.m. Gentle Yoga

1 p.m. Writing Group

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 Betters, Senior Center Director,

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

Monday 2/24

8:45 a.m. Stretch & Sculpt 10 a.m. Healthy Bones & Balance 12 p.m. Homemade Lunch 12:30 p.m. Card Game: Pitch Tuesday 2/25

8:45 a.m. S.W.A.P. Exercise 10 a.m. Stretching & Balance 12 p.m. Homemade Lunch

Wednesday 2/26

8:45 a.m. Line Dancing 8:45 a.m. Relaxing Technique 10 a.m. Chair Yoga 11 a.m. M3 Games 12 p.m. Congregate Lunch 12 p.m. Bingo & Snacks Thursday 2/27

8:45 a.m. Interval Training 10 a.m. Healthy Bones 10 a.m. A Matter of Balance 12 p.m. Homemade Lunch

12 p.m. Congregate Lunch

Friday 2/28 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Quilting Workshop 9:30 a.m. Fun Bowling

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.

Montague Community Television News

Life, Livability, and Live Music

By MICHAEL SMITH

It might be hard to believe, but spring will soon be here! The land will soon be growing with new life, and so will Turners Falls.

Town planner Walter Ramsay gave a presentation of the Livability Plan for Turners Falls at the Great Falls Discovery Center back on the first of February. What sort of ideas were discussed? What direction is our town developing towards? Find out what Walter has up his sleeve by checking out the entire presentation on montaguetv.org.

If you're looking for some live music to accompany your day check out Dan O'Sullivan performing at the Turners Falls Rod and Gun Club. Dan is a talented musician, showing off his skills with some original songs as well as classics we all know and love. You can find the video by clicking the "Latest Videos" tab on our homepage at montaguetv.org.

And if you want to keep an eye on the Montague finance committee, we have their full meeting

from February 12 up for you to watch. Find out what's going on in your own community, and remember that knowing is half the battle!

Something going on you think others would like to see? If you get in touch, we can show you how easy it is to use a camera and capture the moment.

Contact us at (413) 863-9200, infomontaguetv@gmail.com, or stop by 34 Second Street between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., Mondays through Fridays. We'd love to work with you!

Sex Matters

a sex-positive health column

by STEPHANIE BAIRD

Definitions and descriptions of sexual orientation continue to evolve as we blaze into this opening 21st century. Most of us are familiar with these definitions: heterosexual: attracted to a different gender from your own; lesbian: female-identified, attracted to female-identified; gay: male-identified, attracted to male-identified; and bisexual: attracted to multiple genders.

As people expand gender constructs and experiences, ideas of attraction are also expanding. We now know that orientation can include both sexual and romantic attractions. Someone might describe themselves as heterosexual and hetero-romantic. Or they may describe themselves as bisexual and homo-romantic (romantic attraction towards the same gender).

A former client once pointed out that when she came out as a lesbian in her teens, she was mortified that people might imagine her engaging in sexual activity upon hearing the label "lesbian." This particularly bothered her, as she had had no sexual experience yet, nor were her own sexual thoughts and fantasies that detailed. I'm repeating this here as a suggestion to understand a person as more than their sexual orientation or gender label, as each of us is much more than the sum of our parts.

Bisexuality - admittedly a binary term - has frequently been misunderstood as a "transition" phase. Many bisexual-identified folks indeed claim it as a lifelong identity. Kinsey and early sex researchers in the 1940s were the first to develop the Kinsey Scale of sexual orientation (0 =completely heterosexual attraction and behavior, 6 = completely homosexual attractionand behavior), discovering - gasp! - in their research of thousands of anonymous Americans, that very few Americans identified as strictly heterosexual or strictly gay or lesbian, based on questions about their attractions, fantasies, and actual experiences.

Expanding on this scale, the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid and the Storms Scale were later developed to show human nuance more accurately, looking at past, present, ideal, or plotting eroticism on an x/y axis. I myself find the "Gender Unicorn" - referenced in January's column on gender – a wonderful modern tool for looking at continuums of attraction.

Bisexual activists continue to fight against biphobia, and often point out that for them, they prioritize getting to know a person, not what's between their legs. Many bisexual folk also understand there are more than two genders, and include that possibility in their personal definition, or may call themselves pansexual/panromantic (attracted toward all possible genders) or polysexual/polyromantic (attracted toward multiple genders). Some famous bisexual activists that you might enjoy researching include Boston-based Robyn Ochs and California-based Susie Bright.

Folks may also use these descriptive terms: asexual or aromantic: no experience of sexual or romantic attraction towards anyone, may enjoy sexual experiences on their own; gray-sexual or gray-romantic: rarely experience attraction towards anyone; or demi-sexual or demi-romantic: experiencing attraction towards someone only after developing a very strong bond.

While monogamy has been the Western Puritanical default assumption of what adults should aspire to, folks, including many of my clients, are also exploring and claiming a polyamorous orientation, defining and subscribing to "consensual non-monogamy." This practice of being intimate with more than one person at a time, while utilizing the ethical ideals of honesty, communication, and transparency, is detailed in the books The Ethical Slut (Hardy and Easton, 1997, 2009) and Opening Up (Taormino, 2008), among others. Folks who identify with and practice polyamory might mention being part of a polycule, the group of folks romantically or sexually connected to each other in this way, or having a *metamour*, a person who is in an intimate relationship with one of their intimate partners.

Folks in poly relationships might note feeling compersion: the opposite of jealousy. Compersion means feeling happy and delighted that an intimate partner had a wonderful sexual experience with another person. Joli Hamilton, sex educator and activist, recently gave a TEDx talk in Easthampton on "Compersion – The Opposite of Jealousy," available on Youtube.

Eve Ng, associate professor of media, women's gender, and sexuality studies at Ohio University, in her recent article "Rom-com without romonormativity, gays without homonormativity: Examining the People Like Us web series" (New Review of Film and Television Studies, 2020) coined the term "romonormative" as privileging "monogamous romantic relationships and downplaying same-sex eroticism." Finally, a word for all the Disney forced-monogamous-romance plots!

A new favorite and recently purchased illustrated book, How to Have Feminist Sex (Perry, 2019) has a wonderful section on the history of monogamy. Perry essentially notes that many other cultures and similar species (chimps and bonobos) don't have an overriding monogamous expectation.

She mentions several human peoples from non-Western cultures that have these ideas: any child in that group could potentially have any number of fathers (Naskapi tribe, Canada), and therefore all children are loved and cared for, and every woman is possibly a little bit pregnant by more than one man (some Amazon tribes).

Some cultures have a built-in agreement about those in romantic relationships not getting too jealous of other lovers (the Canela in Brazil), or making sure no one is neglected (the Siriono in Bolivia). There are folks on all kinds of fronts (academic, artist, plain ol' person, you name it) challenging that western monogamy paradigm.

Back to terminology. Some people reclaim and use the term queer to describe themselves, an umbrella term that includes living, loving, or identifying outside of binary expectations. A person will let you know if they use this term for themselves – don't use this word unless they give you permission.

Sexual orientation and gender, as discussed in January's column, can remain consistent across a lifetime, or it can change over time. It can be easiest in conversation to identify your own pronouns or orientation if they are relevant, thereby opening the door for the other participants to identify theirs should they choose.

Sharing information openly allows us to understand what resonates and where we may notice discomfort, whether with ourselves, our questioning teens, or our elders who may finally be feeling comfortable enough to explore beyond all the binaries.

Stephanie Baird is a certified OWL facilitator and an EMDR psychotherapist and consultant who encourages her clients towards thriving sexual health. She welcomes feedback and suggestions at sexmatters@ montaguereporter.org.

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MONTY / MUSIK / MOUNTAIN Part XVII: Liz Durette

Interview by J. BURKETT

TURNERS FALLS - Liz Durette is a solo musician/visual artist from Baltimore who plays in Western Mass from time to time. She plays keyboards (Rhodes and others) and makes unique visuals. She has also had art shows out here

MMM: So... about your new LP. Can you talk about it? It seems a bit different than the last one.

at Looky Here in Greenfield. Check

her stuff out!

LD: Yes! The new album is titled Delight. Each side is a suite of improvised music, played on a polyphonic expressive MIDI keyboard (that just means the keyboard is made of silicone and is squishy). There's lots of waltzes and some freeform freakouts on side B. It's influenced by practicing classical waltzes and songs on the piano; I love Schubert and parlor music.

Yes, this album is pretty different from the last one, which was all recorded on a Rhodes electric piano. With this new keyboard, I can make it sound like flutes, bells, and trumpets, so different kinds of melodies come out!

I think there's a lot of experimental music that is way too dreary. I like to make happy music. Ted Lee from Feeding Tube Records in Florence. MA put out the LP, so go hit him up if you'd like one! Or do a Google.

MMM: Do you like Baltimore?

LD: Yes. I have lived in Baltimore for 15 years, except one year when I was out west.

Well, gosh, I'm not sure if I like it? There's millions of more pleasant places to be in the world, but Baltimore is full of wonderful people, especially musicians. It's a difficult and dysfunctional city. I've been feeling ready to move on, but I'm not sure where yet.

That's a nice thing about being a musician and going on tour: you get to see the whole country, and you meet all kinds of neat people in all kinds of different cities, and most people seem to be generally enjoying themselves.

MMM: How do you feel about West Mass?

LD: I love it! I'd move to Western Mass in a minute if your winters weren't so cold and long! I love WIZZ Radio - I'm actually listening to it right now from their website. What up, Phil D.!

It's really cool how people up there will say, Let's make a gallery! Let's make a TV show! Let's make a play! And then they really do it! That's very inspiring.

MMM: Do you have any plans for tours or other new LPs?

LD: Yes, I'll tour when the weather warms up, and I'll definitely swing through Western Mass!

And yes, I have been working on making a recording of Handel's Water Music, doing all the parts with my squishy keyboard. That will likely be the next LP.

MMM: How are making art and music different for you?

LD: Extremely different, but I don't know if I'd have a satisfying answer for you at this point. I used to think a lot more about these things, but now I don't really think with words.

MMM: Do you listen to anything while you make visual art?

LD: Sometimes. I like to listen to dharma talks, and I like to listen to Harry Nilsson or Keith Jarrett. I don't know why, but I listen to so much Harry Nilsson. And of course I listen to WIZZ Radio all the time, from their internet site.

MMM: Do you have any major influences?

LD: Not really anyone in particular. Schubert!

I feel like I pick up on some kind of energy, where I'll see or hear something, and it feels like a familiar energy that I like. I like it when there's some kind of air around music, even if the notes are quite busy. And I like certain colors next to each other. That kind of thing.

It's wintertime, I'm feeling non-verbal about a lot of things. I hope some of your readers are feeling the same, and can excuse my shapeless answers.

MMM: So... Who is Conrad the Talking Cat?

LD: Everyone should follow Conrad on Instagram. His handle is @conradtalks.

Conrad is my roommate Jen's cat, and recently he has learned how to talk, so I have made an Instagram for him to express himself. He talks about birds, dreams he's had, and also his minor complaints. He's a very good boy.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Store Smashup; Vehicle Vs. Bike On Broken Bridge; Yellers; Speeders; Hackers; Shooters; Bangers; Barkers

Sunday, 2/9

7:36 p.m. Caller reporting rence this morning. Offifire between two dumpsters on the canal side of home; requesting evening the Fourth Street alley. Of- shift follow up and advise ficer reporting it was just a neighbor that he cannot cooking fire on a grill. PD and FD units clear.

Monday, 2/10

8 a.m. Caller reporting that East Chestnut Hill Road has roughly four Family Dollar of suspiinches of snow and is icy; motorists are sliding off the road. Reports that the main road is mostly fine. DPW advised.

Tuesday, 2/11

9:17 a.m. Caller states that there is a strong prostrong odor at this time. 2:53 p.m. Walk-in turning eating lunch and had just

in some ammunition that she found in a basement. 3:55 p.m. Report of assault report of a piece of steel and battery with deadly weapon at Great Falls Middle School. [Details redacted. Officer spoke to reporting party and to school resource officer, who will follow up tomorrow.

4:13 p.m. Report of vehicle driving erratically; nearly struck a pole. Vehicle turned in to Food City parking lot. Officer located and spoke to operator; did not see obvious signs of impairment. Involved did state that there was standing water on Montague City Road that may have a group of people yelling affected his operation.

Wednesday, 2/12

lar employee reporting a fight is about to break that when she arrived at out. Officers checked area work, she found the front and were unable to find door smashed. Inside the reported party. No issues store, the cigarette case was smashed as well. Report taken.

8:13 a.m. Officer witnessed one had hacked into her minor motor vehicle acci- email account and has dent (car into handicapped her password; stated they sign) in Family Dollar told her they used mal-

3:07 p.m. Caller from Food City reports female in store who is not supposed to be there due to a history of shoplifting. Female just left, headed toward Aubuchon. Employees attempting to confirm whether subject had taken anything. Store called back to advise nothing was taken. Advised to speak to officer about a trespass.

5:45 p.m. Vehicle vs. bicyclist on General Pierce Bridge; call given to AMR and TFFD. Officer reporting minor injuries. AMR transporting one party.

Report taken. Thursday, 2/13

8:20 a.m. Caller from Federal Street reports that her neighbor has been plowing his snow from across the street onto her walkway and the sidewalk in front of her residence. Caller advises he uses his takehome company vehicle to plow the snow. Ongoing

issue; most recent occurcer advises neighbor not plow snow there. Evening officer attempted to make contact with party; negative contact at this time.

11:56 a.m. Report from cious vehicle, white windowless van except for front windows that are painted white. Occupied by one male who has been there since approximately 9:20 a.m. Staff concerned due to recent break-in pane smell near Roberto's at the store. One vehicle on Turners Falls Road; pulling out upon officer's requesting officer check arrival did not exactly area. Officer requesting match description. Offi-FD with meter. FD on cer checking on second scene; not getting any vehicle in parking lot; occupant advised he was gotten there.

12:34 p.m. Officer received in the travel lane on the General Pierce Bridge. Officer moved debris from travel lane; appeared to

have fallen off a truck. 6:13 p.m. Caller requesting extra traffic enforcement in the area of West Mineral Road during the hours of 4:30 and 6 p.m.; reports people driving at high rates of speed daily, specifically during the work week. Caller reports one of the vehicles is a yellow truck.

9:35 p.m. Caller reporting very loudly across the street from Between the 7:27 a.m. Family Dol- Uprights; it sounds as if at this time.

9:35 p.m. Party into station reporting that someware to do so and that etc. of her. Party states they threatened to release the photos if she did not pay them \$900. Requests

she will change all of her passwords and make them more secure. Advised party to call MPD if she finds that any personal information has been used. 9:53 p.m. Caller requesting officer to Second Street; reports that a party was involved in an altercation a few minutes ago. Officer advises it appears that fight was just

verbal at this time. 10:58 p.m. Caller from N Street states that a male is outside screaming and causing a problem. Caller states no weapons involved; nothing physical; just yelling. Officer advised all is well; nothing physical; party is intoxicated, but sober family member is going to take him in and put him to bed for the night.

Friday, 2/14

9:06 a.m. Report of calling arms down and red lights flashing at Lake Pleasant railroad crossing for past eight minutes but no train coming; vehicles crossing over tracks assuming it's a malfunction. Arms still down upon officer's arrival. Railroad advised. Second call received for this hazard. Caller advises she saw a railroad crew repair the arms, but they are down again. Railroad advised.

10:59 a.m. Report of assault on employee by resident at Farren Care Center. Officer called employee back. Report taken. 1:37 p.m. Caller from Grove Street reports that the two dogs across the street have been outside barking more than half of the time over the past two hours. Animal control officer advised.

3:16 p.m. Caller reporting that he is following a possibly intoxicated driver on Sunderland Road caller reporting that Husouth of the crossover. bie's Tavern and Restau-Reports that white sedan rant is still open and has they have photos, videos, was driving erratically, a lot of underage people passing tractor-trailer inside. Responding officer units on the wrong side reports that bar is closed of the road, failing to stop at this time. at stop signs, and operat-

to have on record only; ing at high rates of speed. MPD and Shelburne Control advised. Officer reports car gone on arrival. 6:59 p.m. Caller requesting to speak with an officer about a party on Fosters Road firing guns late at night. Officer made contact with attached male party and advised him of the complaint. Officer spoke with caller and advised her to call back if problem continues.

> 7:41 p.m. Caller reporting an orange cat sitting by the jersey barriers on the Greenfield side of the General Pierce Bridge. Greenfield PD notified; advised to give caller animal control's number.

> 10:09 p.m. Caller reports she just hit a deer on Millers Falls Road and is waiting in the 253 Farmacy parking lot. No injuries reported at this time. Report taken.

Saturday, 2/15

4:54 a.m. Caller from Fifth Street states that a male party was banging on the door of the front first-floor apartment. She believes that the party is banging on his father's door; reports it happened about 45 minutes ago as well, and each time he is leaving the area quickly. Officer reports quiet upon arrival and no one in the area.

4:46 p.m. Officer requesting fire department be advised about an active fire pit at Unity Park. FD notified.

4:51 p.m. Neighbor complaining of very loud music on G Street. Advised of complaint.

5:26 p.m. Anonymous neighbor reporting very loud music again on G Street. Advised of complaint.

Sunday, 2/16

1:03 a.m. Anonymous

Research Reportback

TURNERS FALLS – On Thursday, February 27 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., the Battlefield Grant Advisory Committee will host a forum, "New Field Research 2019," in the Turners Falls High School Auditorium, 222 Turnpike Road. Presenters include David Naumec and Ashley Bissonnette of the University of Connecticut research team.

Following the talk, a group of local historians will present a panel discussion titled "Emerging Stories of This Land." Panelists include Liz Coldwind Santana Kiser of Chaubunagungamaug Band of Nipmuck Indians, Chief Roger Longtoe Sheehan of Elnu Abenaki, local historian Gary Sanderson, and Joe Graveline of the Northfield Historical Commission.

This event is sponsored by the Town of Montague and the National Park Service American Battlefield Protection Program.



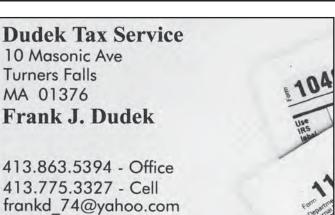
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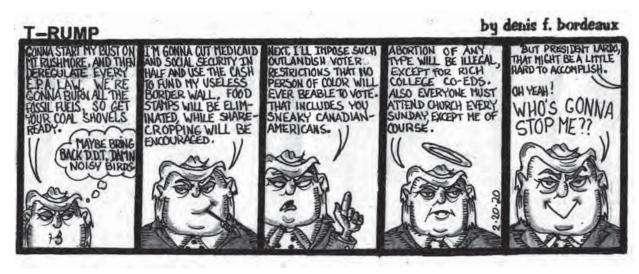


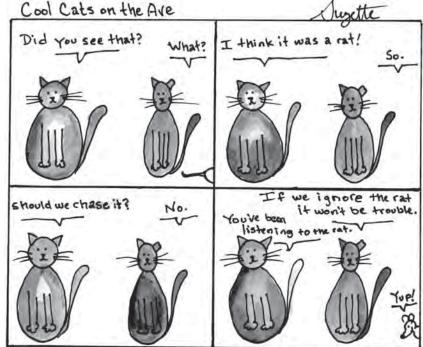


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Did I da something to offend you, (up eake?) Well, your snorms last night was last night was epic, awe-inspiring, harrowing, news " harrowing, news " was something I ate ... harrowing, news " was something I ate ... harrowing, news " was something I ate ... harrowing, news " was something I ate ...

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VALLEY VIEW from page B1

This I never told a soul, even friends, until long after Marshall was dead and buried. It was confidential. Between me and him. If he thought it was wrong, he wouldn't have done it. Call it autonomy, something else he taught me about. I prefer to call it individual sovereignty, a state of being Kropotkin valued.

Whether he knew it or not, Marshall was helping to shape my worldview with a different strain of bedrock. For that, I am more grateful than the pints of Knick Nat he shared before I had come of age. Had I not been exposed to this way of thinking when young and impressionable, it may have eluded me. Of course, some would say I'd be a better man without it. I disagree.

So, what exactly is it that has led me back a half-century to Poplar Hill, that bucolic place mired deep in the adolescent muck of my consciousness? That's easy. On a recent winter whim (I honestly can't recall the precise impetus), I dug into my literature bookcase to revisit James Peter Cooney's little-known literary magazine *The Phoenix*, published from 1938 to '40 in Woodstock, then revived from 1970 to '84 at his west Whately home's Morning Star Press.

To raise start-up cash for what Cooney himself called the 1970 "renewal issue," he published a hardcover, cloth-bound, two-volume compilation of his seven pre-World War II issues, a book that's likely tough to come by today. The cost was \$55. I bought the hardcovers, along with the comeback Winter 1970 magazine, from a local dealer 15 or 20 years ago, read through them with interest, and worked them into the handy bookcase next to my study's desk for reference and posterity. Local history.

Well, now I have reread them, a process that spurred the rereading of Blanche Cooney's acclaimed *In My Own Sweet Time*, a 1993 autobiography that brings the reader into the Cooney family's inner sanctum, a very private place.

The reading refreshed my memory of a Poplar Hill family I didn't know but had always found interesting. The youngest child, a female, was three years ahead of me in high school. I had many times sat in solitary hunting silence looking across meadows at the Cooneys' stately Federal home, crowned by a windowed widow's walk more generally associated with the coastal homes of wealthy sea captains and sailing ships.

Cooney was no lightweight. Quite the contrary, in fact. He was a leftist intellectual. Ahead of his time, he was a pre-WWII critic of American corporate farming's "monoculture" practices, not to mention their use of toxic chemical fertilizers, way before whistleblower Rachel Carson (*Silent Spring*) or, more recently, Wendell Berry – the octogenarian Kentucky poet/essayist who's still beating the same drum.

Jimmy Cooney dared to be different, and didn't hesitate to challenge large corporations, government and cultural norms of capitalistic, war-driven societies.

A literary visionary, Cooney was the first American to publish controversial expatriate Henry Miller and his illicit Paris lover Anaïs Nin. Still to this day, his segmented Phoenix publishing of French novelist Jean Giono's *Refusal to Obey* is the only English translation of the important work. Other luminaries published in Cooney's magazine included D.H. Lawrence (posthumously), Derek Savage, Hervey White, Robert Bly, and many other familiar names from the American literary scene.

No, get this. Mysterious, enigmatic J.D. Salinger may have even made a couple of pseudonymous contributions to *The Phoenix* after going into Cornish, New Hampshire seclusion during the mid-1950s. Who knows? It's distinctly possible. Perhaps even probable.

But that's a tale for another day. A fascinating tale at that. Potentially future column fodder. We'll see. Let me work the local channels.

Off I go.



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PREVIEW from page B1

I asked how she got started and she related a story about a conversation with her co-worker, Nolan Powers, also an artist moonlighting in a coffee shop. Taylor and Powers had become art buddies, that rare friend who you can bounce your creative ideas off of and, instead of rolling their eyes, their imagination gets sparked too. They were discussing Taylor's idea of filming artists in their studios talking about their creative process.

Powers, whose medium is spray paint, said she could start by interviewing him. Meanwhile, because serendipity really is a thing, they were overheard by someone from Greenfield Community Television (GCTV) who chimed in to say it sounded like an idea worth supporting. And, as they say, one thing led to another.

The range of artists and disciplines featured in (413)ART reflects our region's diverse creative community. I enjoyed a preview of a few segments. Ranging from three to ten minutes, each offers the inside scoop on artistic process and vision.

Local viewers will be familiar with the backdrop of Valley landscapes and studio set-ups. From barns and farmhouses to old quarries and converted mills, what we see on the screen feels like home. In the segment with metal- and wood-worker Kamil Peters, we hear about the 700 masks he has made and sent into the world, each unique.

From Maggie Nowinski we gain insight to an exploration of loss in her series W(h)oles. Painter and calligrapher Q Li Holmes offers a Zen perspective on creativity, a color infused dance of lotus and maple.

Other segments include musician Emma Ayres, muralist Kim Carlino, sculptor Joshua Ruder, street artist Nolan Powers, fiber artist Sue Carlson, and pastelist Cliff Carlson.

When we spoke. Taylor reflected on the rich opportunities for creative collaboration that came out of this project, with the artists she interviewed and with her talented production contributors.

This project began as a journey to explore her own creative process as her brain was healing, then she brought the questions she was asking herself to her conversations with other artists. She describes the result as an "homage to the amazing people" who have contributed to her healing process and the "wonderful, artistic, supportive community in the Valley, that says 'Yes' to artists and will support you in being creative."

I asked Taylor what had surprised her in the year she spent working on (413)ART. Because of the brain injury, her screen use had to be severely limited, at first to just 20 minutes at a time. For a filmmaker, this poses a critical limitation and her creative output needed some retooling.

Working in smaller segments to accommodate her brain, she was able to weave together a new creative and collaborative process for her own art. The result is a reflection on creativity and the act of making art that is intimate, generous, and in some moments, sublime.

The community will be able to see individual segments of (413)ART broadcast on GCTV and online on YouTube. But it won't be the same as seeing them all together on a big screen at the Shea Theater, so come out to the 8 p.m. screening on the 28th!

It is easy to take for granted the fertile community of artists who live and create here in the Valley. This film is a reminder that artists bring us new ways to see and understand the landscapes of our physical and emotional environments.

In these stories we are introduced to creative process expressed with boldness through metal, fire, and stone, the grain of wood and texture of fabric, paint and ink splashed across walls or brushed on paper, and the pluck of strings spinning a harmony. The film becomes an intentional communication of humanity and of being connected with life.

Saltbox Films' (413)ART was made with community support from GCTV, and from the Massachusetts and Greenfield cultural councils.

"Triple SSS" Delights

By GREGORY BALSEWICZ

TURNERS FALLS - Now at Nina's Nook in downtown Turners Falls is the sixth incarnation of the Triple SSS: Sensual, Sexual, Smut exhibit. The intimacy of this unique space heightens the encounter with the art works, which draw on various media to explore and celebrate the sensual and erotic perspectives of humanity. This show runs the gamut of feeling from serious to playful, while showcasing each artist's interconnectivity with their chosen medium.

Photography was the most represented art form at this show. Photographers Matthew Cavanaugh, Stephanie Baird, Grier Horner, Ralph Brill, Dave Foss, Richard Getler, Bruce Kahn, Aredvi Azad, and Lois Brown offered varied visions following the theme of the show. Three standouts that I would like to mention are Bruce Kahn's The Rapture, Aredvi Azad's Pom photos, and the smile-inducing snowwomen photos by Lois Brown.

Oil paintings by Robert Markey and Ruth Kjaer move the viewers from photo realism to the dreamier realms of abstraction. A collection-worthy set of six bronzes, copying in miniature famous historical Venus figures, is the work of student sculptor Mairin Emerson. Trisha Moody-Bourbeau's Line Work Nude is a sinuous outline in metal of a shapely female form. Seemingly life-sized, it fills the back wall.

Denise Fontaine-Pincince's poem and shadow box collage offer a poignant commentary on male privilege. Amy Dawn Kotel-Smith's color pencil homage to the portal creaturae is a smile in itself.

Several ceramicists have works on view. The gentle curvaceousness of Relinquishing Blues, a stoneware set made by Erica Gammon, melds sensual line with a most heavenly blue glaze that begs to invite a tactile exploration of its form.

Pelham artist Vincent Frano offers a work in papier-mâché. Titled Arisaema, it is an imaginative rendering of this hermaphroditic flower. On closer inspection it is a fanciful Carnival mask! Exquisitely decorated with handmade paints, this work is detail-driven and beautifully executed.

Many artists bring to this eclectic show works that are both aesthetically pleasing and playfully indulgent, serving as a welcome respite from the saccharine sentiments of commercial Valentine's Day. Drop in and enjoy the talents on display now through March 21.

Nina's Nook, next to the Black Cow Burger Bar at 125A Avenue A, is open Thursday, Friday and Saturday, noon to 5 p.m. and by appointment: (413) 834-8800.

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



Arisaema is an imaginative rendering of the hermaphroditic flower in papier-mâché by Vincent Frano.

ARTBEAT from page B1

in the last 15 years, their growth has intensified.

"If you drive down 91 and look at the sides of the highway, it's overwhelming how much there is," she says.

The thickest vine growth tends to be close to major roads and in areas of dense human population, Young tells me. This may be due to birds' migratory routes, or trucks and cars may be inadvertently transporting seeds from one place to another.

And warming temperatures have enabled formerly southern species, such as Virginia creeper, to thrive farther and farther north.

Young's painting, Tomorrow, depicts bittersweet, Virginia creepers, and fox grape climbing over sumac and white pine. For Young, a painting like Tomorrow is very much about the extreme shifts in nature brought about by climate change, but she says that viewers don't always see that.

"The light is always beautiful,"



Ashfield painter Jamie Young stands before Hill Road, one of her abstract landscapes that depict native trees being enveloped by invasive vines.

she says. "And the light hits these things. So people's responses to them, they're mostly responding to the light."

It's become increasingly important to Young that people know more about what the paintings mean to her.

"I feel like I'm part of the community," she says. "And I think artists need to speak out. Artists and poets for centuries have spoken out about cultural issues and politics. This is the biggest issue our community faces - our community being the whole world."

If the planet becomes inhabitable, there is no other issue, political, social, or otherwise, I say.

Young agrees, but adds, "I keep going back to what Al Gore said. That there is hope. And I've heard a lot of other environmentalists talk about it too, there is hope."

But like her paintings, the light Young expresses is shot through with dark. "We're going to lose a lot of people," she says. "A billion people might die. And a lot of them will be the poor. The world will look vastly different and it will change so many things. We'll lose a lot of species, which is already happening. But in the end, some people – the human race - will survive."

"But I do approach it with hope," she reiterates. "And I think that's the main message that I want to put out in the paintings. That there is still beauty and spirit and hope. Those things will not go away."

"Well," I respond, "and it strikes me that if you have those qualities when you approach a problem, that's really different than if all you have in your mind is panic and despair. It's a different place to operate from."

"Yes," Young replies.

Young attributes her sense of spirit in nature to meditation, which has become deeply integrated into her painting practice. She describes her early meditative practice: "I would very formally sit down and be in the tailleur position, put down my brushes and really meditate. When I opened my eyes again, everything would seem much brighter and clearer."

Animals often approached her in the woods, she was sitting so quietly,

For roughly the first 25 years, Young painted outdoors, in plein air. She chuckles as she recounts some of the difficulties that, especially as she began to paint larger, drove her to change her process.

"I used to take big paintings out on site but the problem was getting them home with wet paint and the wind. I'd tie them down in my truck, but they'd always come back with some road dirt or some weeds in them or something. So finally I said, 'Okay, people have worked from sketches for centuries, I have to learn to do this."

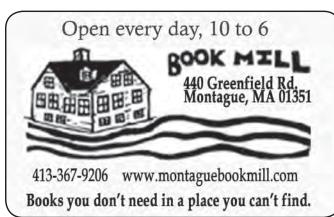
She switched her process to a meditation on site, followed by a sketch.

"If I had done the meditation and if I had done my sketch they became intertwined - I could look at a sketch and tell you how cold it was, what I heard, what I smelled," Young continues. "All those things are in the sketch. And when I look at the sketch, sometimes I'll stop before I start painting in the studio, and bring myself back to that place where I was."

Meditation has allowed her to access a deep relationship to nature. "There's a spirit in nature," she says, "a spirit in the earth that is so powerful that no matter what we do, it's going to be there."

See some of Young's work in the 2020 Landscape Exhibition, a group show at William Baczek Fine Arts, 36 Main Street, Northampton, now through March 14. Hours are Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Sundays, 12 to 5 p.m. For more information call the gallery at (413) 587-9880 or visit online at wbfinearts.com. Find out more about Jamie Young's work at jamieyoung.net.

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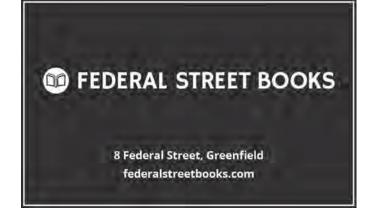
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CALLS FOR ART

#Local Gallery, Easthampton

seeks works in 2 and 3D that

relate to "Mountains Majesty."

All mediums are eligible, and

the gallery encourages artists

to "think outside the box" on

this theme. Deadline: February

26. Submission fee of \$35 for

up to 3 images; see details at

localgallerybyciderhouse.com

Sixth Annual May Day Fine

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seeks Montague artists inter-

ested in selling their work that

day. Any medium, with a sale

price of \$150 and under, is wel-

come. The event will be held

May 3, in conjunction with the

May Day celebrations on the

Montague Center town com-

mon. Send an email of interest

by March 6 to montague.art.

movement@gmail.com.

or call (413) 203-5781.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

EVENTS

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20

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

10 Forward, Greenfield: Electronic Music open mic. \$. 7 p.m.

Majestic Saloon, Northampton: Corey Laitman, Sister Jawbone, Julie Cira & The Wake. \$. 9 p.m.

Sierra Grille, Northampton: Minibeast, Ex-Temper, Land Man. \$. 9:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21

Element Brewing Co, Millers Falls: Brule's Irish Band. 6 p.m. Iron Horse, Northampton: Dar

7 p.m. Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: The 60's Experience. \$. 7 p.m.

Williams, Crys Matthews. \$.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: Sayreal, Rebelle. In the Perch. \$. 7 p.m.

Looky Here, Greenfield: Wishbone Zoe album release show. with Hot Dirt, Hoonah, and Fred Cracklin. \$. 8 p.m.

Majestic Saloon, Northampton: Land Back Dance Party: A Fundraiser for The Wet'suwet'en Nation. With DJ Sospechosa, DJ Honeysuckle, DJ 7elucinations, and DJ Gus (Boy Harsher). \$. 8 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro VT: And the Kids, with Thus Love. \$. 8 p.m.

Shutesbury Athletic Club, Shutesbury: Wild Bill and the Flying Sparks. 8 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: Annie Blech, CHS, Jacob Winans, and Gene Machine 2.0. \$. 9 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: Wubwitus VII with Eknocks, FUZD. In the Wheelhouse. \$. 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22

St. James Church, Greenfield: Freedom & Struggle Song Swap. Singalong and potluck. Donation. \$. 5 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: Mana Fest Winter Luau with Terrafunk. The Diamondstones, Px3, Nate Martel, Eli Elkus, Stone Dynamite, DJ Funky Bottoms, and DJ Vibe Wise. \$. 6 p.m.

Iron Horse, Northampton: Dar Williams, Amelia Chalfant. \$.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: Mardi Gras Get Down feat. Zvdeco Connection, Bourbon Street Blasters. Show up early for zydeco dance lessons! In the Perch. \$. 7 p.m.

St. James Church, Greenfield: Dance Spree. Freestyle boogie: no shoes, no alcohol, no rules. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Queer House Party. Games at 8 p.m., dancing at 10 p.m.

Calvin Theater, Northampton: Kamasi Washington, Honeycomb. \$. 8 p.m.

Red Cross, Northampton: Dusters, The Elite, Vice Grip, Golden Slugs, Human Ignorance. Punk.

10 Forward, Greenfield: Lindsay Foote, Corey Laitman, and Hoonah. \$. 9 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Sto-

rypalooza 2. Featuring storytell-

ers Susanne Schmidt Susanne, Tone Nunes, Jannelle Codianni, and David Bulley. \$. 8 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro VT: Driftwood, with Lily Sexton and Max Wareham. \$. 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23

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

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: Swing Sunday with the Butterfly Swing Band. \$. 3 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: Balance Chord: Interval singing with Chris Weisman. Singing class; arrive at 6 p.m.

Looky Here, Greenfield: Paul Flaherty / Jake Meginsky Duo, Scald Hymn, Limbs Bin, Andrew Wang. \$. 7 p.m.

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

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24

Academy of Music, Northampton: Squeeze. \$. 8 p.m.

mic with Heath Lewis. 9 p.m. Psych. \$. 7 p.m.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: Music in the Morning. Children's music series. Live, interactive music by educator Marcy Gregoire, accompanied by movement specialist Hilary Lake. Puppets, costumes, musical instruments. 10 a.m.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26

10 Forward, Greenfield: Cast party and fundraiser for A Midsummer Night's Dream. \$. 9 p.m.

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

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: Reception for The Art of Rodney Madison. 6 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: A Midsummer Night's Dream. Opening night. \$. 8 p.m.

Majestic Saloon, Northampton: Home Despot, Mal Devisa, Emily Ritz. \$. 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Andrew DiRuzza. 8:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28

Artspace, Greenfield: Jam Session. Kevin Dee leads monthly session, all ages and skill levels welcome. Suggested donation. \$. 12 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: Comedy with Amanda Cohen. In the Perch. \$. 7 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: A Midsummer Night's Dream. \$. 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: Straight Sex, Moxie, Raspberry Jam. \$. 8 p.m.

Shutesbury Athletic Club, Shutesbury: Lush Honey. \$. 8:30 p.m.

Flywheel Arts, Easthampton: Perennial, He Was An Artist She Was A Carpenter, Bridge of Flowers, and When the Sun Sets. \$. 8:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Bluegrass & Beyond. 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 29

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: La Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Open Creation Mondiale, Starbirthed.

Athletic Shutesbury Club, Shutesbury: Misbehavin' Speakeasy fundraiser for Athletic Club roof. With Betsy Scofield of Free

Range; karaoke. 7 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: Oakland Stroke, Shawn Callighan's Ego Trippers. In the Perch. \$. 7:30 p.m.

St. James Church, Greenfield: Dance Spree. Freestyle boogie: no shoes, no alcohol, no rules. \$. 7:30 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: A Midsummer Night's Dream. \$. 8 p.m. Stone Church, Brattleboro: Jane Lee Hooker, Social Medication. Blues. \$. 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: Wendell Reggae Fest Launch Party with Simon White & Rhythm Inc., Dave Noonan's Green Island, Burnie T, Roosta, and I Anbassa. \$. 8:30 p.m.

13th Floor Lounge, Florence: Void Swallower, Dropweapon, Advent Varic, Diva Karr, \$, 9 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Bridge of Flowers, Hung Trucker, Freezer Skunk. 9:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, MARCH 1

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

Belltower Records, North Adams: Rambutan, Bulle, Underwear, Jefferson Pitcher. \$. 6 p.m.

Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: Betsayda Machado. Afro-Venezuelan party music. \$. 6 p.m.

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

MONDAY, MARCH 2

Hope & Olive, Greenfield: Soup and Games Night benefit for Looky Here. 5 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Bingo. 8 p.m.

TUESDAY, MARCH 3

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: Music in the Morning. Children's music series. Live, interactive music by educator Marcy Gregoire, accompanied by movement specialist Hilary Lake. Puppets, costumes, musical instruments. 10 a.m.

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public domain. UMass-Amherst copyright and information policy librarian Laura Quilter will give a talk about copyright and art on Thursday, February 27, 6 p.m. A reception will follow the talk.

Looky Here, Greenfield: Looky Here 2020: A Submission Based Art Show. Works by over 30 regional artists in a variety of media: paintings, poetry, video, sculpture. Through April.

McCusker's Market, Shelburne: Wool Works: Making Art and The Intuitive Process of Play. Exhibit by Rachelle Royer-Llamas. Through February 28.

Nina's Nook, Turners Falls: Triple SSS 2020: Sensual, Sexual, Smut. Group show of erotic art from 30+ artists, including sculpture, photography, poetry, prints, and more. Through March 21.

Sawmill River Arts, Montague Center: Small Works Exhibit and Sale. A non-juried exhibit of small-scale community artwork. Through February 29.

Shelburne Arts Coop, Shelburne Falls: Sweet, a group show celebrating the sweetness of the season. Paintings, ceramics, leather, paper cuts, jewelry, wood and ornaments by member artists. Through February 24.

EXHIBITS

Art Deviation Gallery, South Deerfield: Edgy and thought-provoking art from around the world. Featured artists from France: Christophe Mourthé, Cathy Peylan, and Anne Eliayan.

Art Garden, Shelburne Falls: Woven Together. A community exhibit about relationships. Through February.

Brattleboro Museum & Art Center: Ask the River. Elizabeth Billings, Evie Lovett, and Andrea Wasserman have created a community art exhibit on the theme of the Connecticut River. Postcard writing forms an interactive component. Discussion about the river with artists, historians, and conservators, February 27, 7 p.m. Through March 7.

DVAA Gallery, Northfield: My

Little Town. Member exhibit, in tandem with solo exhibit Paintings by Bev Phelps. Through March 8.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: You Are Here: A Juried Community Art Exhibit. 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? Through February 29 in the Great Hall.

Greenfield Gallery, Greenfield: Something Old, Something New, Nothing Borrowed & A Taste of Blue. Photographs of jazz greats by Bobby Davis. Through April 18. Reception with G Notes Jazz Trio Friday, February 28 at 6 p.m.

GCC South Gallery, Greenfield: Juana Valdes. Printmaking, photography, sculpture, ceramics, and site-specific installations, to explore issues of race, transnationalism, gender, labor, and class. Through February 27.

Hampden Gallery, UMass-Amherst: Christine Texiera: Release the Moorings. Mixed media paintings using a pouring technique. Through February 28.

Herrick Gallery, Wendell Free Library: Lynne Stopen: Birds Bring Peace. Drawings of birds in graphite and colored pencil, capturing their unique characteristics. Through February.

Leverett Library: Unlocking the Past: A Public Domain Exhibit. A traveling exhibit from the UMass Libraries, celebrating the 2019 release of a large number of copyrighted items from 1923 into the

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THE AUTHORS' CORNER: NANDINI BAJPAI

By IZZY VACHULA-CURTIS

TURNERS FALLS – Happy belated Valentine's Day!

Over the week of Valentine's Day, I read A Match Made in Mehendi by Nandini Bajpai. I actually got this book at the Book Expo last May; Nandini Bajpai wasn't at the event, but they were handing out copies of her book.

In today's article I'm going to be reviewing A Match Made in Mehendi, and interviewing Nandini Bajpai. Enjoy!

A Match Made in Mehendi is about a girl named Simi Sangha whose family are matchmakers. Simi's ancestors started matchmaking in India, and had incredible success. In Indian tradition, families often set up their kids with someone with a similar political and religious background.

Simi makes the mistake of setting up her cousin Preet with Jolly, the son of a furniture store owner and future lawyer. After this, Simi's family is convinced she will carry on their legacy of matchmaking, but Simi loves art, and she doesn't particularly want to be a matchmaker at first.

Simi loves creating designs in mehendi, which is what she calls henna tattoos. For her project in art class she chooses mehendi as her medium, and designs a project with wood and henna.

Then Simi and her best friend Noah realize creating a matchmaking app might make them more popular at school. Simi, Noah, and Simi's older brother Navdeep create an app called Matched!, and before long have over 400 students from their school registered on it.

This book is so cute, and super fun to read!

It's also perfect for the Valentine's Day season. I would recommend it to young adults, adults, and anyone who enjoys love stories. Up next, I'll be interviewing Nandini Bajpai about A Match Made in Mehendi...

Isabella V-C: In A Match Made in Mehendi the main character, Simi's, family are matchmakers. What inspired you to write about those characters?

Nandini Bajpai: I've always been interested in how Indian American kids born and/ or raised here have adapted to life in the US. How they view their parents' traditions, and what they choose to change, keep, or leave behind. First- and second-generation teens get such different signals from their peers and parents, especially about things like crushes, dating, and assimilating or holding on to traditional values.

Contrasting traditional matchmaking with modern dating apps let me look at these conflicts in a lighthearted way. Arranged marriage is one of those things that has been widely misunderstood in mainstream America. It's good to lift the curtain on that process a little bit and examine it in proper context as something that is changing with each generation, and is in essence not that different than other ways people connect.

IVC: Was anything in this book based on your high school experience?

NB: I went to high school in India, and in many ways it was really different than the school that the characters in my book attended. We had uniforms, houses like in Harry Potter, class 10th and 12th board exams, can-

teens instead of cafeterias, and so many other differences.

That said, there's still something about the experience of being a teen - trying to fit in with peers, navigating crushes, figuring out what your true interests are, etc. - that is universal, and there was a lot there I could channel into the book.

Luckily I also have a lot of young people in my life - nieces, nephews, and my own kids – that I could lean on for research about schools here!

IVC: If A Match Made in Mehendi was made into a movie, who would you want the characters to be?

NB: There aren't a lot of South Asian actors I know of that are the right age, but if you can imagine them a bit younger, I'd love Simi to be played by Naomi Scott (Aladdin), and Suraj by Suraj Sharma (Life of Pi) or perhaps Karan Brar. Nick Robinson (Love Simon) would make a great Noah.

IVC: Since A Match Made in Mehendi is a love story, what is your favorite love story, and why?

NB: Sorry to be predictable, but I would have to say Pride and Prejudice! I love Elizabeth and Darcy's characters and that they grow and change for the better because of each other, and end up together even when there are so many obstacles in their way, most of them self-inflicted.

IVC: Which part of this book was your fa*vorite or the most fun part to write, and why?* **NB:** Well, the matchmaking aspect was



Our correspondent connected this week with the author of A Match Made in Mehendi.

really fun to develop, honestly. What makes a good match? What makes a good matchmaker? Can the process really be developed into an app? How would that all work? How does a professional matchmaker put people together? How would a teenager view all of this differently from her mother or aunt?

I have a background in systems analysis, so it was nice to use that part of my brain, as well to break down the problem of turning the very amorphous matchmaking process into an algorithm for an app. This theme was really different than any other story I've worked on!

Thank you so, so much to Nandini Bajpai for answering the questions above. This book's plot was so amazing, and I highly recommend it – especially around Valentine's Day!

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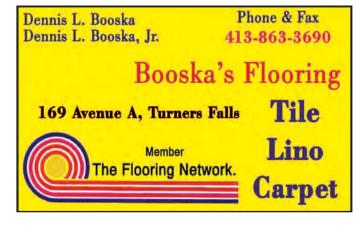


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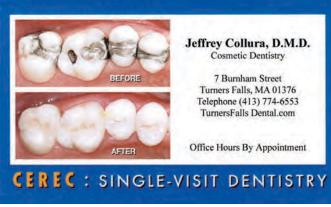
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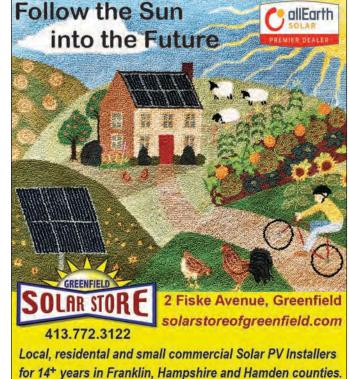


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