## The Montague Reporter

YEAR 18 – NO. 23

also serving Erving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

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EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

### THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

**APRIL 9, 2020** 

### **ENCOURAGEMENT**



encouragement are popping up everywhere in public. A series of positive notes greeted walkers on the bike path in Turners Falls on Sunday morning.

### Local Agencies Preparing For Virus's Anticipated Surge

BY SAMANTHA WOOD

GREENFIELD – The virus that causes COVID-19 has been moving into Franklin County for weeks, but unlike a hurricane or an ice storm, we cannot see it. There's no flooding; trees aren't down in the road. Yet people are sick, and people are dying.

In such a situation, some of us reach for data points to help us get our bearings. But in the early days of tracking a pandemic, especially with such limited testing, the numbers tell only a slice of the story.

We do know what may be the most important piece of information for now: how people act today and tomorrow will either slow the virus's transmission, or encourage it to spread and cause more people to fall ill. How effectively the com-

munity chooses to stay home, wash hands, and wear masks when out in public will be clearly reflected in the numbers we will see in the weeks ahead.

The Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) collects data on public health and policy and coordinates responses to local needs. In collaboration with the City of Greenfield Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at the John Zon Center on Pleasant Street, FRCOG has set up a new Multi-Agency Coordination Center to provide information to agencies responding to the crisis. At the same time, town boards of health are collecting information about people who are ill, tracing their contacts, and adapting to stay abreast of quickly changing guidelines.

see **SURGE** page A5

ERVING SELECTBOARD

WENDELL SELECTBOARD

### Towns Postponing Tax Deadlines, Elections, Annual Town Meetings

By KATIE NOLAN

In response to the COVID-19 emergency, the Erving selectboard have voted to delay the annual town meeting until June 17, and the town election to June 22. They also voted to cancel the Anything Goes bulky waste pickup for 2020.

According to chair Jacob Smith, the town offices are closed to the public during the emergency, but the highway and water/wastewater departments and town financial services are still operating. Town playgrounds are closed, but Smith said, "Green space use is encouraged, where people can be separated."

The selectboard met using GoTo-Webinar on March 30 and April 5. The finance committee joined the board for the March 30 meeting.

Smith reported that emergency state legislation will allow towns to delay the annual town meeting and FY'21 budget vote until after the end of FY'20 on June 30. Under the legislation, towns will be able to spend one-twelfth of the approved

see  $\mathbf{ERVING}$  page A6

By JOSH HEINEMANN

Keeping physically apart for another meeting, the Wendell select-board met remotely through Zoom on April 1. This connection worked better than the method they had used at their March 18 meeting, and no words were lost. As on March 18 discussion was dominated by COVID-19, and ways the town can maintain its functioning through elections and town meeting without putting citizens in close contact with each other.

Board of health chair Barbara Craddock, fire chief Joe Cuneo, emergency manager Lonny Ricketts, town clerk Gretchen Smith, and two members of the board of assessors joined the meeting.

After Good Neighbors opened for two Sundays on the town common and did not open at all for two Sundays, coordinator Nancy Graton asked for it to open again April 12 at the town hall, with a new procedure to allow patrons to keep apart. Tables would be arranged in

see **WENDELL** page A6

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

### **Board of Health Requires Plastic Shields at All Checkout Counters**

By JEFF SINGLETON

At joint meeting of the Montague selectboard and board of health on Monday, the health board abruptly issued a stern warning to businesses like supermarkets, pharmacies, and gas stations which serve the public during the COVID emergency that if they do not install "appropriate protective shields" to protect employees at checkout counters by noon this Friday, April 10, they could be forced to close until they comply.

At the same meeting, the selectboard delayed the dates of Montague's spring election and annual town meeting until June; delayed the due date for most local taxes; decided not to release data on the extent of the epidemic in Montague; and announced, through the director of parks and recreation, that a person in a Peter Cottontail costume will be driven through the various villages this Saturday morning.

The decision to warn local establishments which remain open during the emergency to install protective shields came during a discussion of "operational updates" on the board's agenda. Acting health director Gina McNeely said she had spoken to a number of businesses, such as Food City supermarket, Aubuchon Hardware, and Family Dollar in Turners Falls. She said that both Food City and Aubuchon had installed Plexiglass barriers, and that the Walgreens, after a delay, was complying with her request.

But McNeely said that the Family Dollar next to Aubuchon had

see MONTAGUE page A7

### Athol Native Announces Run For Seat on Beacon Hill

By MIKE JACKSON

ATHOL – "It's an interesting time," said Will LaRose, who announced his candidacy this week to represent the 2nd Franklin District in the state House of Representatives. "I think it's time we have a leader who is very clear and strategic about what their vision is, and how they're going to carry it out. That's what I want to see in a public leader, and I'm not seeing enough of it."

LaRose, a Democrat, believes he faces an uncontested primary field and plans to challenge Susannah Whipps, currently an Independent, in November for the seat she has held since 2014.

The logistics of getting on the ballot are complicated at the moment, LaRose said – to collect the requisite 150 signatures, he couldn't



Will LaRose.

"stand in front of a grocery store and knock it out in a day or two." His campaign had to call supporters and arrange to drop off forms for them to sign and mail in. He believes the process will be finished next week.

LaRose is a fourth-generation sequences that will need tervention," Weber said.

see **ANNOUNCES** page A7

### State's Top Court: Pretrial Detainees Can Be Released For Safety's Sake

By SAMANTHA WOOD

**GREENFIELD** – Late last week, an inmate at the Franklin County House of Correction started feeling sick and was placed in quarantine.

According to sheriff Christopher Donelan, the man was feverish and had a sore throat. "We have test kits now," for COVID-19, Donelan said, and by Tuesday, the prisoner's test results had come back negative.

But with a roughly 30% false negative rate for those tests, Donelan said medical director Dr. Ruth Potee had decided to keep the prisoner quarantined until the symptoms were gone.

"They keep moving the bar on us," Donelan said, expressing frustration about changing safety protocols in response to the virus.

"It is very difficult for prisoners to practice social distancing," says Rachel Weber, a Northampton-based defense lawyer pressing for the release of more Massachusetts inmates as COVID-19 infections rise in the state.

"If there's a jail surge and a large number of people have to go to the local hospitals," Weber said, it will further burden the health system. Among incarcerated people who become ill with COVID-19, Weber said, "a greater portion will need to be hospitalized, and will need ICU care" due to a higher rate of pre-existing conditions. "It is a public health crisis for all of us," she argued.

"Institutionalized oppression results in a disproportionate amount of black people, poor people, Latinx people in prisons at a much higher risk of dying or having serious consequences that will need serious intervention," Weber said.

see COURT page A8

### In a Crisis, Some Create

By ISABEL KOYAMA

**FRANKLIN COUNTY** – "What keeps getting me is how swiftly our world turned upside down, and how quickly this has become our reality," says Turners Falls resident Anja Schutz, who started a Facebook group called "DIY Masks of Western Mass" on March 21.

Noticing that many locals were asking about how to make and deliver protective masks, Schutz says she "thought it would be good to combine all these questions and efforts into one group." The Facebook group has taken on a life of its own, and now includes over 1,000 members and a seemingly endless stream of colorful posts from users sharing their work, ideas, and resources.

As the page grew, Schutz appointed other administrators, including the owners of Lucky's Tattoos and Piercing in Northampton, who streamlined the effort and made spreadsheets to connect producers with those in need of masks.

Another one of the Facebook group's administrators, Kathryn Swanson, is a first grade teacher at the Center School working from home full time while also sewing masks with her mother, a costume designer who lives downstairs from her.

"My goal was to have a design that was as effective as possible and could be made in an assembly line," reports Swanson, who sells her masks at \$15 a pop. Swanson made a Youtube video tutorial entitled "Rosie Mask: COVID-19 Mask" which has over 2,000 views.

"A lot of people doing this are out of work right now," she says of the seamsters in her network, adding that see **CREATE** page A8



Wendell's Lena O'Dou (left) and Patti Scutari (right) have sewn and donated over 300 masks in the last two weeks.

### **Explore Further For This Abundant Content**

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### The Montague Reporter

"The Voice of the Villages"

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Founded by Arthur Evans Harry Brandt David Detmold August 2002

### Ask A Nurse

For the second time in a week, General Electric workers in Lynn held a protest outside their factory Wednesday demanding the company provide a safer work environment, accept federal assistance to keep employees on instead of laying them off, and go all out producing hospital ventilators. This time, they were joined by other factories in Texas, Virginia, and New York.

That's real leadership in a crisis. So far, management says it won't go along with the plan, because the company needs to provide airplane parts and other "mission-critical equipment to the US military." Uh... What mission is that, exactly?

Ten thousand Massachusetts members of the North Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters struck this week to push governor Charlie Baker to close down job sites. "Continuing to work on construction sites poses an immediate threat of harm to the health and safety of my members and the public," the union's secretary wrote.

That's leadership. Boston, Cambridge, Somerville, and a number of smaller towns have declared local moratoriums, and the idea has been endorsed by the state Building Trades Council and 105 state legislators. So far, the governor refuses to distinguish between essential and non-essential construction.

Nationwide, we've seen a rash of strikes and sick-outs at workplaces ranging from Amazon warehouses to fast food restaurants. Detroit bus drivers, who walked off the job in mid-March and immediately won their demands for personal protective equipment and free transit service for the duration of the emergency, set an early example.

This burgeoning strike wave comes amid a massive increase in unemployment - and amid widespread shortages in protective gear. The federal government is apparently using the military and other taxpayer resources to "expedite" imports, but then handing the goods to private companies who sell them to the highest bidder, pitting states against each other in a system many have compared to eBay.

As in many rural areas, the virus is hitting Franklin County slowly - but we also have fewer resources per capita for testing, tracing, or treatment, and as anyone who looks around can see, some of our neighbors are unconvinced by the pleas of health officials to stay home and spread out to slow the wave.

We spoke this week with Donna Stern, a pychiatric nurse at Baystate Franklin, co-chair of the Massachusetts Nurses Association's bargaining unit at the hospital, and a member of the MNA's statewide board of directors.

Stern had high praise for our local legislators ("they are doing everything they possibly can do for the people in western Mass"), as well as for the local hospital management: "We don't want an adverse relationship, we want a partnership. The union wants to partner with the hospital in providing the safest and best care to patients."

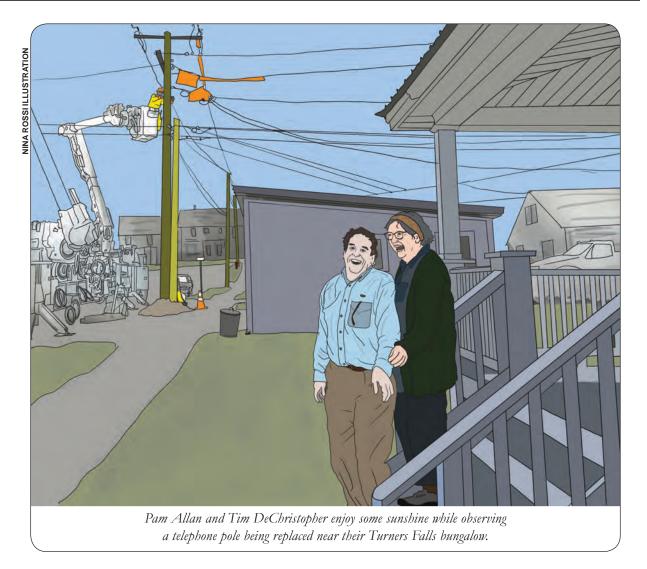
But Stern also sounded a note of alarm. "We have a major supply chain problem going on across the country. It trickles down to the states and counties," she said. "Baystate, along with all the other healthcare systems, are having a hard time getting access to the PPE that they need to have access to. We don't consistently have the PPE we should have – we would like them to be more transparent regarding what PPE they have in stock."

Stern also talked about how non-COVID care is affected by the virus, and vice versa. She called for an end to closures of mental health units, including the one at Baystate Noble in Westfield. "The governor needs to step in and stop the closures," she argued. "In Westfield they've already closed the ICU - now they're considering reopening it, but there are only a few ICU nurses left, so they're trying to figure out how to train Med-Surg nurses to be ICU nurses."

"Prior to this pandemic we were in a critical situation with a lack of mental health beds," she added. "People are languishing in the ER for days... now, on top of COVID-19, we need as many psych beds as possible to get psych patients out of the emergency rooms."

And she voiced another wish. "We feel very strongly that if the Partners system, which includes Cooley Dickinson, can provide housing for their employees, Baystate should provide housing for us," she said. "Regardless of how you've been working at the hospital - whether you're an environmental service worker, working in food service, a nurse, a doctor – people want the option of protecting their families. We're at high risk."

These nurses, who have provided so much leadership in preserving local healthcare, aren't about to walk off the job in protest. What can the rest of us do to return the favor, and support them in getting everything they need in this crisis?





### Resilience

An economic system that prized just-in-time efficiency over longrun resilience is now revealing all its failings.

I can't tell you how many times my fellow economists have described "buy local" and "power to the co-ops" as boutique indulgences. These days, however, local farm stands and food co-ops are enjoying huge demand for their products. Many shoppers want to avoid large supermarkets, and some have – with good reason - lost confidence in global supply chains.

I can't think of a better local example of resilience that the volunteer-powered rescue of the Leverett Village Co-op. A stubborn refusal to yield to financial pressure combined with a cheerful can-do attitude is now paying off - and here's why: the Co-op now offers an excellent line-up of the basic groceries we need to get through our current sequestration, in a safe

and welcoming environment.

Actually, more than just safe and welcoming - inspiring and energizing. Facing shortages of hand sanitizer, a co-op board member put together a home-made supply from aloe vera and isopropyl alcohol. Toilet paper – in short supply everywhere – materialized on the shelves (I'm not sure exactly how this miracle was accomplished).

Phone calls to the co-op asking about what's available and what's not are answered by a real person! A new arrangement with local farms will allow scheduled pickups of fresh produce. And last but not least, a regular newsletter keeps members up-to-date with what's happening, and beats the all-important fund-raising drum.

Thank you Co-op volunteers, our prayers are with you.

> **Nancy Folbre Montague Center**

# Enjoyed Special Issue

The Montague Reporter has, yet again, outdone itself! The special issue (April 2, 2020) with all content by people under 18 years old is brilliant!

Such lively writing. Such thoughtfulness. Such joy in the midst of overwhelming changes in daily life. Every article revealed a mind at work grappling with life, unafraid even while acknowledging fear. This evidence of vitality among the youngest in our communities is a blessing to your readers.

Thank you for taking this bold step, for demonstrating an ongoing experiment in journalism.

> Peter d'Errico Leverett

### Praise for the Montague Town Clerk

The residents in the Town of Montague are very fortunate to have Deb Bourbeau as our town clerk. Over the years Deb has moved this town forward in the voting process. This includes moving polling sites due to logistical nightmares such as cramped conditions (Montague Center Library) and potential interaction with school children (Hillcrest School).

Deb's latest move was to finally update the ballot boxes. Those beloved wooden boxes just had to be retired. Oh, I know, we all loved the sound of the bell as the "town cranks would deposit the ballot."

But did you ever think what happened to that paper ballot just so your vote got counted?

A group of counters would have to "snap" open the ballot, count into piles of 25, then ensure the ballots matched the number of actual voters. Many times the number on the box wasn't right due to a ballot getting stuck or the gear slipping. Often the ballots were wide

and had ballot questions on the back. This required folding and then flipping as the counters went through the piles. A very long, tedious process – especially during national elections, when there could be over 900 ballots in Precinct 1 alone. The media would be announcing the winners and our votes were still in Montague.

New Englanders are known for resisting change. But let's give Deb our support, not our criticism. The recent primary election gave us all an opportunity to move into the 21st century. The new voting scanner was a huge improvement. The ballots were compact, scanned immediately, and the count was electronically stored.

So, instead of the ringing of the ballot box bell, how about getting the button from Staples that remarks "That was easy."

Thanks, Deb!

**Ann Fisk Montague Center** 

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#### Compiled by NINA ROSSI

Due to the collapse of our communal, shared spaces while we are sheltering in place, there's once again not much to report in Local Briefs this week.

Instead, let's look back to a predecessor of this column, "Local Matters," which ran in the Turners Falls Reporter one hundred years ago.

Read over these examples from March and April, 1920, and see if they inspire you. Much like social media postings today, many of these little items were sent in to the paper from residents who wanted other people to know where they were going, who was visiting them, and other trivial and timely things. The paper seemingly published whatever local people were willing to share.

We welcome such tidbits – hints, tips, tricks, trivia, tiny tales, tributes – on this page. Send 'em in! In the meantime, here's what people shared a hundred years ago.

#### March 31, 1920

The ice and snow are fast disappearing from the main thoroughfare and the Avenue is dry for the greater part. More and more automobiles are appearing every day.

The jitneys have come out of their enforced winter retirement and resumed business yesterday morning.

The John Russell Cutlery company factory has taken out the last water wheel having completed the system of electrification from the power plant at Montague City.

The storefront of Stephen Drago & Co. on the Avenue has been repainted.

Mr and Mrs. C.E. Hazelton have been spending a few days in New York City.

George Starbuck, Jr., broke out the winter souvenirs on High Street the other day and opened up the street in good shape, by use of his large auto truck.

W.G. Johnson of Riverside has been ill with a severe attack of indi-

Work on the new building for the Crocker National bank is now progressing rapidly, the plasterers having finished their work and the painters and finishers are bustling along with theirs. From present indications the bank will be able to move into their new quarters by the last of May.

Miss Dorothy Partenheimer of Montague City wore a much prized pearl necklace to Greenfield, on Friday, the 19th, going on the 1:30 car. When she got off the car she missed the treasure, a girlhood keepsake, and tried to find the person who picked it up on the car. In her search she found a person who

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MATINEE & EVENING

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GEORGE LOANE

saw a woman pick up the necklace and pocket it, but supposed she had just dropped it. If people knew that to keep a found article is the same as stealing it, more lost articles would be returned to their owners.

The ice went out of the Connecticut River Sunday.

#### April 7, 1920

The glorious weather, Saturday, gave promise of ideal weather, Easter, but alas! the weather was exceedingly disagreeable, Sunday, and brought bitter disappointment to those who planned to blossom out in new spring finery.

Andrew Luipold, of Third street completed 40 years of continuous service with the John Russell Cutlery Co. last week. The company has a large number of veteran employees, many of whom went to work in the factory when in their teens and men who have been onto the job for from 30 to 50 years or more are not infrequent in the plant.

Alexander Deslongchamp and family have moved into the tenement on Seventh street recently vacated by Mrs. Ida Allen.

The last regular meeting of the St. Mary's C.T.A. society, April 5, 1920, saw 25 candidates receive the honorable degree. After the meeting a debate was held on daylight saving. The meeting was largely attended, there being 125 members on hand, and the subject

This advertisement for a screening of the silent film The Miracle Man at the Colle Opera House ran in the April 21, 1920 issue. The film, an overnight success, was about a group of con artists who sought to team up with a faith healer to trick the public with manufactured "miracle cures."

The only surviving bit of film from the movie shows Lon Chaney pretending to be a disabled man who gets cured, only to witness a real miracle inspired by his fakery. (There was a 1932 remake as well, but the original launched Chaney's career.) Watch the three-minute scene on YouTube: www.youtube.com/

was vigorously debated.

the John Russell Cutlery Co., for about a year, has resigned.

C.A. Eaton, efficiency expert for

Cashier W.T. Ellis of the Crocker National bank is driving a new Hudson touring car.

Mrs Bernice Everett, formerly of Turners Falls, who has been engaged in relief work in Turkey for the past year, finds the work so interesting and the need of workers so great, that she has agreed to remain at her post for another year.

#### **April 14, 1920**

A new club has been organized among members of the St. Mary's C.T.A. society under the name of the "Weekly Sleep and Wake Club" and will meet every Saturday night. Members desiring information about this club should see Paul Guilbeault, who has been elected president.

Porter Farwell and family, who have been in California for about three months, are slowly traveling homewards and expect to arrive here April 24.

Town Clerk Henry D. Bardwell, who has been ill, is now on the road to recovery and his host of friends are glad to know that he is able to sit up several hours daily.

Farmers are bringing small quantities of maple syrup into town, but the price, \$3 and \$3.50 a gallon, makes even lovers of the dainty blink and think twice.

Members of the fire department tested the hose and the new motor truck at the high school last evening.

### **April 21, 1920**

Jos. N. Starbuck, of Marshall street has had a pretty rustic arbor erected on his grounds.

The stores and schools and many offices were closed, Monday, for the holiday, but most of the mills and factories ran as usual, though not with full forces. The bright spring weather lured many people out of doors and during the afternoon the Avenue presented an unwonted gala appearance.

Dealers in milk and cream should have their licenses renewed on or before May 1. C.N.B. Fournier, the town milk inspector, has his office in the Fournier pharmacy on the Avenue.

Louis Gulow, clerk for G. Koch, the grocer, is quite ill at his home.

Mrs. Joseph Welcome of Montague City road is having improvements made on her house, including the extension of the piazza around on one side.

The fire department was called out Monday forenoon by an alarm from box 34, for a lusty brush fire which was raging over Montague plains near the cemeteries. It burned over a considerable territory. Every child in town was late to dinner that day, for there being no school the youngsters all sped to the hill, near the high school, expecting to be entertained.

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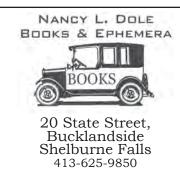


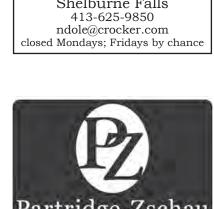


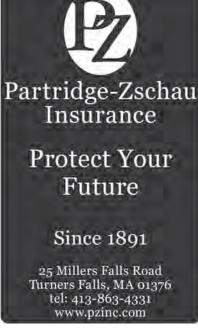
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### **Another Letter to the Editors** Conference Rescheduled

On March 12, this paper published a guest editorial on Women and Life on Earth. It described an "herstoric" conference on ecological feminism with 600 women held at UMass in March 1980. The goal of that gathering was to make connections around women and our communities, peace, ecology, and justice.

Over months now, Traprock and a planning group have developed a program called WLOE 2020 to mark the 40th anniversary of "Women and Life on Earth: a conference on eco-feminism in the 1980s" with a Saturday, March 28 meeting in the GCC Dining Commons.

There we would hear women activists from 18 area organizations describe their groups' plans for 2020. There would be time for small group discussion among the 100 people expected. A long wall calendar would show events being planned.

The goals? Greater unity and impact to achieve

changes so badly needed: for rapid action on climate and racial and gender justice, our unjust economy, and demands for peace.

But the very same day, March 12, all upcoming events at GCC were canceled - and we know how it has gone from there. This letter is to let you know that plans continue

on this project. Ironically, moving to a video and internet "platform" can then involve and reach many more people than the group at GCC.

We will continue to keep our community informed. This is no time to "shelter" from the realities of the health, wealth, and other social injustices that call for all the ideas and actions we can muster. Together.

> Anna Gyorgy, Wendell Pat Hynes, Montague Traprock Center for Peace and Justice

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NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

### "At Least One" Virus Case in Gill

By GEORGE BRACE

Gill's March 30 selectboard meeting was held by conference call. Board members shared information on the town's response to the COVID-19 outbreak, and approved the temporary hiring of Mitchell Waldron as a third full-time police officer. The board also discussed next steps in the town's aggregated electricity purchasing effort.

Town administrator Ray Purington opened the meeting with an update on the town's COVID-19 status and response. He noted the statewide emergency was still in effect. He said that the town's emergency management team was holding a weekly conference call to share information. That team is comprised of selectboard member Randy Crochier - who also serves on Gill's board of health and is a regional health agent for the Cooperative Public Health Service (CPHS) – police chief Christopher Redmond, fire chief Gene Beaubien, highway superintendent John Miner, and Purington.

There was no discussion at the meeting of possible cases in Gill, but subsequently, Crochier reported that the CPHS has dealt with "at least one, but less than five" positive test for the virus in Gill. He said CPHS was not giving out town-specific information at this time, and that he could not be more specific.

Crochier said the health service was notified of the positive result(s) through the state's Massachusetts Virtual Epidemiologic Network system (MAVEN), which collates lab results and provides such notifications to local health agents. Health agents then follow up with the affected individuals, gather further information, and advise them of the

protocols they need to follow.

Crochier described the protocols as something that can be voluntarily complied with, but said they could become an order if voluntarily compliance is not taking place. Crochier said that there have been no compliance issues with the case or cases in Gill, and that the person or persons have been in quarantine.

The board approved the appointment of current part-time police officer Mitchell Waldron as an emergency full-time officer through June 30, 2020, with the appointment to be reevaluated at that time.

"Having redundancy at this time is going to be very important," said Crochier, noting that if one of Gill's two full-time officers were to test positive for the virus they'd need to be quarantined for 14 days, leaving the department with only one full-time officer. He said that due to other commitments during the outbreak, part-time officers would likely be less available to fill in if needed. "Seeing a cruiser out more often would give people a greater feeling of security." he added.

Police chief Redmond and fire chief Beaubien reported that coordination with the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) was working out well. "MEMA's doing a great job," Beaubien said. "They're a great asset, in my opinion."

Crochier replied that he'd echo that for almost everything at the state level, but "above that, not so much."

Beaubien went on to say that the police and fire departments have been ordering needed supplies through a website set up by MEMA, and they have been delivered promptly by the National Guard, who are making daily deliveries for the agency. Red-



A reader who asked to remain anonymous shared this photo of the National Guard dropping off supplies in Gill last week.

mond said the police department was "getting close to where we should feel comfortable" in the supplies of needed equipment.

Beaubien also noted that he had updated the department's ambulance call list from four to ten.

The board and emergency management team shared their observations on communications with a variety of health organizations and agencies, and agreed that though there were some glitches, the systems were working well.

Discussion of the financial aspect of the situation was brief, with participants saying there was not a lot of clarity on what kinds of federal assistance may become available, but that everyone was tracking their COVID-related expenses. Purington said he was working his way through the Federal Emergency Management Agency web portal, and departments should "track your expenses, and stay tuned."

Board member Greg Snedeker mentioned that longer-term budgetary considerations were on his radar, and he would keep an eye out for information on this subject.

### **Other Business**

Claire Chang of the energy commission provided an update on the town's aggregated electricity purchasing project, saying the state Department of Public Utilities has approved the plan, and that Colonial Power, the aggregation agent, has provided "indicative pricing" for a schedule that would see purchasing begin in August.

Chang said pricing was provided for terms between 6 and 36 months, with the lowest rates coming in at 9.1 or 9.2 cents per kilowatt-hour, and that the town must either choose a basic service, or "opt out" of that and "opt in" to one of two alternatives. The differences largely have to do with the levels and types of "green" energy production, with "greener" services being more expensive.

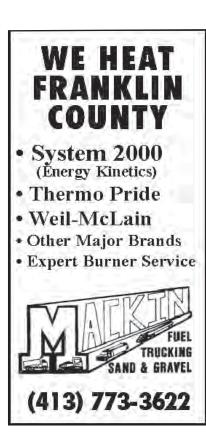
Chang and the board pointed out that 9.1 cents was a low rate, particularly as it could be locked in for as long as three years. It was noted that there is a risk to locking in rates for longer terms as energy markets are volatile. Chang suggested the town consider a greener service than the cheapest available one, as the price difference was very small.

Towns taking part in the aggregation will need to approve a plan by April 15. Final pricing will not be available until May 20, at which time towns will sign a contract in order to begin receiving service in August.

Judd Greenstein was appointed to the cultural council until April 2023.

The board approved renewing Joe Williams's leases for the use of the Boyle lot and Mariamante properties for the third year of his three-year contract.

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### Farm Dispute Spills Onto Social Media

By SARAH ROBERTSON

MONTAGUE – After a local workers' center announced Sunday that packing house workers at a vegetable farm were "on strike for unsafe work conditions," the organization reports the issues are being resolved internally, while the farm's owners maintain that they had been in compliance with health and safety guidelines all along, and that there had been no strike.

"[F]our employees left the farm citing a reason unrelated to the farm's safety practices or COVID-19 in the workplace," Red Fire Farm co-owner Sarah Voiland told the *Reporter*. "We did not hear about the list of demands until it came out on Facebook and in an email to us from PVWC at the same time."

On March 24, at least four workers from the farm's Montague packing house left their jobs. In an April 5 Facebook post, the Northampton-based Pioneer Valley Workers Center (PVWC) wrote that the employees, who wished to remain anonymous, were striking over unsafe working conditions due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, and demanding the farm provide paid sick time, personal protective equipment, and "access to clean water and soap or hand sanitizer," among other measures.

Voiland wrote a public response online on Tuesday. "Ryan and I, as



A sign in the window of a storefront on Avenue A in Turners Falls:
"We must not forget the heroes without capes, our farmworkers..."

well as the farm's employees, were deeply dismayed and shocked to read the Center's allegations," Voiland wrote. "We were also shocked because there is no strike."

Voiland also outlined the farm's existing COVID-19 policies, arguing that all the listed demands were met before the PVWC announced the strike. The farm, she wrote, provided training regarding COVID-19 symptoms and best practices, regularly sanitizes high-touch surfaces, keeps gloves and masks in stock, and has been informing workers of their right to paid time off under the Families

First Coronavirus Response Act.

Both the PVWC's announcement and Red Fire Farm's statement garnered attention on Facebook, with dozens of critics and supporters of both organizations questioning their claims.

"We did get a response from the boss today, and so the workers are going to be in touch with the boss on their own," PVWC co-director and lead organizer Rose Bookbinder told the *Reporter* on Wednesday. "We feel happy that this is happening.... We do understand that all those [demands] have been met now."

Bookbinder said that the day after employees walked out, the farm held a COVID-19 related information session. But she disputed the owners' assertion that the four workers had left for unrelated reasons.

"Clearly we are talking to the workers we're talking to, so this is their perspective," Bookbinder said. "They informed the owner that they were going to return after the shelter in place was lifted or until working conditions improved."

"We would hate to see our business harmed or our public support lessened as a result of this misinformation," Voiland told the *Reporter* on Wednesday night, echoing her earlier statement. "We work very hard on the farm to maintain best practices for staff safety and food safety.... It's crucial to make sure the information you share is correct."

In response to the pandemic,

she said, Red Fire Farm has pivoted to more delivery, and is offering pre-orders of produce for local pickup. They have joined several other local food producers in an online delivery system called Massachusetts Food Delivery.

"We are not sure how it is working out financially yet," she added, "as the new ways we are selling things are more labor intensive in terms of lots of boxed and bagged things, maintaining online listings of products, and processing detailed orders with email communication to customers."

The farm lost revenue with the cancellation of winter farmers markets, she said, but has since sold out its spring CSA shares.

"I think the best outcome for the food system from this situation is learning how to better make more of a collaboration between groups attending to worker rights and farm businesses (owners and systems)," Voiland said of the conflict.

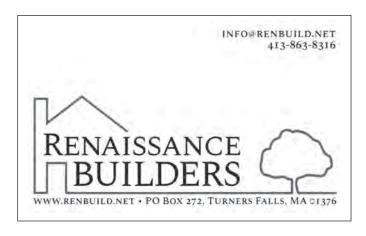
"I think we're cracking open an unjust system that has been here for a long time, and we're just starting to see it," Bookbinder said.

She added that a 24-hour hotline which the PVWC runs for low-income and immigrant workers experiencing unfair working conditions has seen a dramatic increase in call volume since the outbreak began.

The hotline used to get a few calls a day, she said, but is now is handling 20 to 50.

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#### **SURGE** from page A1

Phoebe Walker, director of community services for the FRCOG, has been at the heart of this effort.

"I think the challenge we face right now," Walker said in an interview Tuesday, "is that we have access to one source of very specific, good, hard data, which is the data that comes through all the testing labs at different speeds - into the state lab, and into MAVEN [the Massachusetts Virtual Epidemiologic Network], and to the locals."

"So we have only this one source of really clear data, right? And we also have a situation in which the criteria for who falls into which category actually changes regularly," Walker explained. "In the last week – the people who qualify as needing to be quarantined used to be somebody who'd been within 6 feet, for more than 15 minutes, of a person who was symptomatic, who was later diagnosed.

"Now it includes 48 hours before that person became symptomatic. So that's a whole new group of people we weren't asking about last week, we're now asking about this week."

#### So, What Do We Know Now?

Numbers in a spreadsheet can give the impression of a clear, linear path. But in the eye of a pandemic storm, the defining characteristics of data sets shift and grow as our observations are put into action and our strategies adapt.

The City of Greenfield currently posts several data points on its website, and updates them routinely. As of Wednesday afternoon, 74 Greenfield residents had tested positive for

COVID-19. Of those, 17 had died, and 10 had already recovered.

The city started keeping these records on March 15, said Danielle Letourneau, the mayor's chief of staff and a communications liaison at the operations center.

Across the nation, testing is still very limited, and more people are ill than are getting tested. This is true locally as well.

So, was 17 the total of Greenfield's COVID-19 deaths as of Wednesday? Not necessarily. People who were never tested may have fallen victim to the disease, just as there will be people who recover from the illness without ever being counted.

Greenfield has hired two members of the board of health – Jennifer Hoffman, who has a master's degree in public health, and Kelly Dixon, an RN – to work for the health department during the coronavirus crisis, Letourneau said, and the city filed required conflict of interest disclosures with the state.

Letourneau said Hoffman and Dixon's professional qualifications and familiarity with the community make them peculiarly qualified to help the city respond. They are working on the new team, set up at the EOC, charged with tracing the contacts of people who are sick with the virus.

Letourneau said she expects additional testing capacity to open up in Greenfield soon, perhaps within a week. The city has set up a number for information, including financial support programs. The Greenfield COVID-19 Community Information Line is (413) 775-6411.

For more of Samantha Wood's coronavirus coverage in the Reporter. www.montaguereporter.org/news/whats-happening-at-the-hospital/



Reader Nancy Folbre shared this photo of a roadside sign on Route 63 in Leverett.

#### **Shifting Sands**

Emergency management officials have recently started to meet weekly with Baystate Health to plan for the anticipated surge in COVID-19 cases.

"Baystate Franklin Medical Center has four ICU beds to care for the most critically ill COVID-19 patients," said company spokesperson Shelly Hazlett. "We can increase these ICU beds by two in a surge, and can also utilize 20 PACU (Post-Anesthesia Care Unit) bays for additional critical patients. The hospital also has 43 medical/surgical beds which can be used for admitted COVID-19 patients with less serious symptoms."

The shortage of personal protective equipment is still a challenge, but has been relieved somewhat by recent deliveries. The city has distributed masks to three major supermarkets, Foster's, Big Y, and Stop & Shop. Letourneau advised other companies that are deemed essential to reach out to the mayor's office if they need masks for workers.

ServiceNet is working to open a second

floor at its shelter on Wells Street, and tents have been added next door for people in need of a place to stay. Letourneau said those tents will be used as overflow in case there is a greater need for social distancing after the second floor opens up.

In response to concerns that people in need of shelter might be afraid to seek it because they fear not being allowed to leave, Letourneau said no one would be detained at the shelter.

The city has also installed portable toilets and hand-washing stations downtown, because other public facilities are no longer open.

Massachusetts governor Charlie Baker instituted new rules this week for grocery stores with an occupancy capacity over 25 people. These will now be required to limit people in the building to 40% of occupancy, including employees, to ensure enough space for social distancing. This may require customers to wait in line to get in to shop.

With new guidelines and programs announced by the governor daily, the reality of response to COVID-19 is constantly changing. City officials often have no warning of the changes they will be required to implement.

Meanwhile, they know that people are getting sick.

"So, the data we have is only coming from this one source," Phoebe Walker said of the state's official numbers. "The criteria for what you do with that data changes regularly. And we know that there is widespread, active community transmission.

"At this point," Walker said, "it is safest for everyone to assume that they have it – and everyone they come into contact with has it."

### NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

### Normalcy Amid Virus Arrangements: A Good Old Dangerous Dog Hearing

By JERRI HIGGINS

Town administrator Marjorie McGinnis and selectboard member Tom Hankinson were at the Leverett town hall for the March 31 selectboard meeting, with board chair Peter d'Errico, member Julie Shively, and all others calling in for the 5:30 p.m. meeting. The main item on the agenda was a dangerous dog hearing.

The earlier time alleviated the connection difficulties experienced during heavier call-volume times, but on a recommendation from Hankinson, the town will look at video conference options that could return the selectboard to its regular 7:30 p.m. meeting time.

"What a different place we're in than we were a month ago," said McGinnis, noting the changes and challenges wrought by the COVID-19 virus.

An extension was approved until 4 p.m. on April 14 for Town Meeting warrant article submissions. D'Errico suggested getting the word out that rather than making anyone go door-to-door to solicit signatures, any ten people could submit their written affirmation toward a warrant article to a central coordinator, who could then submit that to the selectboard for consideration at town meeting.

McGinnis opened the dog hearing by reading a statement from animal control officer Roberta Bryant.

"Tina Robison of Rattlesnake Gutter Road called on January 28, 2020," Bryant's letter began, "and said that the neighbor's dogs belonging to Ken and Julie Patterson, were on her property; killed three chickens; and chased her and tried to bite her legs in her yard."

Bryant said that she contacted the

Pattersons and learned that they had ordered an electric fencing system, and agreed they would keep their dogs on leashes in the meantime. But in February, Bryant received another call that one of the Pattersons' dogs was again loose in the Robisons' yard, prompting her to recommend a restraining order on the dogs.

"I'm confused about Roberta Bryant's report," said Julie Patterson, who was on the conference call. "[Tina Robison] did tell me that chickens were killed, but she had never said to me – and I talked to her at length – that the dogs tried to bite her."

Patterson said she had spoken with Bryant, who had also not told her that the dogs had been aggressive. "My dogs are friendly with the neighbors," she said. "They're around children and our fowl, and I've not seen them be aggressive."

"I felt terrible," she continued, "because there's obviously a chance that our dogs could have done it, but there are a lot of dogs on the Rattlesnake Gutter and Old Whitney Road - which is where we live... I just think these things should be taken into consideration."

Isaiah Robison, joining the conference call, spoke to Patterson's complaint.

"We let the chickens out when we're around," he began. "I was here [at home] and I saw the dogs chasing the chickens, but I didn't see the dog kill the chickens, just chase them. Later on, we found that they were dead."

Robison said his experience with other predators made him believe it was likely the chickens were killed by dogs. "When a fox attacks our meat birds," Robison explained, "the fox buries the bird – and it tried to do that within the coop - and

we've had a fisher cat take a bird and run away with it."

"There are multiple times where the dogs would follow me, barking and growling," added Tina Robison. "And if I turned my back they'd run up and try to jump on my back where my daughter was in a backpack." Robison said she had to swing a stick behind her to keep the dogs from jumping up and biting her until she was able to get inside the house and call the owners.

Patterson defended the efforts she and her husband have made spending over a thousand dollars on electric fencing and on training the dogs to not jump – and expressed her dismay over people walking through the neighborhood with dogs off leash.

"All day long, dogs are coming through and defeating what we've done," she said, "dogs coming on our land, enticing our dogs to leave... I politely ask them to not have their dogs off leash. And I tell them that Tina and her kids have a real fear of dogs, and I'm trying to help the situation."

"We've had dog hearings many times," said d'Errico, "and it's always more or less the same story about people feeling bad about what their dogs do. The starting point is to realize there's a leash law in Leverett. Period."

The board did not vote on a restraining order. D'Errico noted the "heavy circumstantial evidence" of the dead chickens, along with a definite leash law violation. "If the fence doesn't work, the dogs will have to be leashed to avoid further action by the town," he warned Patterson.

### **Amherst Water Line**

McGinnis told the board that town counsel Donna MacNicol

### Leverett Sets Up Resource Call Line

LEVERETT - A Board of to. They have also volunteered to Health-recruited taskforce has put together a resource line to support residents during the state-wide COVID-19 "stay at home" order. The number is (413) 345-5072.

Open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. starting on Monday, April 6, the line is staffed by knowledgeable volunteers who can assist you with information about the resources and services available in the area - for example, grocery and medicine deliveries and curbside pickup. Some of our neighbors have volunteered to do these pickups, if you're not able make "check in" calls to anyone who would like that.

Messages can be left if calls come in outside the 10 to 2 timeframe. Calls will be returned the next day.

This is not an emergency service. You should call 911 if you have a medical emergency.

We are all in this together, and hope this resource line is helpful during this very challenging time. We know that needs and resources may change as we move through this pandemic but we're here to help as best as we can.

to the problem of unusable wells contaminated by effluvient from a capped town landfill. The town had previously received an "estimate" of the design cost from consultants.

"Donna recommends that the engineers know what they're doing," said McGinnis, "and that the price is good enough to go forward and to base our calculations on."

"The board should explore possibilities that we previously had passed over," said d'Errico, "such as changing the size of the water line pipe or changing the water line material. Those were things which we had previously thought we had settled – and they may change the cost estimate," he added.

### **Other Business**

Hankinson applauded the newly created group Leverett Together, a community and elder support taskforce through the board of health that will do "what we've been trying to create for months now," said Hankinson. (See sidebar.)

A \$16,276 Green Communities grant application for streetlights

does not recommend bidding out from Eversource was completed. the design of a water line connec- The total project will be \$18,830, tion to Amherst, a potential solution with the difference made up from utility incentives. The grant will allow an LED streetlight upgrade and ongoing maintenance costs, which McGinnis said Leverett could contract with other towns to help maintain their LED lights as well. The grant money will also fund LED lights for the town hall.

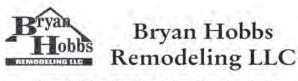
> Police chief Scott Minckler was authorized to sign a 2020 Pedestrian and Bike Safety Grant that will go towards patrols for safety measures around town.

> A late addition to the agenda was a proposed town meeting warrant article for a "release of easement" on Depot Road removing Eversource from traveling through a portion of Denzel Hankinson's property to access power lines. Tom Hankinson recused himself from the discussion.

> D'Errico advised Denzel Hankinson to have the article reviewed by town counsel MacNicol before submitting it for a town meeting vote.

> A planned executive session was postponed as it was, in McGinnis's words, "not timely." The board will explore conducting the session through video software.

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## What's It Like To Have COVID-19?



Jessamyn Smyth has been fighting the disease at her West County home.

#### By SAMANTHA WOOD

WEST COUNTY – People in Franklin County are coming down with the illness caused by the new coronavirus, COVID-19. While testing is still hard to come by, the virus is spreading in the community and making people sick.

According to Franklin Regional Council of Governments public health nurse Lisa White, the most important thing now is care for people who are ill. "We should assume anyone we come in contact with may be carrying the virus," White said in an interview this week.

Jessamyn Smyth, a Franklin County hilltown resident who is recovering from COVID-19, says she is at high risk for complications, and did everything she could to avoid catching this virus. She thinks it was likely that she was exposed through her partner, who was working outside the home but has remained asymptomatic.

Smyth, who has a background in public health and teaches communications, granted the *Montague Reporter* an interview by email because COVID-19 makes her cough. In the last week, she has experienced respiratory distress and has been to the emergency room. She continues to recover at home as of press time, and is still awaiting test results.

This interview has been edited for length.

MR: What were the first signs you had of coronavirus? How did you get tested?

JS: I had a feeling of intense pain and pressure in my chest. The next morning I woke up with a fever of 100 and a spasmodic cough, full body pain, GI issues, worsening lung pain. That seems like a long time ago now (it's been a long week and a half or so!).

Because of test shortages, while I was still breathing okay I didn't meet the criteria for one of the few tests in western Mass., even

though I am in a "medically vulnerable" group. When I started having real breathing difficulty, my primary care doctor referred me to the emergency respiratory clinic set up in Northampton.

The doc there was both extraordinarily kind and realist, diagnosing corona, discussing what that may mean for me in particular, safety planning with me about when to bolt for the ER and how we hope I won't have to, all of that. The nasopharyngeal swab used in the test is pretty uncomfortable, but she was even very honest with me about that — I appreciate how she treated me with calm, exact kindness, and respectful directness about both the disease and my risks, more than I can say.

I'm grateful for all the work healthcare people are doing right now. They are exhausted already.

*MR:* How do you think you were exposed to the virus?

JS: Knowing that my hereditary primary immune deficiency and allergy to all groups of antibiotics makes me high risk for complications of coronavirus (and difficult to treat if I got it), I took this contagion very seriously far before most folks around me really understood the dangers. I began fully self-isolating on March 10, teaching and working virtually.

My partner began isolating at home with me on March 15, but was exposed to several high risk vectors in the interim. The span the docs here are seeing between exposure and symptoms for those who get sick is four days, so it seems I got it from him during that period. He's asymptomatic, which, we have learned from recent studies published in *Nature*, as many as 60% of all carriers are. That's 6 in 10 people transmitting with no visible symptoms.

[Editors' note: Franklin County public health nurse Lisa White said this week that the incubation period may be up to two weeks.]

This lengthy interview was published in its entirety on our website last Friday, April 3. To read more, click here: www.montaguereporter.org/news/whats-it-like-to-have-covid-19/

### WENDELL from page A1

an "S," and patrons would enter one by one from the alley side of the town hall, be given gloves, follow the "S," and leave through the front doors. Good Neighbors will forego the usual donation jar.

Craddock said that if there is a problem with the stairs, they will work out something on the spot.

Selectboard member Christine Heard said it seemed like a good approach, and the other board members concurred.

Craddock said that FRCOG will allow Wendell \$1,000 for COVID-19 related costs, but the cost of protective gear is the town's responsibility. Hotels, motels, and B'n'Bs are now reserved for quarantine, especially for emergency responders. Airbnb's are known only if they are listed on the website.

Cuneo said that the two motels off Exit 16 of Route 2 will be shared by Wendell and Orange, with the cost borne by the towns with hope for reimbursement. He said he would reach out to Mark Kemsley to see about use of the Kemsley Academy buildings.

Cuneo also reported that the Wendell and New Salem fire departments are manning an emergency operations center at the New Salem fire station – phone number (978) 544-3345, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. – in an attempt to coordinate local actions. A multi-agency coordination center for Franklin County will be operating soon.

Smith brought up the town election, scheduled for May 4, and the annual town meeting, scheduled for June 8, both of which involve close contact among citizens. She suggested postponing the election to June 1 and encouraging people to vote by mail.

Selectboard chair Dan Keller made a motion to that effect, and it was approved. To that end, Keller proposed a townwide mailing, similar to the newsletter, encouraging voting by mail and including the necessary application. Town coordinator Nancy Aldrich said that including a self-addressed stamped envelope would not work, because the mailings are only folded and stapled.

Selectboard member Christine Heard observed



Inês Pedrosa Thompson, aged 7, is selling these small laminated signs at www.etsy.com/shop/InesArtDesign.

that, with the delayed election, she would have to stay on the board an extra month.

The board scheduled an extra meeting for Wednesday, April 8 to work out details of the election mailing.

The board also discussed possibilities for delaying the annual town meeting, or holding one in the open air. The number of connections for a remote town meeting might overwhelm the connection. As of press time, the commonwealth has extended the deadline for town meetings – even beyond July 1, the first day of FY'21. The selectboard and fin com are considering limiting the warrant to four money articles.

#### **Assessing and Collecting**

The deadline for paying Wendell taxes has been changed from May 1 to June 1, and no interest will accrue until June 30.

Heard said she is ready to work with tax collector Penny Delorey and treasurer Carolyn Manley to work out details of property tax payment plans for people who suddenly find themselves unemployed.

Assessors Anna Seeger and Chris Wings, who joined the April 1 meeting, said they are required to assess personal property and business property. Joanna Moest, the town's new administrative assessor, suggested having a business survey, as assessment for business property has been inconsistent within the town.

The town has enacted a \$10,000 exemption for personal property before it is taxed, a provision that some feel should be looked at again.

There is also a farm (equipment) tax of \$5 per \$1,000 that can be exempted by a town meeting vote. Heard suggested that such a vote be postponed from the annual town meeting, which will be mostly about the budget, to a special town meeting. Keller said that he personally favors the farm exemption.

Moest was hired at \$18 an hour, but since then, because she has completed two courses and proved her worth, according to Seeger and Wing, they recommended raising her hourly pay to \$18.50. The selectboard approved the raise.

#### **Other Business**

Library trustees chose Anna Lawrence to be Wendell's new librarian, to start work near the end of May and work with the present librarian, Rosie Heidkamp until Heidkamp's retirement at the end of June. Lawrence has an MA in library science from Simmons College. Keller said that hiring Lawrence was entirely the responsibility of the trustees, and the selectboard does not sign her contract.

A scheduled meeting with Appleguy Flowers, LLC concerning their proposal to grow marijuana on a piece of land bordering West Street was postponed until the next regular meeting on April 15.

### ERVING from page A1

FY'20 budget amount each month during the emergency in FY'21, and can spend any free cash certified as of July 1, 2019.

Towns are also allowed to extend the due date for property tax bills to June 1, 2020. Town administrator Bryan Smith told the board that the treasurer and tax collector were discussing whether to implement this provision. He said they would report to the board at a later meeting.

The board reviewed the draft annual town meeting warrant and a \$12 million budget for FY'21 at both meetings. The budget includes \$5.2 million for education (including \$3.3 million for Erving Elementary School), \$2 million for employee benefits, \$250,000 into the capital stabilization fund, and \$273,000 into the general stabilization fund.

"It's a tight budget," remarked Jacob Smith. The board decided to vote on a final budget on April 12.

The annual town meeting warrant includes several proposed bylaws, including one to move the town election to a date before the annual town meeting, with the provision that newly-elected officials will not take office until July 1.

In 2016, Erving voted to move the election to a date after the annual town meeting so that town officials who had developed the next fiscal year's budget would still be in office at the town meeting. "The public may have concerns as to why we're going back," said selectboard member William Bembury. "It's kind of flip-flopping."

Jacob Smith said that the bylaw would allow elected officials to complete their fiscal term, but would also allow the town to make changes to their compensation using the recently approved step and grade system.

The final FY'21 budget and town meeting warrant will be published in the Around Town newsletter and mailed to every household in Erving.

### Other Business

The board voted to join the state

Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program offered by Mass-Development, which provides low-cost loans to businesses for energy efficiency improvements. Under the PACE program, the loans would be paid with a betterment assessment on the owners' property tax bills.

The board continued its discussion of the future use of the former library building. The recreation department, the Union #28 school administration, and the highway and water/wastewater departments have all expressed interest in using the building.

Bryan Smith said that the building was cleaned up, and that planning assistant Mariah Kurtz was currently working with the highway department, recreation commission, and Union #28. Potential use of the building will be included in the already approved public works office feasibility study.

The board decided to table the discussion until the current state of emergency is lifted.

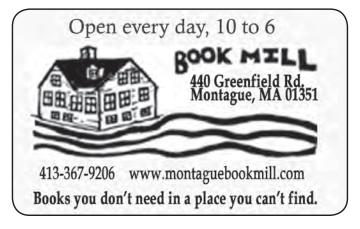
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#### **ANNOUNCES** from page A1

School graduate, currently finishing up a masters degree in public administration at Cornell University from home. His service credentials include six years as an armor officer in the US Army and an administrative position at Cornell's Center for Regional Economic Advancement.

In a brief interview this week, LaRose described his policy platform for the 2nd Franklin as one of "rural revitalization," emphasizing economic development, infrastructure, and education. "I think those are intertwined," he said. "We need to look at comprehensive, systemic policies to move the region forward."

"I look forward to the months and weeks ahead," he added, "and trying to hash some of these issues out with my opponent."

The 2nd Franklin District includes Erving, Gill, and Wendell; New Salem, Orange and Athol; Warwick, Royalston, Templeton, Phillipston, and Petersham; and the northern half of Belchertown in Hampshire County.

By MIKE JACKSON

**GILL-MONTAGUE** – "I don't have a report, other than this large draft learning plan for you," superintendent Michael Sullivan told the school

committee, convened via Zoom on April 7.

Schools statewide are closed to slow transmission of the novel coronavirus, and when the governor extended the closure from three weeks to seven, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education mandated that districts resume educating students remotely.

Staff and administration had worked "tirelessly" to come up with a viable plan, ranging from curriculum planning to technology to outreach to families, and now the committee was hearing a draft. It took 73 minutes for Sullivan, pupil services director Dianne Ellis, director of elementary teaching and learning Christine Limoges, and information technology director Tina Mahaney to run through the outline. (Readers can watch the full meeting at www.vimeo.com/403056355.)

"There's real limitations," said Sullivan. "Not just technology limitations, but psychological limitations, hours-in-the-day limitations, parents needing to watch other kids, people still holding

down their job at home... We need to be realistic and practical, and reduce stress, when we're thinking about our learning."

NOTES FROM THE GILL-MONTAGUE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

School Gears Up To Attempt Distance Learning

The plan is to determine which families need to be lent computers, and then, depending on the grade level, run lessons a couple times a week and give ongoing online support around homework.

Mahaney, who said she was salvaging Chromebooks to send out, discussed the technology plan at length. The main software used, she explained, would be Google Classroom, including the group video chat provided by Google Meet.

"The admin team, as a group, has spent hours on [the] issue of conferencing as it relates to privacy," Sullivan said.

"Tina, this is a tremendous amount of work that went into this," Montague member Thomasina Hall told Mahaney, "so that we can provide a free and equitable education to our students."

"It's quite a moment in my career," Ma-

heney replied. "My daughter said, 'Mama, it's your turn to sparkle!"" According to the plan, the third and fourth terms of the year will be combined into a sin-

gle semester. Elementary students will receive

"feedback," while those at the middle and high

work included considerable collaboration." A new memorandum of agreement between the teachers and district has not yet been signed,

support of their union for the plan.

but Dziura said he felt "confident" that the one covering the initial period of closure could be extended into the new period. "We needed to focus on completing the creation, collaboration, and

school will be assessed with "no credit," "par-

and Plans." "Everything's canceled," Sullivan,

who will retire after June, announced with a grin.

families on Tuesday, and can now be viewed

at www.gmrsd.org. Along the way, the admin-

istration has involved teachers, and sought the

tague Education Association president Karl

Dziura told the Reporter on Wednesday. "The

GMRSD administration has been working very

hard to create the remote learning plan, and that

"The process has been fast paced," Gill-Mon-

Next on the agenda was "Major Spring Events

The learning plan was announced to district

tial credit," or "full credit."

release of the remote learning plan first," he said. Dziura said Sullivan's request for staff input on the plan had "generated more feedback than any other previous issue."

#### MONTAGUE from page A1

been "incredibly difficult to work with." The store had attempted to implement "social distancing" by establishing a longer line to the register, she said, but the checkout process left well under six feet between customers and employees. A store manager told her it might take weeks to implement a new policy, and calls to corporate headquarters produced no responses.

"At some point, Family Dollar has to close," McNeely warned.

"Supermarkets and grocery stores need to have barriers," said health board and selectboard member Michael Nelson. "Big Y had screens even before they were required to."

"I would agree with Michael," said selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz. "Hand-deliver a letter to the stores, and if no action is taken, close the stores."

"I do want to work with them," McNeely said, "and everyone wants to work with me, but I cannot seem to get [Family Dollar] to return my calls." She also said she had not "heard back" from FL Roberts or Cumberland Farms, gas stations with convenience stores.

The final motion, unanimously approved by the board of health, authorized "the acting health director, in consultation with the chair of the board of health, to deliver to any business that does not have appropriate protective shields in place, a notice to do so and get them in place. If they are not in place by 12 noon this coming Friday, then the health director with consultation with the board of health chair, has the authority to close the business until they are in compliance."

The boards did not discuss the legal basis for the shield order, including whether town counsel had reviewed it. The Reporter could find no requirement, enforced by locally mandated closure of essential businesses, for shields to protect employees on either the state public health website or the website of the Centers for Disease Control.

In its letter hand-delivered to Cumberland Farms on Tuesday, the health director cited the "intent and spirit" of Governor Baker's March 31 order on "essential services," and the "guidance" from the state Department of Public Health (DPH) advocating local social distancing of six feet.

#### Withholding Data

The two officials discussed whether to publish available data on the number of confirmed COVID cases and the number of deaths in town. Nelson reported that county-level data is available on the state DPH website, but that the department encourages cities and towns not to publish local data. "Privacy concerns" were expressed by state officials – and by members of the Montague board of health – for this policy.

The state, however, does not prohibit publishing town data, so there has been "mixed guidance," in Nelson's words, on the issue. Some towns, such as Greenfield, have published data on confirmed cases, while in others local officials have strongly opposed it. There is a growing debate in the press and social media over the issue.

Nelson said the publication of town-level data could cause confusion among local residents: if the number of confirmed COVID cases seemed "too few," he said, it might give residents a sense of "comfort." If the number was "too many," they would ask 'what are we doing wrong?"

Fire chief John Zellman did not take a stance on the issue, but noted that the number of confirmed cases was increasing statewide and locally because more testing sites were opening up.

Gina McNeely said the issue had not been "on top of my list," but added that the "right to privacy" is a "tenet of our system."

The board voted to "share the DPH county-level COVID data" with the public.

### **Postponing Business**

The board voted unanimously to delay the annual town meeting until Saturday, June 13 and the spring town election for local offices until Monday, June 22.

Town administrator Steve Ellis had initially encouraged the board to consider either June 13 or June 20 for the town meeting, saying that he could think of reasons that "either would be good or neither would be good." But, he continued, "my gut tells me that the 13th would be the best date," partly because it left more space until the end of the fiscal year on June 30.

The June 26 date for the spring town election was proposed by town clerk Deb Bourbeau, who also said it might be possible to restrict voting hours to encourage public safety. "My first priority is the safety of the poll workers and the public," she said.

In response to a question from finance committee chair Jen Audley, Bourbeau said it was not legally possible to extend the deadline, which was at the end of March, to hand in nomination papers for local offices. She said there needed to be more more discussion with the town Democratic Committee about the process for implementing nominations through the party's caucus.

The selectboard also voted unanimously to delay payment of certain local taxes, as allowed under state emergency legislation. The due date for real and personal property taxes was extended from April 1 to June 1, 2020, as was the due date for property tax exemptions. The board also voted to waive interest and penalties for late payment of taxes until June 30.

Nelson asked whether people who had "raided the piggy bank" to pay their taxes on time might resent the extension. Town treasurer Eileen Seymour said tax payments this year were only slightly lower than at the same date last year. Ellis said towns like Montague had lobbied their representatives in the legislature to change state law to allow the tax delay.

### Aid and Adaptation

Ellis reported that the town Council on Aging, under the direction of Roberta Potter, had a program to deliver groceries to seniors "up and running." He said the program had already delivered "sixty plus" bags of groceries, and that Potter was doing "outreach calls."

Potter told the Reporter that "volunteers have been advised to wear cloth face masks of their own devising and gloves where and when they feel it would be appropriate. They are, of course hand washing, sanitizing, and maintaining social distance."

Parks and recreation director Jon Dobosz announced a "Peter Cottontail Social Distancing Drive By Tour" in lieu of the annual April Unity Park Easter egg hunt, which has been postponed to the summer. The tour, which will take place this Saturday morning, April 11, will feature Dobosz driving an individual dressed in a rabbit costume through the town's various villages.

For those who wish to wave to Mr. Cottontail, he is scheduled to appear in sections of Turners Falls between 10 and 10:20 a.m.; in Millers Falls and Lake Pleasant from 10:20 to 10:40 a.m.; and then in to Montague Center and up Turners Falls Road to Unity Park between 10:30 and 11 a.m.



### **Other Business**

In other news, the board discussed significant changes in Article 23 and 31 of the annual town meeting warrant. As originally written, Article 23 would have requested three additional liquor licenses from the state to be located in downtown Turners Falls, while 31 would have requested an additional license for the Upper Bend cafe on Avenue A.

Ellis and town planner Walter Ramsey argued that the geographic limitation in Article 23 was too restrictive, and that having two license requests before the state legislature might undermine their viability. The board voted to eliminate the geographic restriction in Article 23, and request all four licenses under that article.

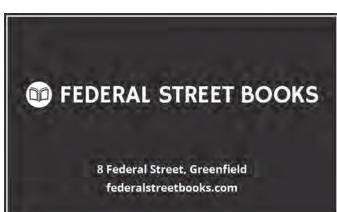
Ellis updated the board on the project to cap the old "burn dump" on Sandy Lane Road and site a solar array on top of it. He said the lease agreement with the solar firm Kearsarge, LLC will not produce much revenue for the town, but that the cap project, which will be financed by the company and is mandated by the state, would lead to significant "cost avoidance." "It's exciting," said Ellis. "And a lot of hard work."

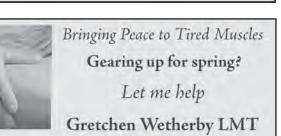
The board approved a cellphone stipend for new water pollution control facility superintendent Chelsey Little, who has been on the job since March 30.

The next scheduled selectboard meeting will be on April 13.



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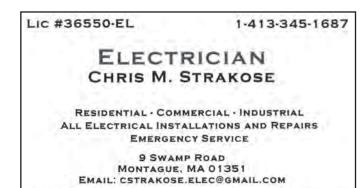




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FREE CONSULTATION





### **CREATE** from page B1

more than half of the masks are donated to places in need, such as hospitals and grocery stores.

Swanson used the profits from her home-sewn masks to purchase an industrial sewing machine that is four times as fast as its predecessor. Now she and her mother are able to churn out around 50 masks a day.

"People always sew for a disaster," says Swanson. "We've always been here."

91-year-old Lena O'Dou of Wendell, another seamstress tapped into the local DIY network, albeit offline, says her sewing put her kids through college, "three times." O'Dou and Wendell Country Store owner Patti Scutari have made and donated over 300 cloth face masks in the last two weeks.

"Like the priest told me, I 'get on the machine and stay there," jokes O'Dou, who says she is happiest when she is sewing.

Scutari, who was a quilter before she opened a restaurant 15 years ago, helps O'Dou by pinning the masks and pleating them at the end. For nose wire, she uses donated wire from Dean's Beans in Orange.

Since the Centers for Disease Control's recent recommendation that people wear face masks in public to protect those around them from being infected, Scutari doesn't allow anyone into her store unless they wear one. "My goal has been to keep my store open, and keep the community safe," she says.

#### **Layering Plastic**

While Schutz, Swanson, and

O'Dou have taken to sewing, an inherited and longstanding industry, one engineering teacher at Franklin County Technical School has lined his living room with three 3D printers, which he is borrowing from the



Jonas LaPointe (above) has been printing "3DVerkstan" face shields and donating them to senior homes and healthcare facilities including Charlene Manor, Poet's Seat, Buckley HealthCare Center, and Baystate Franklin Medical Center.

After playing with a few different designs for face shields, LaPointe says he settled on the "3DVerkstan" model from a Swedish design company because it was the simplest one he could find, with only two plastic parts to print.

"These are really well-suited for people in healthcare," says LaPointe. "I'm getting a pretty good product out that is really useful."

LaPointe says that because 3D printers are made to prototype, rather than to mass-produce, the machines work slowly, setting melted plastic layer by layer. On average, he prints one shield per hour per machine.

LaPointe says he will keep printing shields "until either the machines break down or people say they don't need them anymore."

### **Delivery Systems**

With the COVID-19 pandemic keeping at-risk populations, especially seniors, homebound, the need for home-delivered food has increased everyhwere. For one local business owner, this means more demand for an existing product.

"What we're finding," says Jay DiPucchio, "is that [Meals on Wheels] programs are growing exponentially across the country right now, because seniors are now having to stay in their homes, and they don't have an easy and safe way to get their daily nutrition."

DiPucchio owns the Nutri-systems Meals on Wheels Store, a sewing manufacturing company that makes insulated thermal bags in the Turners Falls industrial park for Meals on Wheels programs across the US and Canada. The company also produces reusable meal trays and other heating devices to keep meals warm.

"These programs are spread thin to begin with," DiPucchio says of his customers. "Our own local program was just asking how long the turnaround would be."

DiPucchio's business has been pegged as essential, and remains open. "This is very detailed sewing," remarks DiPucchio. "It's beyond drapes." He says he is eight weeks behind on filling orders, and in need of more highly skilled seamsters.

#### **COURT** from page A1

In response to an emergency petition filed by the Massachusetts Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, the Public Defender Agency of Massachusetts and the American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts, the state Supreme Judicial Court (SJC) ruled last week that pre-trial detainees could be released in response to the risk posed by the spread of COVID-19.

At the Franklin County House of Correction, 23 people have been released since the start of the coronavirus crisis, including some serving sentences, who have been released into programs with electronic monitoring. Donelan said Tuesday that four more were awaiting video hearings for possible release.

Weber said the SJC is now requiring prisons to identify which inmates are eligible for release hearings, and to report daily on health statistics and whether any inmates have been tested for the virus.

But, she says, some county sheriffs are interpreting the reporting guidelines differently, and in some instances this has become an impediment to scheduling a hearing. "Is now really the time to limit transparency?" Weber asked. "This is a public health crisis."

Sheriff Donelan said that concerns in choosing which inmates to release include whether they have access to necessary medications and will have a place to stay. In Greenfield, where many of the inmates are taking medications to treat substance abuse disorder, Do-

nelan said Dr. Potee was working to ensure that those prisoners who are released will have uninterrupted access to the medications they need.

Weber said lawyers will continue to work for release of individual clients, for example to press for parole hearings where applicable. If conditions worsen and the virus begins to sicken more inmates in the state, she said, another petition may be used to press the court to consider an 8th Amendment argument, which in Massachusetts protects against "cruel or unusual punishment."

"Now is the time to get creative with allocating public resources," Weber said, to create more space for prisoners and find ways to release them. "They don't deserve to die or become seriously ill."

As of this week, there have been three reported COVID-19 deaths among inmates in the state, all at the Massachusetts Treatment Center in Bridgewater.

As of Wednesday morning, the situation in Greenfield remained steady, according to Donelan, with no new signs of COVID-19 symptoms among inmates. The jail continues to closely monitor the health of the inmates. Guards and other staff have their temperature taken before they enter the building. If they show any signs of illness, they're sent home.

All jail staff who have face-toface contact with inmates are wearing masks, said the sheriff, and the facility recently received a new supply of masks.

DIEMANO

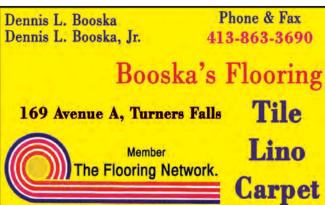
Winston the Farm Dog says,

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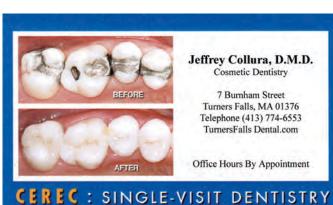


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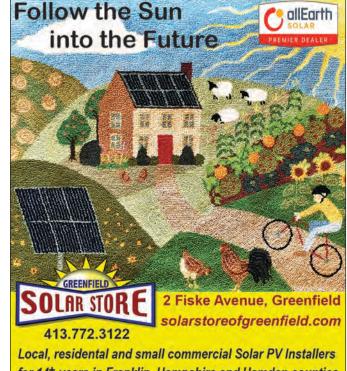












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Above: Two gates open at the Turners Falls dam, as captured by Suzette Snow-Cobb.

**BOOK REVIEW** 

## Daniel Hales, ¿Como Hacer Preguntas? or How to Make Questions: 69 Instructional Poems in English (Frayed Edge Press, 2020)

By TRISH CRAPO

**GREENFIELD** – Poet and musician Daniel Hales talked to me by phone on Sunday from his home behind

a torn-down hotel in Greenfield. It was odd, looking out my window into the scraggly branches of my neglected pear tree in Leyden, to remember the way these interviews used to occur – at a café table in Turners or Greenfield, in an artist's or writer's home or studio, occasionally over a cocktail or glass of wine at a bar. In other words, in person, face to face.

But these are strange times, and we're all developing new ways of doing what we do.

Given the times we find ourselves in, the instructional premise of the poems in Hales' new book, ¿Como Hacer Preguntas? or How to Make Questions: 69 Instructional Poems in

English, due to launch April 21, seems oddly prescient. Daily, *The New York Times* is full of easy recipes for tuna casserole or red beans and rice, and earnest articles headlined "How to Stock a Pantry," "How to Make a Face Mask," and, what's at the base of all of it, "How to Live in the Face of Fear." Elsewhere online I spotted, "How to Tell If Your Eggs Have Gone Bad." (All I have to say, if you have to read that one, is shame on you. You bought too many eggs.)

People are eager for instruction right now, Hales and I agreed. In a world so upended, it's comforting to have

an expert tell you what to do. But Hales laughed when he said, "This book is not going to do that for you."

Many of Hales' poem titles are seemingly straightforward (the operative word here is "seemingly," but

we'll get back to that), such as "How to Find the Evacuation Route" and "How to Write a Cover Letter." The poem "How to Deliver a Toast," in different form, won Hales the adult first place award in the Poet's Seat Poetry Contest in 2014.

Other poem titles veer more toward the philosophical, or even the impossible: "How to Find God," "How to Win a War Versus Outer Space," and "How to Make the Light Come." I'll leave it up to you to decide which might be impossible.

And lest you think you already know how to define remorse, measure the dew point, or tell time, and can therefore skip some poems, it goes without saying, if you

know any of Hales' previous work – and if you don't, I'm telling you now – nothing will be ordinary here. Torches will be lit, envelopes pushed, locks picked, tickets for the guided tour procured, and you'll find yourself, at the end of the poem, someplace you didn't expect to be.

Hales is smart and agile with words, and funny in ways both outright and sly. "They say operators / are standing by but we know most / are seated..." made me laugh on a day not much else was going to. Those lines,

see **BOOK REVIEW** page B8

# Valley View ORRA WHITE HITCHCOCK PRINT

#### By GARY SANDERSON

GREENFIELD – It's April, the month that ushers in our annual Connecticut River American shad-spawning run, a natural phenomenon that has for millennia pulled valley dwellers – be they ancient, indigenous villagers, colonial families and commercial fishermen, or contemporary sportfishermen and women – to advantageous May fishing sites.

So, what better for a longtime observer of this spring migration to do during this vexing Coronavirus scare and personal distancing than focus on these anadromous fish, which have by now started their long, exhausting, upriver journey through our valley? Why not revisit what seems like a never-ending effort to accurately reconstruct indigenous, Colonial Contact Period fishing camps? What did these busy, festive, riverside camps look like to the first European eyes?

Finding the answer involves book-reading, Googling, talking on the phone, and exchanging emails with experts in a cooperative effort to fine-tune details and expand upon previous reconstructions.

Not an easy chore. In fact, a somewhat daunting task. Why? Because the earliest New England chroniclers, primarily Puritan ministers and governmental leaders, were blinded by an arrogant, biased Puritan fog and had little or no interest in Indian culture. Sure, sources like Bradford and Wood, Winslow and Winthrop, Morton and Smith and Elliott did report some cultural observations about New England's indigenous people. But try to find detailed descriptions and illustrations of the complex, spring, Connecticut Valley Indian fishing camps and be prepared for an exercise in frustration.

I myself have found no such source – just bits and pieces, dribs and drabs, leaving a difficult jigsaw puzzle to assemble.

The impetus for my most recent foray into this topic was not the spring shad season. Instead, it was a simple query from friend Peter A. Thomas, a committed scholar who's always probing something new on our local-history scene. On this occasion, around the start of March, the author of *In the Maelstrom of Change: The Indian Trade and Cultural Process in the Middle Connecticut River Valley, 1635-*

1665 wondered if by chance I was familiar with Indian fish traps on New England rivers.

Yes, I responded, it rang a bell, but I needed a little time to chase down the references.

I had a good idea where to start. The first source I pulled from the bookcase was anthropologist Hilary Stewart's Indian Fishing: Early Methods on the Northwest Coast (1977). I remember buying the book from a long-ago shuttered Amherst bookstore in the early 1990s, after Deerfield historian and artist Al Dray had introduced me to a site a stone's throw above Montague City's Rock Dam that he believed to be the remains of an ancient, stone, Connecticut River fishing weir. After exploring the intriguing site, writing about it and discussing it for weeks and months, I set out to learn more about weirs and indigenous fishing methods. That's how I found Stewart's book, still a go-to North American source on the subject that's valid in the Northeast despite its focus on the Northwest.

Why study coastal indigenous fishing methods so far away, you ask, when trying to understand inland fishing practices of New England tribes? Well, because primitive people worldwide over the ages have consistently displayed an uncanny ability to develop remarkably similar hunting and gathering strategies and contraptions. In fact, it's almost a given that Indians harvesting migratory fish on rivers and bays on the East Coast used the same types of fish-gathering apparatuses as their distant West Coast cousins. For that matter, fish weirs and traps across the globe tend to share remarkable design similarities, be they in North America, South America, Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia or New Zealand.

"Primitive people learned by trial and error," explained Thomas, a card-carrying anthropologist/ archaeologist, during a telephone conversation, "and they thus developed quite similar technologies."

Most helpful in a rereading of Stewart's *Indian Fishing* were her detailed sketches of various weirs, traps, nets, and fish-processing stations, with wooden racks constructed to air- and sundry and smoke their catch for storage preservation. I suspected that the illustrations were not much see **VALLEY VIEW** page B3

REFLECTION

### Liking Biking

By JEFF WEBSTER

**TUCSON, AZ** – When I was a kid, riding a bike was like being able to fly. It was exhilarating, and just plain fun – even the wipeouts.

My father, a foreman at Cabot Station, did wiring jobs on the side. In the '50s, when his friends Hap and Rose Dunican bought the Olde Stone Lodge in Gill, Dad helped get the electrical system in shape. For payment, Dad received a boat and an old bicycle, among other stuff. He sold the boat (I wish he hadn't) and I inherited my first bicycle – a big, fat-tired antique.

I was a bit older than other kids by the time I learned to ride. My first attempt in the alley between Third and Fourth streets ended when I plowed into a parked car on L Street. There was no lasting harm to me, the bike, or the car. Helmets? We didn't have no stinkin' helmets!

I have no recollection of what happened to that bike.



Jeff with his bike, wearing his wife-mandated helmet.
(Photo by Sue Webster, who was not wearing a helmet.)

When I was in junior high school, I received a new, red Columbia with two speeds and coaster brakes. I rode it to school, all over Turners Falls, and to Greenfield – often with a playing card pinned to make noise as the spokes hit it.

One summer I had a short-lived job picking cucumbers at the Unitas Farm on Colrain Road in Greenfield. Every morning I hopped on my bike and somehow pedaled over Canada Hill and down into the Meadows. I cannot imagine making it up that hill

today with my 72-year-old knees. I was a lousy cucumber picker, but I enjoyed the ride. Still no helmet.

The youth group at the First Congregational Church planned a bike ride from Turners up through Northfield, and back through Millers Falls. My brother-in-law thought I would be better off borrowing his new "English" bike — thin tires, three speeds, and hand brakes. Turning from Routh 10 onto Route 63, I veered into a sandy shoulder

see **BIKING** page B3

### Pets of Week



### "HOME FRY, HASH Brown, & Sushi"

Guinea Pigs are social creatures, and if we're already paired up here at the shelter, we need to stay together. We need a spacious habitat equipped with hiding and napping spots, things to climb on, safe wood to chew, and guinea pig toys.

Our diet should consist of grass hay available at all times, with a small amount of timothy pellets. We don't naturally make our own vitamin C, so we must get it daily from our diet. Snacks like red pepper, kale, mustard greens, dandelion greens, and other leafy greens will do the job nicely. In fact, we love these snacks so much that we will call "wheet, wheeeeet" when we see you bringing us some!

Our average lifespan is 5 to 7 years. Please speak with an adoption agent for more information, or to inquire about adoption!

Here's the latest from the Dakin Humane Society website:

"In an effort to consolidate staffing and focus on animal care needs, we are temporarily closing our Adoption Centers to visitors and volunteers. Animals are still available for adoption by appointment only. Please call (413) 781-4000. Leave your name, pet's information and a callback number. We will return calls on a first come-first served basis within 48 hours. Finding homes for our current population of animals is a critical need as pets arrive under emergency situations."

See www.dakinhumane.org for more information.

### The ART of Social Distancing

**PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT** 

**GREENFIELD** – Calling all artists who are crafting, creating, and imagining their way through the strange days of this pandemic: Hawks & Reed Performing Arts Center wants to help showcase your art! Beginning this week, Hawks & Reed will be seeking art submissions for "The ART of Social Distancing" gallery show, which will be displayed in the windows of the center at 289 Main Street.

"We are inviting local artists to fill the empty windows of Hawks & Reed," said Ben Goldsher, the venue's manager. "We are asking artists to display work or make new work that evokes the feels of these strange times. We hope this project brings some light to people in what seems to be a dark time."

Original drawings, paintings, poems, sculptures,

photos, or videos will be on display in the windows at Hawks & Reed, facing Main Street and Court Square. Eight windows, plus one television screen, will be filled with a rotating assortment of artwork through the month of April, and however much longer it takes to see the COVID-19 crisis through the other side. Video and digital creations are welcome and encouraged, and will be displayed on a shared television screen facing the sidewalk along Main Street.

Proper sanitation, personal protective equipment, and social distancing guidelines will be followed when handling, installing, and exchanging work.

Artists interested in being a part of this show should email info@hawksandreed.com for more information.

#### **PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT**

### New Book Club is a Collaboration

GREENFIELD - Two downtown Greenfield enterprises, The LAVA Center and Federal Street Books, are collaborating to offer an online book club. Due to the Covid-19 crisis, The LAVA Center temporarily closed to the public March 13 and began to plan online events in lieu of live ones. An online open mic, improv storytelling session, and the online book club are the first such offerings.

The book club's April selection, which will be discussed online at 7 p.m. on April 20, is How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accent by Julia Alvarez. The May selection is *Rag*time by E. L. Doctorow. The Ragtime discussion is slated for May 18 at 7 p.m.

Federal Street Books has multiple copies of both titles. Thanks to a LAVA Center donor, the books will be made available both free of charge and free of shipping/delivery charges for book club participants. Customers taking advantage of this offer are encouraged to browse other titles and buy an additional book or books to support Federal Street Books, but no additional purchase is necessary to participate.

Information about how to sign in to the online discussion will be posted on The LAVA Center's Facebook page at facebook.com/theLA-*VAcenter/* and will be sent to everyone who purchases either or both books via email.

Federal Street Books is a bookstore carrying primarily used books, with new titles from local authors. In-store shopping is suspended at this time due to COVID-19 guidelines. They are adding titles from their inventory of over 18,000 books to their website at federalstreetbooks.com daily for online ordering. They are happy to personally search their inventory for you and to offer recommendations: contact them via their website with inquiries. Or try their grab bag, where they select surprises for you!

The LAVA Center is a new arts incubator, black box theater and community space in downtown Greenfield. With a focus on creating opportunities in and through primarily the performing and literary arts, the LAVA Center's mission is to host a wide variety of arts events, classes, and workshops as well as be a space to display and sell art made by local artisans. A Monday "Lit Up the Night" series of events in February and early March brought a variety of literary-arts-based events to the Center, while Tuesday night offerings focused on participatory events and workshops.

Both Federal Street Books and The LAVA Center are new downtown ventures. Federal Street Books was closed for a time, and reopened under new ownership in October; the LAVA Center opened January 31, 2020. Both have expressed appreciation for any support available during this time of community physical distancing.

For further information contact LAVA Center co-coordinator Jan Maher at jan@localaccess.org.

### **Senior Center Activities APRIL 13 THROUGH 17**

#### **GILL and MONTAGUE**

The Gill Montague Senior Center is closed and will reopen when advised by state and local authorities that it is safe to do so. This measure is taken not lightly but with the utmost concern for the most vulnerable in our community.

The Council on Aging staff will be available for referrals and information from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Mondays through Thursdays, at (413) 863-9357 by telephone, and coa@montague-ma.gov by email.

Erving Senior Center director Paula Betters writes that the Center is closed until at least May 4:

"All programs are canceled or postponed. With that said, I will be here or at least checking my messages daily. I want anyone to call me and leave a message if they have any questions or concerns regarding food or other services. I will call them back and if we can help with services of any kind we will do so. I am working with other agencies so we can be sure to keep our seniors healthy & safe."

Paula can be reached at at (413) 423-3649 or paula-betters@erving-ma.gov.

### **LEVERETT**

Leverett senior activities are currently canceled. Further updates are being distributed via TTY telephone and email. For more information, contact the Leverett COA at (413) 548-1022 x 5, or coa@leverett.ma.us.

### WENDELL

Wendell senior activities have been canceled. The Wendell Senior Center is closed. The Wendell Council on Aging will continue to provide transportation for essential medical visits if volunteers are available. For more information or for rides, call Nancy Spittle at (978) 544-6760.

### Local Supermarket **Senior Accomodations**

Supermarkets in Massachusetts are now required to provide special hours for seniors and immunocompromised shoppers. Call ahead – this information is accurate as of April 8; hours and accommodations are still changing.

Big Y: Senior hours from 7 to 8 a.m. (413) 772-0435 Foster's: Senior hours from 7 to 8 a.m. (413) 773-1100 **Food City:** (413) 863-9591 Senior hours from 7 to 8 a.m.

Green Fields Market: Senior hours from 9 to 10 a.m. Curbside pickup available. Order by 8 p.m.; order ready for pickup between 1 and 6 the following day. Delivery also available. \$6 per delivery inside (413) 773-9567 Greenfield. \$8 outside Greenfield.

McCusker's Market: Only six customers allowed in store at a time. Curbside pickup available. Order between 12 and 1 p.m. for pickup the following day. Delivery available. \$10 per delivery. Email pickup@ (413) 625-2548 franklincommunity.coop

**Stop and Shop:** Senior hours from 6 to 7:30 a.m. (413) 774-6096

REVIEW OF AN EVENT FROM BEFORE

### Storypalooza 2 at the Shea

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

TURNERS FALLS – I went to the first Storypalooza that the Shea Theater did in 2017, and reasonably enjoyed it. I always enjoyed storytelling. So I decided to go to Storypalooza 2 when it came to the Shea in February.

Dan Foley started out with the introduction, doing some jokes and then singing a song on his guitar about being a deadbeat dad. It was actually rather humorous. He actually did two songs like that, and he got a couple of decent laughs out of them. He also told a little story about staying awake while driving.

The first storyteller was Sue Smith, with one called "Men Who Look Like Jesus." Smith's story was a funny true story about what happened to her when she was arrested as a young girl, and another time later when she was at a party with a man who looked like Jesus. She gave Foley a run for his money with the humor in her story.

Tone Nunes's "Cardigans" was next, and featured this guy giving cardigan sweaters to the most unlikely of people. He made sure

ready wearing. Given who they was trying to rob him. were, and what they did when given these sweaters, made this a very unique story to hear. Also, let's just say those individuals returned the favor for this guy when he had an unpleasant encounter. They also sent him a nice gift in return for the sweaters.

If you heard this story, you'd understand why this was such a unique one to hear, and a nice way to think about how "one good turn deserves another."

Janelle Codianni's "Expections" was next to be heard. It appeared to be about a massage that she had once. She mentioned her reaction to it, which included some feelings that could be described as nervousness and awkwardness. At least that's what it sounded like to me as she told the story.

I believe it was called "Expections" because of what she expected to happen during this encounter.

David Bulley's "That Time I Got Stabbed" was next. This guy spoke of hitchhiking to see his girlfriend, and what he encountered. This guy got in this car and ended

they matched what they were al- up being stabbed by someone who

Bulley spoke of how his father taught him not to panic in situations where he was in trouble. He broke the robber's nose, and almost made the car crash because he did that.

In terms of which stories were the most funny, I would say Nunes's was first place and Bulley was in second place. Bulley's having this happen to him ended up getting him back in the good graces of his girlfriend's mother. I enjoyed them very much.

The second act consisted of all the storytellers telling second stories. Dan Foley juggled a bit during the second act, and even managed to do it under one leg! Dan was still funny and very enjoyable to see during this act. Bulley's second story, about a hilarious bike ride that he had, also involved lessons from his father.

With all that, I found I still loved "Cardigans" the best, and "That Time I Got Stabbed" the next best. However, "Pygmalion Failure" by Tones, together with Dan Foley, would be third place.

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#### **Montague Community Television News**

### Share Your Videos With Our Viewers!

By MICHAEL SMITH

TURNERS FALLS - The MCTV office is closed to the public due to coronavirus. But we are open, and would love to hear from you!

If you have any videos you would like to share or something we can film, please contact us at (413) 863-9200 or infomontaguetv@ gmail.com. Town meetings will not be broadcast live, but will be posted on our Vimeo page, found at montaguetv.org, and scheduled in our programming the following day via online video meetings.

Thanks for your cooperation, and please stay safe!



#### **BIKING** from page B1

and pulled the front brake by mistake. I remember hitting the ground and seeing the bike fly over me. I had a cast on my broken arm for what seemed like forever. Maybe I should have had a helmet.

When I was a sophomore at TFHS, I worked at Rockdale, the predecessor to Railroad Salvage. Leaving work one evening, I was shocked to find my bike gone. It had always been safe to leave it outside the back door. Remember, Turners Falls was the equivalent of Mayberry in those days. Besides, we were required to register our bikes back then. We all had license plates riveted to the rear fender. Yes, bikes had fenders.

Walking home, I stopped at the old police station on Fifth Street and reported the theft. The next day I received a phone call that my bike had been found. It had been thrown over the bank leading down to the canal. It was unharmed.

I was working on my bike with

a friend in an empty storefront on Avenue A one day when the Drago Building blew up right across the street. I will always have that image in my head.

In my 20s, married and living in the Boston suburb of Winthrop, my wife and I bought a pair of Columbias and enjoyed riding after work and on weekends. We left them with family when we moved to California in 1980, but soon bought another pair of bikes. We both loved riding around Sacramento.

Now we own a pair of Globe Carmel bicycles, and living in a quiet adult community in Arizona, we try to get on our bikes a few times a week. We consider ourselves lucky that we can. While we have some hardcore cyclists here, we also have friends who can no longer balance well enough to ride.

Riding a bicycle takes my wife and me right back to when we were kids. Of course, now we wear helmets.

#### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

### Shoplifting; Trespassing; Various Altercations; Callers Concerned Street Sweeping May Spread Virus

Sunday, 3/29

1:37 p.m. Report of smashed windows and windshield in a vehicle in the public parking lot at Third and Canal streets. Caller heard a window smash and saw a youth with a blue stick in the immediate area. Youth took off up the hill into the wooded area. Described as approximately 8 to 10 years old, 4'8". Vehicle owner contacted and advised. Report taken.

2:01 p.m. Report of disturbance at neighbor's house on Station Street; caller can hear a male yelling "I'm going to f\*ck you up." No disturbance upon arrival; occupants were talking loudly and a window was open. Advised of complaint.

9:59 p.m. Officer checking on vehicle at Unity Park. No issues; driver just playing on her phone. Monday, 3/30

12:25 p.m. Caller from Fifth Street states that she was recently assaulted and someone stole a TV from her. Report taken.

4:32 p.m. Manager of Food City reporting that a male party stole some meat from the store; last seen walking north on Avenue A. Officer viewed video footage and confirmed suspect's identity. Involved male is now verbally trespassed from

store per store manager. 10:31 p.m. Caller from L Street states that someone has been coming up on her porch and taking stuff. Caller has told the party she suspects is involved to leave her property and the landlord has posted No Trespassing signs; however, the male

came onto her porch again tonight attempting to take her cigarette butts. Caller states that when she asked the male to leave, he stated he didn't see the signs, started yelling at her, and rushed towards her, at which point she went into her house. Caller requesting this be documented as she feels it might become more of an issue. Referred to an officer.

### Tuesday, 3/31

11:27 a.m. Caller states that there are three broken beer bottles on the sidewalk outside of Basically Bicycles. DPW notified.

11:40 a.m. Caller states that the driver of the truck in front of him on Federal Street threw a bunch of trash out of his window into the road. No officers available to respond at this time.

3:11 p.m. Caller reports that her neighbor may be cutting down trees that are on town property behind Fourth Street and felling them towards her property. Officer advises party was cutting trees on his own property.

4:02 p.m. DPW requesting officer to assist an employee who locked himself out of his truck. Services rendered.

#### Wednesday, 4/1

8:22 a.m. Caller from Millers Falls complaining of street sweeping and is concerned that it may spread COVID-19. Did not provide name. Officer advised. 8:25 a.m. Caller reporting a dead raccoon ventral side up under the trees by the area where they are building a new sidewalk by the playground. DPW advised.

10:11 a.m. Caller calling

So, did I learn anything new from my little spin through Stewart, Speck, and McPhee? Well, yes. I discovered that fish traps of many designs - some associated with weirs that were in their own right traps - were widely used on our Connecticut and other Northeastern rivers. Like hunting traps used to funnel deer to constricted ravine kill sites, fish traps were built to increase the harvest at advantageous river sites created by Mother Nature. Constructed to maximize the catch and minimize the

I wonder how many still exist, in various degrees of preservation, along our

My guess is that they're there, for the inquisitive.



on behalf of her mother requesting to speak with an officer about a larceny. Caller believes that her mother's homemaker stole \$500 out of her safe and all the money out of her wallet. Officer advised.

11:40 a.m. Caller from Da-

vis Road reporting that

the street cleaner truck from Wendell is causing huge clouds of dust when driving by houses. Caller states he just spent the week cleaning the outside of his house and now wants to file a criminal complaint against Wendell and its employees for causing the dust storm. Caller also concerned for spreading of COVID-19 through the street-cleaning process. Referred to Chief Williams.

2:37 p.m. Caller from Family Dollar requesting officer to remove an unwanted female party who harassing employees. Area search negative. 5:42 p.m. Caller from

North Street reporting altercation between herself and another dog owner. Caller advises she was walking her dog on North Street when she saw a man walking 5 or 6 border collies, three of whom were off leash. One of the dogs charged at the caller and her dog, at which time she used her pepper spray on the dog. The man got into a vehicle and followed her, at one point pulling up to her on the sidewalk, getting out of the vehicle, and confronting her about the incident. Caller has since seen the man circling the block several times. Advised of options. Officer spoke with male party and advised him of the leash law.

6:41 p.m. Officer off at Unity Park; states there are six or more kids at the skatepark. Clear; parties moved along and told to go home.

8:02 p.m. Caller from Millers Falls reporting that he just heard 5 or 6 large explosion sounds; unknown where they are coming from; possibly Route 63 area. Caller states that it doesn't sound like fireworks, and is much louder. Unable to locate source.

### Thursday, 4/2

9:16 a.m. Caller reporting that a vehicle just passed him across the double yellow lines on Sunderland Road, slammed on his brakes, and then flipped him off. Caller states he just crossed over into Sunderland. Shelburne Control advised.

10:13 a.m. Caller reporting that a vehicle hit the guard by the gas pump at Cumberland Farms. Caller states they approached driver, who stated he is blind in one eye but does have a valid driver's li-

cense. Caller states they followed driver to the Walgreens parking lot, where he crossed the double median before pulling in. Cumberland Farms reports no damage to their pump guard. Officer unable to locate operator but will stop by his residence later to try and speak with him.

3:30 p.m. Caller reporting that a man just came into Family Dollar and made verbal threats to her in relation to an incident that happened at the store yesterday with his girlfriend. Officer spoke with attached party near park; party stated it was just a verbal altercation because the clerk said something to him about the mask he was wearing. Officer spoke with clerk and advised her of trespass options.

### Friday, 4/3

8:56 p.m. Desperate motorist in need of assistance on Fourth Street. Services rendered.

10:20 p.m. Caller from Federal Street states that she can hear two females talking and laughing from the property across the street, which is a closeddown business. Responding officer re-routed to emergency call.

#### Saturday, 4/4

12:03 a.m. Caller from Federal Street states that a male party was just burning out on his motorcycle in front of this location. Officer spoke with residents at involved male party's home and told them to stop if they were the ones involved.

8:42 a.m. Caller reporting accident on Bridge Street; a large truck took the corner too fast and dumped his load. No smoke or fluids; no injuries at this time. Shelburne Control advises Erving PD is en route. Officer reports state police are on scene and he is assisting with directing traffic.

3:18 p.m. Caller states that people are using the skatepark and the basketball courts at Unity Park. The entire park has been closed down by the town due to the coronavirus pandemic. Playground and skatepark are roped off. A few people were moved along from the skatepark. Does not look like basketball court has been closed down yet.

4:29 p.m. Caller from East Mineral Road reporting that four or five guys who appear underage are drinking alcohol in the parking lot near the walking bridge. Area checked; no vehicles or people there. 5:30 p.m. Caller states that people are skateboarding at the corner of Avenue A

and Third Street and possi-

bly damaging the sculpture

there. Unable to locate.

### VALLEY VIEW from page B1 different from what would have been found

at temporary spring fishing camps along the Connecticut River and its tributaries.

The most productive local indigenous sites would have been Chicopee Falls and South Hadley Falls in what is now Hampden County; Hadley Falls (today underwater and silt-covered), between North Hadley and Hatfield's Bashin in Hampshire County; and Rock Dam, Peskeompskut Falls and Salmon Falls (Deerfield River) in our Franklin County.

Glaringly obvious from Stewart's illustrations is the fact that many different fish-gathering methods were employed within the same weirs and trans which funneled great numbers of migrating fish into tight constrictions where they could be easily speared, scoop-netted, seined and trapped in splint baskets. Some weirs and traps were built of stone. Others were made of wooden poles intertwined with saplings and brush to keep fish contained.

It was not unusual to catch random sturgeon and salmon in weirs constructed to harvest shad. Fishers working the station were on the ready for such large, tasty bonuses, which were speared or arrowed for festive riverside feasts of fresh baked salmon and sturgeon.

Indians were also experts at reading rivers and using natural features like Rock Dam or the old, pre-dam flume at Riverside/Gill to catch great numbers of migrating fish following channels through tight spots, often congregating to build energy in settling pools at the base of waterfalls. At such sites, many fish could be seined and dip-netted quickly, and even speared or arrowed for a sporting change of pace.

In an effort to support the hypothesis that indigenous migratory-fish-harvesting methods differed little between eastern and western North American tribes, I went to University of Pennsylvania anthropologist Frank G. Speck's

Penobscot Man: The Life History of a Forest Tribe in Maine. Speck's nine-page narrative within on Maine's indigenous fishing activities pretty-much mirrored that of Stewart's West Coast fishers, right down to natural materials used for net cordage, poles and handles, the style of tools and weapons, and the design elements of manmade weirs and traps.

From the same bolt of resource. Photos of conical Penobscot the old supply-and-demand principle. splint basket-traps shaped like megaphones in Speck's book are identical to those of the great Northwest drawn by Stewart. Amazing.

To complete my little investigative adventure, I reread John McPhee's The Founding Fish, which I first read soon after its 2002 publishing date. About American shad and shad fishing along the Eastern Seaboard, McPhee's book buttresses the argument that shad were every bit as important to European colonials as they had been to the East Coast's First People all the way from Nova Scotia to Florida.

Shad filets, be they barreled or jarred, salted or smoked, pickled or planked, broiled or baked, were a valuable food source prepared and sold by urban merchants in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, not to mention our Connecticut Valley all the way from Saybrook and Lyme to Hartford and Springfield, Holyoke and Northampton, Greenfield and Brattleboro, and Bellows Falls. Yes, shad was a hot commodity in the marketplace.

Back in colonial days and then during the Federal Period, shad fishing was not a sport. Shad were market fish that kept families and merchants fed. The same can be said for salmon, though it was caught in far

cloth, so to speak - amazing human in- fewer numbers. Still, salmon held higher genuity employed to exploit a natural status and was thus more expensive due to

Nineteenth-century historians like Syl-

vester Judd of Northampton (and others) reported that commercial seines working their magic between Holyoke and Turners Falls would, on a good day, retrieve a few thousand shad and maybe a dozen salmon from one haul. After dams obstructed upstream fish passage above Holyoke on the Connecticut, and also on many large tributaries that supported grist and lumber mills, salmon runs diminished before totally disappearing from our valley by 1850.

effort, the traps were a formula for success.

rivers and streams?



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### My First Reporting Assignment

By JOE R. PARZYCH

**SHELBURNE** – Many years ago, back in 1998, was the day of my first reporting assignment with my late grandfather, Joe A. Parzych.

The editor of the *Greenfield Town Crier* called us, saying: "We want you to do a special write up and photo op on Gould's Sugar House. We will send the Classified woman who does the advertising for the paper. She'll call Mr. and Mrs. Edgar and Helen Gould up and ask if they want a local writer to be sent up to do a write-up and photo shoot of their sugar house. While you do that, we ask if they are interested in advertising in our paper."

"What is this person's name, and what town are they from?" they asked her.

"He is from Gill. Also, his name is Parzych."

"Oh yes, we know the Parzychs from our square dancing days with him and his wife Edna." That was my late grandparents, back in the '60s at the Grange. "Parzych. Wow, interesting – a retired excavator turned photo essayist. That's wonderful, please send him up to our place."

"By the way, his grandson is coming too." I had an internship for school, to learn about business administration, journalism, photography, agriculture – a little of everything. The teacher agreed I could get extra credit.

For those who don't know, the *Town Crier* was a sister paper of the *Brattleboro Reformer*, which ran the publication from 1960 to the mid-2000s. It was free, because ads paid for the paper. It had writeups on local businesses, farms, etc. Farmers could find local and non-local auctions for cows, farm equipment, etc. People could also find jobs, you name it, in the classified section. This was before social media, during the pre-internet days. They had more advertisers than the

Greenfield Recorder back then.

My grandfather and I took our 35 mm film camera and notebook with us to Gould's Sugar House, where they have the best maple syrup and sugaring in Franklin County. I met the Goulds, and we asked how is business this year.

"More people had been coming up lately." Wow, neat. "We tap a lot of maple trees for sap... Best time to start tapping the trees is generally when the sap starts to flow, between mid-February and mid-March. We use a drill brace with a 7/16 or 3/8 drill bit to drill a hole in a tree, and put a bucket and spile tap using a hammer...."

They also had a restaurant to eat great food, and a woodstove to make the sap boil indoors in a maple evaporator. I knew how to tap trees for making maple sugar from my class outside with my teacher and local farmers at Gill Elementary School. It's fun and interesting.

We shared jokes and had fun at the same time at Gould's. But it was a lot of hard work. They had been in business for years.

New England has the best maple syrup. My late aunt Joanne Parzych Olson – a school teacher for many years, a college grad, a grad of Northfield Mount Hermon on the Gill side – grew up in Gill and lived in many places, including Dover, PA. Well. The maple sugar season is not as great in Pennsylvania. When my aunt came up, my dad would give her some local maple syrup.

I remember my late school teacher Bill Burnham of Gill who used to make maple sugar from syrup. He also made honey, planted a garden, gave farming tips, and did other things. He was part of the Friends of Gill, and sold honey and maple syrup at local craft fairs, the Friends of Gill pancake breakfast, and the Franklin County Fair.

At the restaurant at Gould's, a funny thing happened while I was

taking photos. My grandfather said, "Stop running around taking random photos. You will waste the film, Joey. Also stop fooling around." I fell on the ground, almost on mud, near the wood shed.

My grandfather told Gould, "You want to hear a dirty joke? A farmer said the horse fell in the mud." That was a *Country Folks* farming magazine joke.

I turned on the flash to take photos of Gould pouring the syrup and opening the stove door. The thought came to mind that the photo might not come out that great with the color of the natural fire lighting. But the photo came out fresh from the darkroom after all.

My grandfather sent my photos, along with his story, in the mailbox in a big yellow package to his editor. This was during pre-internet days, but it got published.

Occasionally, after a local paper runs a story, a writer will recycle it to run in a national-level trade magazine like Lee Newspapers Inc. in New York. It will also go back and forth, local and national, sometimes. Editors from magazines like newspaper stories from writers at the local level that are farming-related.

With my grandfather I met David Detmold, before he was editor of the *Montague Reporter*. I showed him a photo and he said, "Maybe someday you can take photos for me."

I thought my high school journalism teacher was going to have a stroke after that. He said, "You teach the class."

My grandfather taught others. He could get a lot of places that *Recorder* staff couldn't get to, especially construction sites. He came to my journalism class to give a talk about his early days running and operating J.A. Parzych Excavating, using heavy equipment in construction during the day, then after work at night writing for many publications.

night writing for many publications. Years after it did not stop him



Mr. Gould opens the stove door.

from doing what he enjoyed: putting on his hard hat, vest, and press pass. He took his notebook on job sites to take photos of engineers working on projects:

"If a superintendent asked me if I was an inspector, or he or she found out I was a reporter, they told me get the heck off the job. 'It's too late, I have taken photos. I will publish them, and you will be in Deep Doodle. But if you cooperate I will write nice things about you. This local police officer is with me - he escorted me here. Also, I know an engineer who contracts with many companies, including you.' 'Oh, sorry. You're the guy who writes for Hard Hat News. My bad! We read Hard Hat News - we even put our business card in there. It's an honor!""

You don't need to go to school for photography. You can learn to teach yourself, or through handson experience. I was my grandfather's apprentice in journalism and photography. I learned journalism in high school, I was part of school newspapers, and I learned to use a darkroom for photography at GCC, but I told my teacher I had more experience out of the classroom.

Remember, no matter who you are, a lot of great people get rejected a lot. But keep trying.

Meanwhile, going back to

Gould's. It closed this year, for one reason or another. It's too bad. You could buy their local maple products. It was a great atmosphere, and it was cozy next to the fireplace. People were kind, etc. It had a historical old-fashioned farm look, built out of logs. They made food from scratch, there was great service, and it felt like home. We liked the maple ice cream, and we got to be taste testers while Miss Gould gave people ice cream / maple sugar cream mix with vanilla flavor to try.

If you see local businesses or a farm or restaurant in the *Montague Reporter*, please support them.

By the way, I am working trying to publish a book of my own photography at some point – from the point of view, and the eye, of a person with a form of autism. The book will be dedicated to my aunt Joanne, who was a huge inspiration to me, and also inspired others.

I still have big shoes to fill. But many great memories, over the years.

Joe R. Parzych grew up in Gill and lives in Greenfield. He is a free-lance photojournalist and works part-time at Riff's North. He is also part of a group of artists at the United Arc. Please free to contact joerparzych@gmail.com, or check out "Joe r. Parzych photography and ect." on Facebook.



Interview by J. BURKETT

TURNERS FALLS – Conrad Capistran is a local artist and musician from Northampton. He is known around the country for his vast musical knowledge and enthusiasm, plus his art is on the covers of many albums.

Conrad was an original member of the Sunburned Hand of the Man

collective, and still plays with them. He also plays in Tarp. He is currently working on a second LP of solo recordings under the moniker SOP.

MMM: Hi Conrad! So, you have been playing in Sunburned Hand these days? They have changed over the years, right?

CC: Early on it was more weird,

more out. It didn't have rock elements. I did fit in back then – but I can still do noise in a "Ravenstine in Pere Ubu" or "Dik Mik in Hawkwind" or Krautrock way that mixes electronics in a rock setting, which is how I think of playing with Sunburned now. Like I'm bringing that kind of dimension.

MMM: And you have been working on a new SOP album? The other one is a classic for some of us

CC: Yes. I will continue to do Sound Of Pot (the name was coined by Byron Coley, by the way). It is mainly a recording project, but I do play live. Early on it was more atonal/noise.

I would listen to noise in the late '80s/early '90s, that's when I started to listen to it... the Japanese stuff and all that. Noise and John Cage and, you know, the idea of listening to anything.

If you can listen to anything in nature, and hear it and appreciate it for what is, and enjoy its sonics, it's music if you decide to listen to it like that, it's like putting a frame around something. That's the thing with noise, it's fun.

And I will say, academic electronics, free improv, and Krautrock – that has all influenced early SOP, and influences Tarp too.

What I have been describing about early SOP has continued in my playing in Tarp.

At some point I started to add melodies, and the newer recordings are different. There is some Ennio Morricone influence now.

MMM: As far as making art and doing recordings go, are they very different processes for you?

**CC:** I have a very different experience doing visual art and music. There is a deeper connection for me with music.

I will get back into visuals though. I will say that my favorite visual artists are Edward Hopper, and Vermeer... and Richard Corben, Basil Wolverton, and Bernie Wrightson. I like comic art... but not superhero stuff.

MMM: So as far as music goes, I know you are also deep into metal and prog. Do you like UK stuff or US stuff more?

**CC:** UK stuff. Progressive and heavy metal are European. They have their origins in the UK. But the basis of metal is American music. It's based on American blues and rock.

Then American bands sounded like UK blues. Metal and prog have a foundation in rock rhythms that came from Chicago blues.

MMM: But you like US music,

CC: Yes! I like Howlin' Wolf, Muddy Waters, Skip James, John Lee Hooker, Slim Harpo, and a lot more.

MMM: And folk music?
CC: Yes, I recently listened to
Nick Drake and Leadbelly.

MMM: Do you still like living in Western Mass?

CC: Oh yeah. When I moved here from Boston I didn't know there was such an active music community. I knew about the Outpatients, Pajama Slave Dancers, Dinosaur Jr., and Scientific Americans, but that was it. I didn't think about the college students — that would be part of the scene — of the kind of music I play.

Flywheel was really big, too. There were SO many noise shows in the early 2000s, and house shows too, but the shows at Flywheel were amazing. Chris Dooley promoted all that, and made it work.

MMM: And you are also way into film, horror/cult and otherwise... Do you have an all-time fave film?

**CC:** [Long pause.] No, I can't think of a favorite. There are too many!

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#### Contributions to NatureCulture are welcome. What are you interested in? Would you like to write about birds, weather, science of any kind? We need your input. Send articles for consideration to: science@montaguereporter.org. Thank you! - Lisa McLoughlin, editor

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**APRIL 9, 2020** 

### Coming Soon to a Watershed Near You: "Forever Chemicals"

By LISA McLOUGHLIN

**NORTHFIELD** – The Environmental Working Group has released a new report on how widespread toxic "forever chemicals" are in drinking water. The report, available on the ewg.org website, focuses on polyfluoroalkyl substances, commonly called PFAS.

This group of chemicals, which includes PFOS, GenX, and PFOA, are known as "forever chemicals" because they are persistent in the environment including in human bodies, meaning they don't break down, and keep adding up over time. They come in "short chain" and "long chain" varieties, referring to the length of their molecules, with the short-chain variety being more ubiquitous and dangerous to health.

These chemicals are very stable for three interrelated reasons: 1) the strength of the carbon-fluorine bonds in their molecules, 2) the three electron pairs surrounding each fluorine atom, and 3) the shielding of the carbon atoms by the fluorine atoms. This makes them extremely resistant to breaking down in many ways, such as direct photolysis (decomposition by light) and reaction with other substances, including acids, bases, oxidants, and reductants.

#### Where are PFAS?

PFAS are manufactured chemicals invented in the 1940s and used in products that resist heat, oil, stains and water. Examples include carpeting, non-stick cookware like Teflon, stain-resistant and water-proof clothing such as Gore-Tex and scotchguarded fabrics, waxes such as ski/ snowboard wax, cleaning products, personal care products like dental floss and cosmetics, fire-fighting foam, food packaging like microwavable popcorn bags and some pizza boxes, and food that is grown with contaminated soil and water.

Contaminated soil is generally not tested for, so it's hard to know how much of our food is contaminated. At least one dairy farmer (in Maine) was put out of business by PFAS having been found in the milk, from land that was contaminated by sludge fertilizer.

PFAS are also used in many industrial processes including chrome-plating and electronics, and very high levels have been found in workers employed by 3M and DuPont, and those living near the plants, and near military bases which use a lot of firefighting foam among other things. Because they exist in the environment at large and because they don't degrade, these chemicals are making their way into drinking water across the country.

The 2019 movie Dark Waters, is about the effects of DuPont's PFAS in a West Virginia community.

### You Can Reduce PFAS **Exposure By Avoiding:**

- nonstick pans
- microwavable popcorn bags
- take-out food with packaging
- "stain guard" on furniture/carpet

The EWG report found PFAS present in rainwater across the country, and in drinking water in 43 of 44 cities tested. "EWG scientists now believe PFAS is likely detectable in all major water supplies in the US, almost certainly in all that use surface water. EWG's tests also found chemicals from the PFAS family that are not commonly tested for in drinking water." The one city without PFAS detected in their drinking water had wells over 600 feet deep.

PFAS is not regulated, and thus not required to be tested for in municipal drinking water, so even if your town has decided to test for it, they are not required to report high levels to the Environmental Protection Agency or anyone else, including you. For those of us with wells, we would have to ask for PFAS to be tested for, as it is not commonly included in a standard test. Previously, EWG had estimated that drinking water for 110 million Americans was contaminated, a number they now believe to be far too low.

### **Exposure and Testing**

Exposure to these chemicals can lead to reduced fertility, low infant birthrates, thyroid hormone disruption, reduced effectiveness of

vaccines, and cancer. US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have done biomonitoring studies showing that almost every person in the US has PFAS in their blood.

#### What is Government Doing?

Nothing really, although that could be changing. Congress had a hearing about PFAS in 2019. But so far, the federal government has no testing requirement and no national limit. The government has been aware of the problem of PFAS in drinking water since 2001, but has not set an enforceable limit. Instead, in 2016 the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) set an advisory limit of 70 parts per trillion (ppt), while independent research recommends a safe level of 1 ppt.

It is also difficult to test for all the thousands of permutations of PFAS, and so many chemicals may be missed by testing only for the most common ingredients. The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) is a federal public health agency testing for PFOA, and working with states to clean it up. Their closest project to us is in southern New Hampshire, where contamination was found from factories. They work on superfund sites.

State governments vary in their approaches and recommendations. Between 2013 and 2015 Massachusetts participated in a short-term EPA study, and found nine drinking water sources contaminated above the study's reporting levels. Since then, they've done additional testing.

Searching the Massachusetts data base, the following towns have tested positive for PFAS (not all towns have been tested): Ayer, Barnstable, Bellingham, Berlin, Bolton, Bourne, Boxborough, Braintree, Falmouth, Grafton, Granby, Groton, Harvard. Hudson, Lancaster, Littleton, Mashpee, Maynard, Mendon, Middleton, Millbury, Millis, Monterey, Oxford, Princeton, Randolph, Shirley, Stow, Templeton, and Westfield. Most towns in Massachusetts were not tested. Massachusetts has new draft legislation that will likely go into effect this year limiting six PFAS chemicals to 20 ppt. New Jersey was the first state to limit PFAS in drinking water, and they chose 13 ppt.

### **Treating Water**

There's no easy or single recommended way to remove PFAS from drinking water. Options include granular activated carbon, ion exchange, and reverse osmosis. Even once a system is devised, it must be maintained properly. Some of the cities that tested positive for PFAS were treating their water, but their filtering efforts were not sufficient. For home treatment, overall the most effective choice is reverse osmosis.

Our best option for long-term treatment is to mandate the independently-determined safe level of PFAS to 1 ppt via legislation, and to mandate that water suppliers test for and treat to this level.

### April 22 is height of the Lyrid meteor shower, visible approximately April 19 to 25. Mete-Radiant ors radiate from the Northeast. Vega Best viewing is just before dawn, although a close-to-full moon will Lyra wash out all but the brightest meteors this year. About 20 meteors per hour are expected. These are from debris from Comet Thatcher that orbits the sun every 415 years. Pieces of debris left in the comet's wake, however, can be seen ev-Credit: Bruce McClure and ery year. Earthlings won't see the Joni Hall (earthsky.org) comet itself again until 2276.

### **BOOK REVIEW**

### Sherri Mitchell, Sacred Instructions (North Atlantic Books, 2018)

**Review by LISA McLOUGHLIN** 

LYRID METEOR SHOWER:

This book by wellknown Penawahpskek (Penobscot Nation) lawyer, activist, speaker, and leader Sherri Mitchell (Weh'na Ha'mu' Kwasset or "She Who Brings Light") is a beautifully lucid description of Indigenous wisdom regarding how to be in the world.

Mitchell begins by recognizing that we are at a "critical crossroads for humanity, a teetering point of choice that will determine the future of all life" (xix). The book lays out a set of instructions that have been handed down to Mitchell via her tribal heritage. They outline how as spiritual beings we can live in harmony with the Earth; with integrity; and help heal our past.

This book combines history, philosophy, religion, anthropology, and ecology in a complex mix that merges the individual and so-

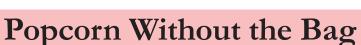
cietal responsibilities we all must undertake in order to save our plan-

> et and ourselves from ecological destruction. It extends a sociological critique based on a deep ecology into most aspects of our modern lives, and argues compellingly for nothing less than a sea change based on Indigenous wisdom.

> If you enjoyed Braiding Sweetgrass you will most likely enjoy this

While the emphasis is more spiritual and less what European-Americans would consider scientific, it too is delivered in a friendly and frankly autobiographical narrative, and has much food for thought about the cultural origins of our relationship with the rest of the natural world.

It is a hopeful and authentically Indigenous account whose audience includes all of us, and whose lyrical prose makes it a page-turner, even if you stop to underline often.



Popcorn you make yourself is relatively cheap, but how to do it? Even without a machine it's easy. (Locally-grown popcorn is available direct at farm stands and farmers markets, and organic multi-colored popcorn from local co-ops. Both are delicious!)

- 1. Take the heaviest stew or sauce pot you have (don't use a non-stick pot, as that has PFAS in the Teflon), and pour in the oil of your choice so it covers the bottom (olive oil is delicious for this).
- Pour a thin layer of popcorn seeds into the pan (it really expands a lot, so just use a small amount until you get a good sense of it).
- Cover the pan and turn it on high it should get really hot gas stoves are great for this.
- The popcorn will pop quickly, then it will slow down. Once it slows to just individual pops, wait a little until popping is almost done (timing will get easier after a few tries), and dump the corn into a bowl.
- If you want butter, return the pan to the burner (don't have to turn it back on) and add however much butter, try a couple tablespoons for a bowl. Tilt the pan around to help the butter melt faster.
- Salt if needed may not be needed if you used salted butter.



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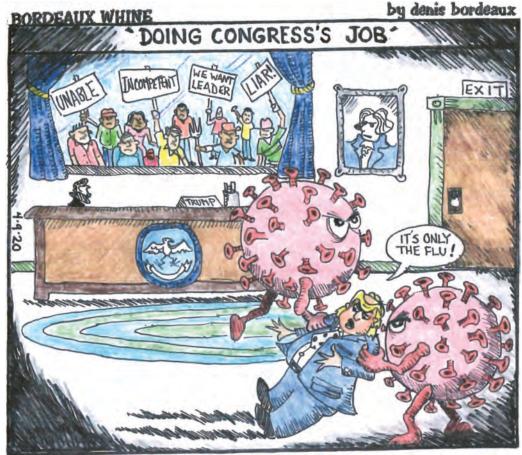
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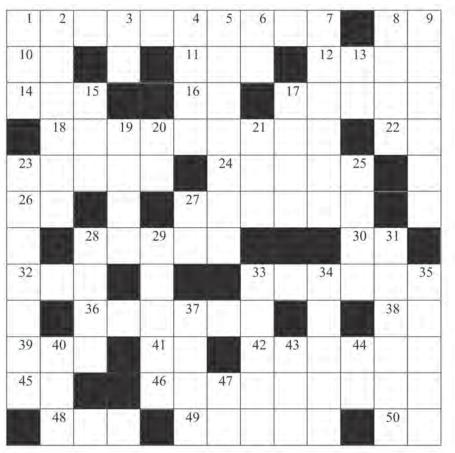




Submit your comics and puzzles to editor@montaguereporter.org. Original & local creations only, please!

okay so maybe print the crossword out? sorry haha

### Cross Words in the Age of COVID-19 a puzzle by Ferd Wulkan



- 1. Bad mental or economic state caused by virus
- 8. See 16 Across
- 10. If you're a retired one, expect a call
- 11. Unit of (different kind of) resistance 12. One's in the newspaper when someone succumbs
- 14. What we're all feeling
- 16. Federal disaster agency (with 8 Across)
- 17. Why would Trump \_\_\_ off scientific forecasts? 18. Government coordination - it's almost like
- 22. Some officials are still making \_\_\_ many mistakes
- 23. Not clear if this kind of diet will help or hurt 24. What people like 10 Across do to patients
- 26. \_\_\_ nauseum
- 27. J.K. Rowling wrote tales of this bard
- 28. High one may indicate infection
- 30. Designation for unrated movie 32. Meddles in foreign elections - and it's not Russia
- 33. If we all \_\_\_ all surfaces with disinfectant, it
- would help
- 36. Timely beer 38. Many of us have never been \_\_\_ scared
- 39. This will sadly \_\_\_ be over very soon 41. Indicates hesitation or uncertainty
- 42. What ignoring CDC recommendations is
- 45. What \_\_\_ can we be doing? (with 50 Across) 46. We wake up with a \_\_\_\_ feeling about Covid-19
- 48. China started slow but then \_\_\_ things right 49. We need billions more of these
- 50. See 45 Across

### DOWN

- 1. Highest risk occupation
- 2. Several years of stock market gains have been \_
- 3. We're in a \_\_\_\_ to find a cure (with 47 Down)
- 4. Where many of us hang out to watch movies 5. \_\_\_ in place
- 6. \_\_\_ sure you'll solve this puzzle
- 7. Yikes! Is this the new \_\_\_\_?
- 8. We \_\_\_ our loved ones we can't go see 9. Safest place to stay
- 13. MLK is an alum from here
- 15. No evidence yet this best friend can get the virus
- 17. What Trump did, as usual, when he knew nothing 19. With Medicare for All we'd have better health \_
- 20. Not enough beds \_\_\_ the ICU's: scandalous!
- 21. What many rightly feel toward Trump
- 23. What we're all waiting for
- 25. Many hospital entrances now have one
- 27. We can \_\_\_ sure millions more will get the virus
- 28. It's a \_\_\_ that the feds ignored expert advice 29. We're happy when only our computer gets one
- 31. Polymers used in plastics and adhesives
- 33. Face coverings in short supply
- 34. Everyone \_\_\_ hugging these days
- 35. If we \_\_\_ the worst, there's always global warming
- 37. Let's not \_\_\_ hand washing from our routines
- 40. These people are at higher risk
- 43. Famous Vietnam offensive 44. Approximately 22/7
- 47. See 3 Down

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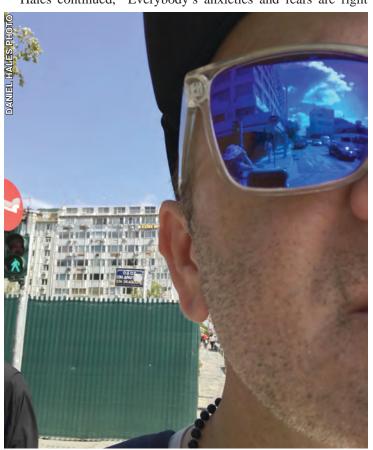
#### **BOOK REVIEW** from page B1

in a twist of weird irony, come from a poem entitled "How to Get Their Blessing," a poem about sneezing. Hales described the poem as "the most terrifying poem for the times that we're living in. I couldn't have chosen something that was more off-putting."

"So don't waste another sacred sneeze / on the void smother gifts in corporate tissues / which is why I always greet you / with my most robust noseburst / as you enter my airspace."

Another poem, "How to Become One with Nature," also takes on particular resonance during these difficult times. While its title tilts a little humorously Zen, the poem's first lines stopped me in my tracks: "Small birds / don't live / very long." It's a poem about mortality, and, as Hales told me, a poem about "trying to see nature on its own terms, without imposing our metaphors and our understanding."

Hales continued, "Everybody's anxieties and fears are right



An accidental self-portrait by Daniel Hales.

on the surface now. People are wrestling with their mortality in a more overt way. Perhaps the best consolation nature can provide is that death is part of nature. There's a continuity that supersedes it. If we can get our heads around that, we can live with less anxiety."

Hales is also a musician, writing songs and providing lead guitar and vocals in the band The Frost Heaves and Hales. The band includes bassist James Lowe, drummer Brian DiPippo, and "other auxiliary members" who are called in for some gigs. Hales, who also works in collage, said he likes the ability to toggle between creative forms.

"Especially if one isn't playing nice," he said. "You have the option to switch gears and feed that creative beast in its cage that's hungry for something."

The difference between a poem and song usually presents itself to him not ahead of time but in the process of writing. He'll know something's a song "when the first really hard rhyme drops," he said. Or he'll start to sense, from a series of lines, that "This feels like a chorus." Poems are different creatures that "don't want to be contained in a song structure," he said.

How to Make Questions contains both poems broken in lines, the way we're used to seeing poems, and poems in chunks or blocks, sometimes called prose poems. The whole sordid process of labeling is like a Houdini box Hales manages to escape from every time. A previous work, Run Story, described on the back of this book as a "hybrid novel" made use of the structures of poems, memos, diary entries, and clinical reports to tell the story of at-risk youth at The Center, based on a school where Hales taught for many years. He currently teaches at the Bement School in Deerfield.

Needless to say, the many readings Hales had scheduled to celebrate and promote the new book's launch have been postponed or canceled. To at least partially fill the gap, and to honor National Poetry Month, he began live-streaming a reading of one poem a day on his Facebook page (search for Daniel Selah - "Hales" spelled backwards).

On April 21, the book's official launch date, Hales will give a full, roughly half-hour reading on his Facebook page. The readings stream live at 7:30 p.m., but readings can still be accessed after they run. Preorder the book from now until April 21, and you'll receive 20% off the book's \$16 cover price. Find the book's publisher, Frayed Edge Press of Philadelphia, at www.frayededgepress.com.

For more about Daniel Hales and his band, see V www.thefrostheaves.wixsite.com/frost.

### How To Define Remorse By Daniel Hales

Verb A long black car carrying caskets The first really warm day and radio's more tortured prisoners more kids in cages Scattered snow cays in rhododendron shade Homeless busker plays Turn The Page but I need these quarters for the meter

Suddenly there are nearly naked women everywhere discalced pale but alive They seem so in love with the sun and the sun is

loving them back so hard right now as sirens saw the air for

elsewheres toward someone being attacked by their own heart

hit by invisible shrapnel a shrill that should rip through the husk of us all

??

The same two kids play with their tiny white dog in the parking lot of the motel where they live chase it to the dumpster try to make it chase them back while the mom lights up again squints seems measuring with slit eyes how much post dusk light's left takes a long deep drag on it

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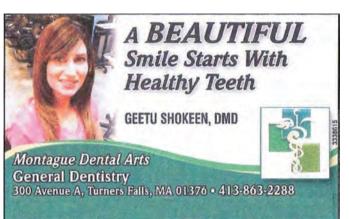


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