

# The Montague Reporter

YEAR 19 – NO. 14

also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

\$1

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

FEBRUARY 11, 2021

ERVING SELECTBOARD

## Erving Bridge Not Suitable For Two-Way Traffic: State

By KATIE NOLAN

Last week, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) District 2 engineer told Erving officials informally that a bridge in Erving Center—the Church Street bridge at the North Street intersection over Keyup Brook—is in poor condition, and must either be closed or made one-lane only. Once MassDOT sends a formal letter to Erving about the bridge, the town will have two weeks to take action.

At Monday's selectboard meeting, chair Jacob Smith said that installing traffic lights and making the bridge bi-directional, with traffic taking turns crossing it, "has probably the least impact to Route 2 traffic." He also suggested the town could make North Street one-way northbound to Church Street and Church Street southbound only, or vice versa.

Selectboard member William Bembury said of the suggestions, "All of them have problems.... The best, for me, is shut the bridge down and don't allow any traffic."

Bembury, Jacob Smith, and town administrator Bryan Smith said they would meet with highway superintendent Glenn McCrory later this week, weather depending, to lay out the roadway with traffic cones in order to get a better understanding of what a one-lane bridge would look like. Jacob Smith said that the fire department would join them with a

see **ERVING** page A3

## No Evictions Yet As Aid, Moratorium Stretch Out

By SARAH ROBERTSON

**FRANKLIN COUNTY** – On Thursday, February 4 the Franklin County sheriff's Opioid Task Force held a public Zoom meeting to provide an update on housing issues in Franklin County and the North Quabbin region. The meeting focused on housing assistance programs and rent relief from the local to federal level. So far, no Franklin County residents have been evicted, but a federal moratorium protecting many tenants is due to expire at the end of March.

According to data shared by Pamela Schwartz of the Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness, at least 449 final eviction notices had been issued across the state during the pandemic as of last week, 353 of which were for non-payment of rent.

"This is a pretty searing number when you think about what we're

see **HOUSING** page A5

DISCOVERIES

## Through a Glass, Lightly



Terri Cappucci works on a light table as she cleans 4" by 5" glass plate negatives and prepares them for preservation.

LAURA WHITE PHOTO

By TRISH CRAPO

**TURNERS FALLS** – This summer, Turners Falls photographer Terri Cappucci made a rare foray out into the world. Though the pandemic has kept her, like the rest of us, close to home, she was curious to follow up on a tip that a friend-of-a-friend had several boxes of old glass negatives to give away.

It may seem like happenstance that Cappucci ended up with over 4,000 glass negatives dating from the 1800s and early 1900s, an intriguing collection of portraits and landscapes that offer a glimpse into another time. After all, that friend-of-a-friend had picked them up from yet another friend, who had purchased them at auction.

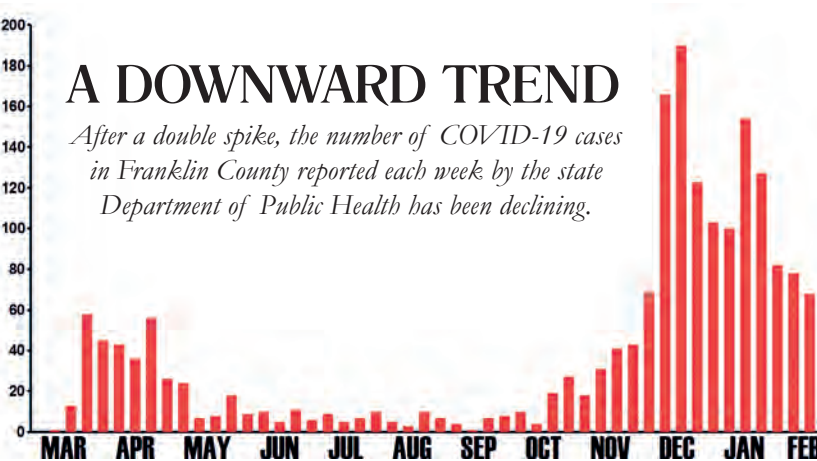
Yet Cappucci, a member of the American Photography Archive Group, had long been steeped in archival methods. After losing most of the prints and film negatives of what she considered her most important work, a 25-year documentary project on elections and voting in South Africa, to a flood, Cappucci had become

obsessed with archiving photographs. She took workshops through the Northeast Document Conservation Center and the George Eastman Museum in Rochester, New York, and reached out to experts around the world.

Her goal, at first, was to restore and preserve what she could of her own lost work – she's been photographing some of the negatives that weren't too damaged with a macro lens – and to prevent any losses of future work. Along the way, Cappucci realized that the skills she was acquiring could be of use to others and could even generate a little income. She has since started a small business offering photo preservation and digital archiving services.

Cappucci got her start as a photographer at the *Greenfield Recorder*, when photographers still developed their own film and made prints in the darkroom. Her love for darkroom methods and practices extended long beyond their usefulness in journalistic or commercial photography. Out of necessity, she switched to digital

see **GLASS** page A6



MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

## Amid Pandemic, Corporate America Responds to Town's Phone Pole Angst

By JEFF SINGLETON

**TURNERS FALLS** – Who says you can't beat "Corporate America?" The Montague selectboard, which represents a small town of approximately 8,400 people, has stood up to the giant electric company Eversource and won. And they did it by refusing to approve the construction of two telephone poles on an obscure town street that overlooks the village of Turners Falls.

This was a personal victory for selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz, whose persistent demands that the electric company remove the many redundant and unsightly poles may have been viewed by some locals as a bit of an obsession. But the confrontation came to a head during a pole location hearing on January 25, when the selectboard refused to approve new poles on either Unity Street or Broadview Heights – it

see **MONTAGUE** page A7

GILL-MONTAGUE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Schools Scramble to Hire Staff

By MIKE JACKSON

**GILL-MONTAGUE** – With coronavirus cases continuing to decline in Franklin County, a long-awaited air filtration report in hand, and a school vacation week left to prepare, the Gill-Montague school district plans to welcome students back into the buildings for optional "hybrid" learning, two days a week, starting February 22. Returning students will be split into separate cohorts for masked and socially distanced instruction, with their

remote counterparts logging in via display screens.

"Parents have articulated concerns to us about the emotional health of their children being challenged during this pandemic," superintendent Brian Beck told the regional school committee Tuesday evening. "Assessment of students' social-emotional considerations right now is probably the most important thing that we can do, in terms of immediately assessing learning loss as we head into the hybrid model."

see **GMRSD** page A6

## Storm Damage Prompts Further Dingle Clearance



More trees, it is reasoned, could fall upon the Bridge of Names.

ANDREW FRENKEL PHOTO

By JEFF SINGLETON

**LAKE PLEASANT** – The Turners Falls Water District, which owns the land on which Lake Pleasant's Bridge of Names sits, is developing a plan to cut trees which may threaten the bridge in the future. It also hopes to implement a limited forest management plan on the rest of its property in and around the "dingle," a steep valley created by Pond Brook, which empties the lake.

A dingle is purportedly an Irish term for a small wooded valley, as well as vulgar slang, though the name used frequently by village residents refers to the former.

The Bridge, a third of which was destroyed by a falling tree during a storm last October, connects the eastern and western sections of the village. Its own name is derived

from the wooden pickets along the length of the structure, whose purchases were used originally to fund construction and since then its maintenance.

This most recent version of the bridge, which dates to the late nineteenth century when Lake Pleasant was founded as a Spiritualist summer encampment, was built in the mid-1970s. Its ownership is not well documented. A fundraising campaign for its reconstruction initiated by a group called the Lake Pleasant Village Association (LPVA), has been underway for the past three months, with an initial target of \$50,000.

Mike Brown, the superintendent of the water district, discussed the proposed tree cutting project on site last Sunday morning and then

see **CLEARAGE** page A8

AT LARGE

## A Shady Plan for Sunny Farmland?

By CHIP AINSWORTH

**NORTHFIELD** – Nathan L'Etoile is urging Northfield residents to watch the February 18 planning board meeting. That's a good idea. He's got a lot of explaining to do. Gene and Bonnie L'Etoile and young Nathan have proposed a 75-acre industrial solar development on their farmland off Pine Meadow Road, in the heart of the agricultural district between the railroad tracks and the Connecticut River.

Nathan needs to explain to the public that he isn't just an average farmer who was approached by a solar company. He is the New England Regional Director of the American Farmland Trust (AFT), a non-profit conservation organization headquartered in DC with regional offices throughout the country including Northampton.

The AFT's annual report lists \$32 million in net assets, including \$4.2 million in grant money and \$6.75 million in contributions. Its 17-page online brochure shows photos of tractors, cows, barns, rows of vegetables, and fields of hay being worked by different generations of farmers.

What, no solar fields? One photo and that's it, accompanied by the headline "Promoting Smart Solar Siting." The agency's PR Department probably had a tough time explaining this one. "We can't be placing solar devices on the farmland we need to grow food," it said. "State policies will guide [solar fields] onto land where it has the least impact on agriculture and the environment."

That doesn't jive with the L'Etoiles' intention of putting their solar arrays over rich, bountiful soil

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# The Montague Reporter

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## Short of Two-Thirds

We've been wrong before, but it seems pretty unlikely that Democrats will succeed in impeaching Donald Trump for his incitement of the January 6 mob attack on the US Capitol. Seventeen Republican senators would have to break with their party to convict him, and only six even acknowledged the process is Constitutional.

The GOP's party discipline is remarkable. Politically speaking, this is the year the party removed its mask. It's difficult to even imagine the same scenario playing out in reverse: if a brash leftist outsider were elected President in a flukey historic convergence, then lost reelection, and their followers physically attacked the government in an effort to override the results by direct action, but failed? It would simply be the end of the left.

It is because Democrats know they would purge the revolutionary left that they believe they can drive a wedge between the GOP and the emerging revolutionary right.

They are proceeding with the trial even though they know they will lose because they believe the spectacle itself will sour their sublime political object, the moderate middle-class swing voter, on voting Republican in future cycles.

And even if that might fail, they believe future students of history will review the transcript and agree that they were correct.

It's all fallacy. The two political parties are not mirrors of each other, because the political right and the political left do not have symmetrical relationships to the US state.

Let's check the rationale – reading various recent Tweets from Republican senators.

Josh Hawley of Missouri: "We are in the throes of a major pandemic and Democrats choose to focus on an unconstitutional attempt to try and convict a private citizen."

Bill Hagerty of Tennessee: "[T]he Democrats are using an unconstitutional impeachment as a political charade to humiliate and silence the 74 million Americans who voted for @potus45."

Tommy Tuberville of Alabama: "Why should hard working Americans foot the bill for political theater?"

Lindsay Graham of South Carolina: "I think most Republicans found the presentation of the House Managers offensive and absurd."

Rand Paul of Kentucky: "Our system only works well if we understand the speaker is not responsible for the actions of the listener..."

And Ted Cruz of Texas: "The World Health Organization is simply a mouthpiece for the CCP... Biden continues embrace of communist China."

And so it goes. On Wednesday Graham went on Sean Hannity's Fox News show to float a doozy of a line: that because the FBI had warned beforehand that extremists were heading to DC, Trump could not have been responsible for what they may or may not have done upon their arrival.

"The whole storyline, originally, was Trump created this with his speech," he argued. "Now we know that people had this on their mind before he spoke."

Trump – and the Proud Boys *et. al.* – may have overplayed a weak hand this winter, but the Democratic leadership is incapable of taking proper advantage of his error, because they still don't understand the basis of his appeal.

American politics is defined by an underlying antagonism between two groups: angry landowners and scolding administrators. They have separate histories, incompatible bases of power, clashing cultures – and most importantly, different conceptions of freedom.

The two camps held an uneasy truce through the era of American prosperity and global dominance, but as that unravels, they are spiraling into an increasingly deadly and intractable conflict. And the two political parties, in turn, are tagging along after these separate bases.

Trumpism is the only possible future of the GOP, because it is an acceptance of this underlying social war, and an invitation to make it pleasurable: an identification of scientific and administrative society as a source of our collective misery, and a forceful rejection of its authority. (The easiest way to solve climate change is to accept that it is a hoax. Ditto for respiratory pandemics.)

Republican politicians are trapped chasing after this madness, but the Democrats are equally unmoored from reality if they think they can scold it into submission. No one who has spent the last four years enjoying watching their leader nihilistically roast the libs is going to be convinced to convert by a recital of outrage over January 6.

The Democrats should present their case for the historical record, sure. But it won't expand their political base. To do that, they must govern in a way that changes our lives for the better. Time is short.



Hannah Brookman puts a camera away in the equipment room at the Montague Community Television station.

## Letters to the Editors

### Stance Hyperbolic

As a former newspaper columnist, I know the fun of taking a side and sticking it to the Powers that Be. But I was dismayed when your Northfield columnist, backing farmland against a solar project, sided with farmland. NIMBY – Not in My Backyard – needs a better flack because the article was, shall we say, a bit hyperbolic.

Reading that solar's only purpose is "fatter wallets," I marveled at how far it has descended since "Give us the warm power of the sun..." Seeing agriculture exalted into "rich earth," and "carmine red strawberries," I thought I heard the jocular whistling from the opening theme of "Andy of Mayberry." Warned of "rampant development" threatening Northfield – bustling, centrally located Northfield! – I could only tip my hat and foresee the columnist working for some conspiracy-based website. The full concert cast of "No Nukes" weeps.

Hyperbole aside, consider the tradeoff. Yes, solar (finally) makes money – a cause for celebration, not concern. Yes, farmland is quaint and productive. Yes, people live there. But it's not 1821, it's 2021. Last I checked, we have no shortage of farmland nor of strawberries, just a tragic shortage of time. To choose preservation of still more farmland over one "noisy" – gimme a break! – solar field is the height of folly. Meanwhile the planet burns.

Bruce Watson  
Montague Center

### Influencing People: Illegal

In response to the situation with the Leverett/Wendell police and the pressure on them to take the vaccine, I want to support and encourage the officer who chooses to decline the shot.

Our right to personal choice, involving our bodies and our lives, is the keystone of democracy. Informed consent is similarly the keystone of our medical system. Only a licensed physician is legally permitted to influence us as we make these decisions. It is not the work of any town official to mandate a medical procedure.

I would hope that all parties involved continue to respect an individual's liberties as the gems they are, precious, and of the greatest importance. To paraphrase Ben Franklin, anyone who gives up their liberty for a measure of safety deserves neither liberty nor safety.

Caleb Keller  
Wendell

### Shout Out To Randi

The Survival Center is a gem in our community.

A major highlight of the store is the clothing section: well-organized, very reasonably priced, a decent selection, and clothing *always* clean and in good condition; the latter because of the tireless, consistent and persistent efforts day in and day out by Randi.

KUDOS Randi! You're one of a kind!

Mary Kay Mattiace  
Montague City

### To Gary Sanderson:

The *Montague Reporter* arrived in my inbox today and I very much appreciated your piece on your woodshed.

Your words brought back warm memories of visits to my aunt's parents' farm in Vermont when I was quite young. Those folks had a big woodlot, heated by wood, cooked by wood on an old kitchen stove, and had a great woodshed attached to the kitchen – behind which was a two-holer, actively in use, which could be a chilly experience. The windows were loose single pane and one cold night it snowed and snow slipped through on the window sill as I slept on the couch. They too knew how to run and bank their various stoves, and the woodshed provided confidence of warmth all winter.

Anyway, your piece was quite refreshing and brought back many memories of those Vermont trips, now about 65 years ago.

Take care,

Bob Hallock  
Leverett

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By NINA ROSSI

All Montague and Gill residents **over the age of 75 are eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine** which is being given in Greenfield at the John Zon Community Center. Please visit the website [www.mass.gov/covid-19-vaccine](http://www.mass.gov/covid-19-vaccine) to schedule your appointment.

If you need assistance please call the Gill Montague Council on Aging at (413) 863-9357, the Montague Board of Health at (413) 863-3200 ext. 205, or LifePath's vaccination helpline at (413) 829-9285. You can also check the Town of Montague's Facebook page for more information.

Hawks & Reed Performing Arts Center has added a few **livestream concerts in February**. The first features Lexi Weege and the Wonder Twins this Thursday, February 11, at 7 p.m., performing a concert they call "Let Us be Your Valentine."

The concerts will be live streamed from the ballroom at Hawks & Reed.

Hawks & Reed has also recently started a Kickstarter campaign to stay afloat during the prolonged pandemic which has forced closed entertainment venues such as theirs. Details at their website, [www.hawksandreed.com](http://www.hawksandreed.com).

The Arms Library in Shelburne Falls is hosting "Ask Me Anything," a talk with Dr. Cady Coleman, a **former NASA astronaut** and retired Air Force Colonel from Shelburne Falls. The event will be held Friday, February 12, at 6:30 p.m.

Cady Coleman has logged more than 180 days in space, including two space shuttle missions and a six-month expedition to the International Space Station.

She will talk about her adventures in space, show some amazing images, and take questions about her experience, the recent SpaceX missions, or... anything!

Call the Arms Library at (413) 625-0306 or email [armslibrary@gmail.com](mailto:armslibrary@gmail.com) for a Zoom link to the program. The link will also be posted on the library website and Facebook page.

Beginning this Sunday, February 14, FRTA will be expanding its current Access program to provide **transportation service on the weekends** from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. This program is open to all residents of Franklin County.

You can schedule curb-to-curb transportation using a free smartphone app, available on the Apple Store and Google Play, and book trips up to a week in advance. Rides are as low as \$3 a piece if you travel within one zone. There are four travel zones delineated, ranging from Shelburne to Athol, south to Deerfield, and north to Leyden.

No smartphone? No problem – just reach out to FRTA to learn more about setting up an account through their new web portal. For more information on the Access program and new weekend service pilot, visit [www.frtc.org/getting-around/frta-access-program/](http://www.frtc.org/getting-around/frta-access-program/).

Anyone with challenges with the phone app or accessing the online portal can email [frtaaccess@gmail.com](mailto:frtaaccess@gmail.com).

Big Brothers, Big Sisters is looking for **children ages 6 to 11 who need mentors**. Deerfield Academy students are looking to mentor youngsters, so call (413) 834-8124 if you have a child looking to match up with one of them.

Another Communities That Care Coalition e-newsletter has come out, and once again it is packed with resources and information for families and community members. Find a link there for a **Black History Month resource guide**, created by the Center for Racial Justice in Education, that you can use for yourself or with your school-age child as a curriculum for integrating more Black history, stories, and accomplishments into your studies.

If you would like to start getting this valuable newsletter, email [ilana@frcog.org](mailto:ilana@frcog.org).

Christina Forde brought the following **Contactless Valentines Exchange** to our attention. She writes, "Due to remote learning a lot of kids will miss out on Valentine's exchange this year. I thought it would be fun to try to have a contactless Valentine Hunt in our towns!"

The exchange works on a take-one, leave-one system. You can participate by leaving valentines on your porch or steps on February 20. If you have multiple people in your home, you can either set up multiple boxes for each person at your home or have one box and divide it. Forde will put together a list of streets that will have valentines.

If you have a child who would like to hunt, they can participate by visiting the houses that are sharing valentines, taking a valentine and replacing it with one of their own. By the end, Forde believes, everyone should end up with lots of valentines from all over our community! Look for the Facebook page "Franklin County Contactless Valentines Exchange" to list your town and street.

Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA) looks for community members to tell **true, personal stories on the theme of local food** or farming in western Mass. Do you have a story you would love to share, perhaps of growing up on a farm, working at a local restaurant, seeing food differently during the pandemic, or even about having a realization around your relationship to food and the

people who provide it?

"Anyone whose story ties in with growing, cooking, selling, or eating local food will be considered. Whether you're a farmer, chef, waiter, gardener, food activist, passionate home cook, or anyone else with a story to share about local food or farming, this event is for you," reads information on CISA's website page for the event.

If your pitch is accepted, a professional storyteller will provide coaching, and there will be a small stipend awarded. The performances will air online in May, but you need to submit your pitch by March 19. Need some advice, or just wondering how everything is going to be done? Call Jacob Nelson, (413) 665-7100, ext. 34. Read more about Field Notes online at [www.buylocalfood.org](http://www.buylocalfood.org).

Register for a virtual mill site visit with the **Leverett Historical Commission**. "Join us for a virtual visit to Cave Hill Mill," reads the invitation. "Easy to miss when you're driving by, Cave Hill Mill was partially covered by road construction. Nevertheless, it's a fascinating place. Join historian Pleun Bouricius and members of the Leverett Historical Commission as they virtually visit the mill site and learn to interpret what's still there and what was once there, and discuss what owners can do for sites like these."

The tour takes place on Friday, February 26 at 7 p.m. Register at [bit.ly/zoomcavehillmill](http://bit.ly/zoomcavehillmill).

**Great Falls Books Through Bars** recently received a batch of requests from ten inmates from a women's prison. They are looking for composition books, sketchbooks, cards and envelopes (especially envelopes), calendars, and children's books.

If you would like to drop off these or any other donations, feel free to reach out to GFBTB at [gfbtb@riseup.net](mailto:gfbtb@riseup.net), or stop by 113 Avenue A in Turners Falls on Saturdays from 12 to 3 p.m.

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**ERVING** from page A1

fire truck to test how a large vehicle could maneuver the single lane.

McCrorry said that MassDOT indicated that the bridge has an 18-foot-wide travel lane. "But it's not a straight shot," he said. "It has quite an S-curve... Part of me would like to close it first to work out the bugs, since we'll have to close it for construction."

Jacob Smith commented that installing a traffic light or making Church Street a "local-only" street and closing the bridge will back up traffic on Route 2. "There are no good answers," he said, adding that closing the bridge would "push traffic to Mountain Road."

Later in the evening, after the finance committee joined the meeting, fin com member Arthur Johnson facetiously suggested closing the bridge and creating another Bridge of Flowers.

"Then traffic goes on North Street or High Street," Jacob Smith responded.

Fin com chair Benjamin Fellows asked, "Can we turn each street [Church Street and North Street] into a one-way street?" He also facetiously suggested putting a rotary in at the intersection, with a statue in the middle.

Fin com member Charles Zilinski suggested box culverts under the roadway instead of a bridge.

"We don't have answers now, but we need to come up with a short-term plan," said Jacob Smith. He told the fin com that repairing the bridge is on the town's capital improvement plan for FY'23, and suggested reconsidering the

FY'22 plan to fund engineering studies for its reconstruction earlier, or perhaps voting on funds at a special town meeting.

A preliminary estimate from Weston & Sampson, Inc. estimates engineering costs at approximately \$200,000 and the entire project at least \$1 million.

Bryan Smith said that it would take a minimum of ten months for the engineering and permitting before any construction would start. He warned that along with the normal process of permitting, MassDOT is currently requiring review of plans at its Boston headquarters. Because bridge components would be fabricated off-site, construction might not take more than a few months.

The selectboard, fin com, and capital planning committee plan to discuss the Church Street bridge at their February 22 joint meeting, though the selectboard may schedule a meeting earlier if necessary.

**Education Budgets**

Bruce Turner, director of finance and operations for the Union #28 elementary school superintendency district, presented the draft FY'22 budget for Erving Elementary School, for a total of \$3.5 million, an increase of 2.2% over FY'21.

Several longtime staff members are retiring, and will be replaced by new hires at a lower end of the pay scale. However, per contracts, staff salaries overall are increasing and transportation costs are increasing.

Erving tuitions secondary students in to the Gill-Montague Regional School District. Accord-

ing to Turner, that district's draft budget would increase by 6.7% in FY'22, to \$1.5 million. Special education costs drive a portion of the increase.

Fin com member Arthur Johnson complained about the special education costs, especially with COVID-related remote learning, saying students with individual education plans (IEPs) are not getting the services they need. He likened the remote learning to "homeschooling," and said a child in his own home was "falling through the cracks" and that "the IEP is not being met."

Johnson wondered why Erving should pay for special education services if they are not being provided. "It's not fair to the kids," he said. "It's not fair to Erving."

School committee chair Erik Semb said he would call Gill-Montague superintendent Brian Beck to discuss special education programming for Erving students, and report back to Bryan Smith.

Franklin County Technical School business manager Russ Kaubris presented a FY'22 budget of \$13.4 million, up from \$12.6 million in FY'21.

**Other Business**

Pat Semb was appointed to fill a vacancy on the library board of trustees, and Catherine McLaughlin was appointed to fill a vacancy on the school committee.

Bryan Smith reported that senior center director Paula Betters was continuing to help people over 75 years register for COVID-19 vaccinations. She is also helping elders find transportation to vaccination clinics.

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## AT LARGE from A1

that's been compared to the Nile Delta.

As the regional director of a non-profit, L'Etoile's role is to act in the public interest. The AFT is tax exempt, it's not supposed to be used as a means to an end. Maybe he'll explain the ethics of using his job to line his family's pocket to the tune of what's likely millions of dollars.

Anyone who goes online to look at the planning application will see that the contract info between the L'Etoiles and BlueWave Solar is heavily redacted. We simply don't know the numbers.

Maybe he'll show slides of all the memos, the letters, the webinars he has signed or hosted to develop every aspect of the Commonwealth's new "Dual Use" policy.

Maybe Nathan will reveal how his years as Assistant Commissioner of Agriculture in the Deval Patrick administration gave him an inside view of policy making and the permit process. Maybe he'll explain why he thinks it's okay to use his role in a non-profit charity to make himself rich.

Maybe he'll come clean about how he was able to manipulate the heads of the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources - Commissioner Judith Judson in 2019 and a year later Commissioner Patrick Woodcock - into proposing the AFT be the gatekeeper for the "Dual Use" solar array permit process.

Maybe he'll acknowledge his primary purpose has been to ensure



Joe R. Parzych spotted these MassDOT vehicles on Route 2 in Gill during the early hours of Monday morning, preparing to plow and sand.

JOE R. PARZYCH PHOTO

a smooth bureaucratic path toward converting his family's fertile property into solar energy production.

The simple truth is that while dual use provides more space and sunlight than conventional solar panels, it leaves enough room for goats, not tractors, turnips not corn. Sunlight would be diminished by 50 percent. No crop does better in the shade than it does in the sun, not in this latitude.

"No conservation on farmland should be broken or undone for

the purpose of solar development," wrote Marty Dagoberto L. Driggs, the policy director for Northeast Organic Farming Association of Massachusetts, in an undated memo.

The L'Etoiles crossed that line in 2018 when they proceeded to make arrangements to remove the Mass Agricultural Covenant from 130+ acres of their prime farmland if the permit is approved. Talk about planning ahead. If the permit's not approved they'll keep

their land in the Covenant; if it is approved they'll return the money because they broke their promise.

The list of opponents is growing. There are agri-conscious people who are concerned that solar devices could ruin tens of thousands of quality farmland in Massachusetts.

Maybe Nathan L'Etoile will be able to explain his way out of betraying the land he was entrusted to protect.

Or maybe not.



## NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

# Wendell Encouraged to Become Age-Friendly

By JOSH HEINEMANN

The Wendell selectboard's February 3 meeting opened with a presentation about age- and dementia-friendly communities by Council on Aging chair Nancy Spittle and LifePath age-friendly program manager Nour Elkhattaby Strauch.

People are continuing to get older, and public policy has not kept pace with the changing needs of the aging population. Already more than 30% of Wendell's population is older than 60, and other Franklin County towns have similar profiles. The trend is likely to continue.

The Age-Friendly Communities program was initiated by the World Health Organization, and is associated in the United States with AARP. Its goal is to help caregivers and aging people to stay at home, where they are happier and more productive, and where the cost of maintaining their health is less than in an institution.

Age-friendly infrastructure can be physical, including outdoor spaces, transportation options, and housing. Social infrastructure can include respect and social inclusion, appropriate health services, and keeping civic participation accessible as citizens become less mobile.

Wendell already has the town hall kitchen, the potential gathering space of the Meetinghouse (still in the process of renovation), and Village Neighbors.

The four-step process of becoming an age-friendly community - enrollment, assessment, planning, and action - can take three to five years. LifePath's goal is to get Franklin County towns to join, then create an age- and dementia-friendly region.

Strauch left contact information with town coordinator Nancy Aldrich, and a form letter for selectboard members to look over.

### Wood Bank Idea

Tree warden Cliff Dornbush reported that he and the electric supplier have identified 80 trees in town that should be removed to protect wires and roads.

Dornbush recommended creating a town wood bank that would allow people in town who

burn wood, especially low-income households, to get some from the town. For a collecting area he suggested below the WRATS, where wood chips are already dumped and sometimes collected by residents. Before doing anything he wanted to check in with the selectboard.

As with all good ideas, there are potential problems.

The first consideration, brought up by board chair Dan Keller, was liability and management. The DPW road crew is insured through work, but they do not need extra work or have extra money. Dornbush said that as an arborist he already has insurance.

Selectboard member Gillian Budine said that some towns have had trouble getting rid of wood, but highway supervisor Rich Wilder said at an earlier meeting that trees cut and left by the side of the road "just disappear."

Keller said he thought the wood bank was a good idea, and that the WRATS crew and the highway commission should be consulted.

### Technical Assistance

Citizen Dan Leahy Zoomed in to ask that renewing Wendell's open space plan be made the number one priority for district local technical assistance (DLTA) from the Franklin Regional County of Governments. Fire chief Joe Cuneo has asked that a COVID-19 vaccination review be on that list.

Aldrich read a list of over 20 other options for DLTA, and board members commented on which were of interest and which were not.

The top three priorities identified were the open space plan, vaccination, and a study of Wendell's culverts.

### Solar Discount

Colonial Power, which provides savings to electricity customers through aggregate supply and billing, is offering low-income ratepayers a discount of 2 cents per kilowatt-hour as part of the Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target (SMART) program. The discount would be available only after new solar installations come online.

"Not necessarily in Wendell," said Keller.

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# PLACES



*Who made this snow devil, sitting at the picnic tables near Unity Park last Saturday? Nice work! Thanks to Thomas Fleming of Greenfield for grabbing a photo.*

THOMAS FLEMING PHOTO

## HOUSING from page A1

experiencing in this pandemic,” Schwartz said. “Closer to home, we are far from the execution state.”

The Franklin County sheriff’s office continues to serve pre-eviction notices and court summonses, but has yet to physically displace anyone. According to records reviewed by the *Reporter*, the office has served around 97 housing court summonses since the state eviction moratorium was lifted on October 17. Schwartz said that at least 64 of those cases had been filed in housing court as of last week.

“In my short period of time being in here I’ve noticed a pretty substantial increase in summary processes,” said Scott Parker, director of the sheriff’s Civil Process Division responsible for serving eviction notices. “I think it’s a little to pacify the landlords a bit, that’s my personal feeling.... I haven’t seen any go forward.”

Officially, two eviction actions were completed earlier this month, both technicalities involving affordable housing units already vacated. One case concerned a subsidized apartment in Montague abandoned several months ago, and the other a tenant in Orange who had died.

### Court Backlog Continues

According to US Census Bureau statistics, 6.7 million people nationwide are at risk of eviction in the coming months unless wide-ranging rent and mortgage relief measures are enacted. In Massachusetts that includes about 146,000 renters and homeowners.

For six months last year, housing courts in Massachusetts shut down following a state-ordered halt to all “non-essential” evictions in April. Western Housing Court, which serves Franklin, Hampshire, Hampden and Berkshire counties, faced a backlog of about 800 pre-pandemic cases when it reopened in October.

“The courts are incredibly backed up right now,” said Community Legal Aid managing attorney Jennifer Dieringer.

Community Legal Aid, which provides free legal service for low-income defendants in central and western Massachusetts, recently hired more staff to represent tenants in court and help them file applications for rental assistance and other forms of support. In the last three months the organization has

assisted 250 families with eviction cases, according to Dieringer.

All housing court hearings for the four western Massachusetts counties are currently taking place on one busy Zoom session each day, with the same judge, clerk magistrate, and housing specialist overseeing each case. Dieringer said the online format is slowing down the process and complicating her staff’s work, but allows them more time to settle cases awaiting a hearing date.

In one of his first orders as president, Joe Biden extended the Centers for Disease Control’s (CDC) nationwide eviction moratorium until March 31. Unlike Massachusetts’ expired moratorium, the federal moratorium does not halt court processes.

Dieringer said that the CDC moratorium has been interpreted differently by district courts and housing courts, both of which handle eviction cases. While housing courts have continued hearing eviction cases and only waiting to execute evictions, she said, district courts have paused cases altogether.

Some landlords have also been challenging tenants’ claims to protection under the CDC moratorium. To qualify, applicants must have sought other forms of housing assistance and have attempted to make partial payments.

“Those declarations get filed with the court, and landlords can and have been challenging the veracity of them,” Dieringer explained.

### More Aid Expected

The COVID-19 relief bill currently working its way through the US Congress includes an additional \$30 billion nationwide for rental assistance. The last federal stimulus package delivered about \$459 million to Massachusetts for rental and housing assistance.

“It’s one-time, and it’s going to go fast,” Schwartz said. “The challenge is, how do we administer it in the most effective way possible to not overload the [system]?”

The state’s main vessel for dispensing rent relief is the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) program, originally designed to provide one-time aid to families at risk of homelessness. Governor Charlie Baker’s Eviction Diversion Initiative, introduced after the state moratorium ended, pledged \$100 million to

RAFT, \$12.3 million towards legal aid for tenants and landlords, and \$50 million towards emergency rehousing programs.

To address the increased need, RAFT awards have been increased from \$4,000 to \$10,000, and eligibility requirements were expanded. RAFT can be accessed by households earning up to 50% of the area median income (AMI), or \$42,700 for a family of four in Franklin County.

A second program, Emergency Rental and Mortgage Assistance (ERMA), was created last summer for households making between 50% and 80% of AMI.

Less than two months into 2021, the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority (FCRHRA) has already helped 67 local families apply for RAFT assistance, as many as they typically help in one full calendar year, according to executive director Gina Govoni.

“We are concerned about the state’s ability to fund the RAFT pipeline for the balance of the year, but we are encouraged by the influx of federal funds,” Govoni told the *Reporter*. “The increase in funds [per household] and the expansion in eligibility has really helped us to help more people.”

Govoni said housing agencies are working with the state Department of Housing and Community Development to manage the distribution of the aid.

“One loophole that concerns me is that the federal funds are only for renters,” said Govoni. “We have a disproportionately high number of low- and moderate-income homeowners in Franklin County that may not be served once the ERMA program and the local funds are exhausted.”

Govoni said the FCRHRA provides counseling and advocacy for homeowners who may be negotiating with their banks. “The moratorium delays the physical removal,” she said, “but it has put into question a lot of temporary modification and forbearance agreements that are set to expire in March, which is the one-year point from the pandemic’s beginning.”

### Down the Line

Other forms of local financial aid are cropping up as well. Sunderland and Easthampton have both introduced municipal housing assis-

## THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION – HIGHWAY DIVISION NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING Project File No. 608056

A Virtual Design Public Hearing will be published on the MassDOT website below to present the design for the proposed Erving-Gill, E-10-014=G-04-009 (OUC), Route 2 Over Connecticut River, Protective Screening Installation.

**WHEN:** Thursday, February 25, 2021

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed Erving-Gill Protective Screening Installation project. All views and comments submitted in response to the hearing will be reviewed and considered to the maximum extent possible.

**PROPOSAL:** The project involves the reconstruction and widening of approximately 460 feet of existing reinforced concrete sidewalk located on the north side of Bridge Structure E-10-014=G-04-009 (OUC) above the steel truss portion of the bridge structure between the east and west pylons providing additional width for improved pedestrian access, installation of new BR-2 bridge railing mounted to the sidewalk adjacent to the westbound roadway, installation of refurbished or replicated northerly metal pedestrian bridge and the installation of 9’-0” high metal safety fence with curved top behind the northerly metal pedestrian rail mounted to the reconstructed sidewalk; reconstruction of approximately 460 feet of reinforced concrete safety walk located on the south side of Bridge Structure above the steel truss portions of the bridge structure between the east and west pylons, installation of new BR-2 bridge railing mounted to the safety walk adjacent to the eastbound roadway, installation of refurbished or replicated metal pedestrian rail and new 9’-0” high metal safety fence with curved top outside of the metal pedestrian rail; removal of the suspended steel inspection catwalk located midway between the north and south steel trusses.

A secure right-of-way is necessary for this project. Acquisitions in fee and permanent or temporary easements may be required. Each municipality, both the **Town of Erving/Commonwealth of Massachusetts** and the **Town of Gill/Commonwealth of Massachusetts**, are responsible for acquiring all needed rights in private or public lands. MassDOT’s policy concerning land acquisitions will be presented in the hearing.

Written statements and other exhibits regarding the proposed undertaking are to be submitted to Patricia A. Leavenworth, P.E., Chief Engineer, MassDOT, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116, Attention: **Major Projects, Project File No. 608056**. Mailed statements and exhibits intended for inclusion in the public hearing transcript must be postmarked no later than ten (10) business days after the hearing is posted to the MassDOT website listed below. Project inquiries may be emailed to [dot.feedback.highway@state.ma.us](mailto:dot.feedback.highway@state.ma.us)

This hearing is accessible to people with disabilities. MassDOT provides reasonable accommodations and/or language assistance free of charge upon request (e.g interpreters in American Sign Language and languages other than English, live captioning, videos, assistive listening devices and alternate material formats), as available. For accommodation or language assistance, please contact MassDOT’s Chief Diversity and Civil Rights Officer by phone (857-368-8580), TTD/TTY at (857) 266-0603, fax (857) 368-0602 or by email ([MassDOT.CivilRights@dot.state.ma.us](mailto:MassDOT.CivilRights@dot.state.ma.us)). Requests should be made as soon as possible prior to the meeting, and for more difficult to arrange services including sign-language, CART or language translation or interpretation, requests should be made at least ten business days before the hearing.

This Virtual Design Public Hearing or a cancellation announcement will be posted on the internet at [www.mass.gov/massdot-highway-design-public-hearings](http://www.mass.gov/massdot-highway-design-public-hearings).

JONATHAN GULLIVER  
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR

PATRICIA A. LEAVENWORTH, P.E.  
CHIEF ENGINEER

tance funds for their residents, and non-profits such as the Community Foundation of Western MA and the Women’s Fund of Western MA have established funds of their own.

And a presidential executive order announced last week will allow towns and cities to be reimbursed fully, rather than at the standard 75% rate, by the Federal Emergency Management Agency for emergency expenditures. Though this does not cover direct aid for tenants and homeowners, it does cover “increasing medical capacity, non-congregate sheltering, and emergency feeding distribution,” according to the agency.

“This 100% reimbursement is great – it means states, cities, and towns will not be charged for sheltering people in need of emergency shelter during COVID-19,” Pamela Schwartz of the Network to End Homelessness said at last week’s meeting.

“At the same time, there are tenants invariably falling through the cracks,” she said. “There’s still holes, and there will forever be holes as long as the courts are allowed to process evictions.”



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**GLASS** from page A1

cameras for her professional work, which has included freelancing for the *Boston Globe* and *New York Times*. But for her personal, artistic projects, Cappucci increasingly turned to even older methods.

"I make glass plates and tintypes using the same processes and methods that these plates were made under," Cappucci says.

On her website, you can watch her develop wet plate collodion tintypes, make gumoil prints, and create *giclée* and Polaroid film transfers. So of course Cappucci was the right person to end up with the glass negatives. They were practically calling her name.

**A Treasure Trove**

"The first thing that happens when you come upon something like this, is you get really excited," Cappucci said. "But I know it could become an absolute mess if I don't do it right."

So, Cappucci set about the detail-oriented task of cleaning the negatives, and then scanning and digitally archiving each one, including carefully titling them and creating keywords so each digital version can be easily searched for and found.

Despite the amount of work the glass negatives present, Cappucci describes them as a "treasure trove." She is constantly coming across images that surprise and delight her.

"I just scanned an image, dated 1899, of a woman holding a lamb in her arms," Cappucci said. "And she's got something on her head. I can't really tell what it is."

The woman's headwear is curious, perhaps even humorous, but what Cappucci sees, above all, is "a life."

"I feel like I fell into a time warp when I look at these. I can actually imagine this. I've always, always been fascinated by anything from the past. I just want to close my eyes and walk into them and have a conversation," she said.

Speaking again of the woman holding the lamb, Cappucci asked, "What kind of accent would she have? Would she have a deep voice? I could probably write a book and create characters for all of these people."

The glass negatives are clearly from western Massachusetts, Cappucci says. Some are labeled Bernardston, Northfield, or Buckland, for instance. Others, unlabeled, show familiar farm settings and scenes.

They represent the efforts of



*This boy on a tricycle is among the 4,000 images on glass negatives that Terri Cappucci was given this summer.*

multiple photographers. Some exhibit the compositional and technical skills of professionals, while others are of lower quality, perhaps the efforts of amateur hobbyists still teaching themselves the craft. There's a whole box of post-mortem photos, in which a deceased person has been propped up in a group

portrait with his or her loved ones, which Cappucci said was common practice at the time.

"That's the thing, you learn so much about how people did things," Cappucci said. "I like people's lives in photos. I just love it."

The day I spoke with Cappucci, she had just hit the halfway mark in her task — that means she'd handled 2,000 glass negatives, just as a reminder!

"I have cuts all over my fingers," Cappucci said. "I have to wear gloves."

She said she stopped using band-aids when she got cuts and instead, uses electrical tape, "so they can't cut me again."

She uses distilled water and special round cotton pads to clean the glass, wearing rubber gloves so as not to transfer any oils to the surface. After the negatives are clean and dry, she uses a natural, very soft brush, like a makeup brush, to remove any dust. Each negative must then be put into a special archival envelope and stored standing vertically in a box, to minimize future breakage. The supplies are not cheap: fifty 4- by 5-inch archival envelopes cost about \$40, Cappucci said. And that's just one small part of what's needed.

Thus, Cappucci has started a GoFundMe page to help defer the costs of restoring the collection, which she's recently titled "Somebody Photographed This." So far she's reached \$1,190 of her modest \$2,000 goal.

Once all of the negatives have been dealt with, she may pay to store them at an archive house while she considers what to do next. Perhaps a museum might want them at some point.

"I'm not sure what the end result will be," Cappucci said, "where they will go."

In the meantime, she'll continue her labor of love, restoring the glass negatives in between paying jobs. And she'll continue to pursue her own photography in a way she says has been freed to come from a "deeper, more personal place," now that she has another way to make money.

"I've gone back to making handmade prints," she said. "That's what I'm most passionate about."

Her dream would be to start a 501(c)3 non-profit photography center to teach young people about the history of photography, and to get them excited about darkroom processes.

"I'm kind of a photo nerd," Cappucci said. "I was just born with this passion for it. I've always had a camera in my hands. I think people thought I would outgrow it and I never did."

To view the collection of images from glass negatives, visit Cappucci's website, terriccappucci.com, look for the heading *Photographic Preservation*, and then choose *Glass Plate Collection*. She also shares them on her Facebook page.



*This image, created from a scan of glass negative dated 1899, shows a woman with a lamb. Cappucci has not done any digital restoration on the image, but will in the future.*

**GMRSD** from page A1

The district is still scrambling to staff the schools. Just over a week before the planned return to hybrid, Beck explained, ten positions suddenly opened up.

However, he reported, the delay from an announced February 8 start prompted a number of parents to offer their own labor. "I want to thank the parents who have stepped up and either offered themselves as substitutes, or said they're interested in taking on some of these positions to help us get into school," he said.

The district has open postings for two facilities staff, a certified nurse's aide, a long-term special education substitute teacher, and two full-time and three long-term substitute paraprofessional positions. Beck told the *Reporter* that a new food services director has been hired, but no public announcement has been made. The administration sent a recruitment email out to families on Wednesday, encouraging job seekers to log in via *schoolspring.com*.

"There's a strong likelihood people are going to have to quarantine from time to time," Beck told the school committee. "If we're right

on the edge of being staffed up, we'll use up our substitutes very quickly."

**On the Horizon**

The committee heard an update on the FY'22 budget from business manager Joanne Blier. Though an estimated 31,000 students have withdrawn from public schools statewide during the pandemic, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is basing next year's Chapter 70 aid on this year's count.

Gill-Montague's foundation enrollment has dropped from 1,072 to 974 this year, so that revenue line is only projected to rise by \$80,538, as compared with \$607,875 during the previous cycle. "Unless the enrollment comes back up, we will not see additional Chapter 70 in future years, either," Blier warned.

The administration is working to close the budget gap, which it has narrowed to \$66,309.

It will be bridged in part using \$196,000 in this year's Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding, which Blier said can be rolled over and used to hire staff to support students' learning recovery and

emotional needs: an adjustment counselor, a speech language pathologist, and first-grade paraprofessionals. The district plans to apply for another round of ESSER funding this spring, to the tune of \$860,000.

Budget presentations to the Gill and Montague finance committees are scheduled for March 3. As it stands, the district expects to assess Gill \$1,710,175, a decline of 4.2% from the current year, and Montague \$10,765,993, an increase of 2.1%.

**Supplemental Supports**

Athletic director Adam Graves came before the committee to report on the district's Athletic Leadership Council, and request that it be granted an official student activities fund.

While the Council has already run food and clothing drives through its Helping Hands program, Graves said that it has grown into "more of service-type community" during the pandemic. The group keeps a resource closet, and any requests for aid are kept confidential by three staff members. This year it provided Christmas baskets to 21 local families.

The committee approved the request.

Graves also reported on two donations recently received by the athletics program, including one for \$2,000 from the Montague Elks Board. "They're always there to help support our school, and our students, when we need it," he said.

**Testing and Vaccination**

The district has not heard back on its application to help pilot "pool-testing" for the virus. Beck explained to the school committee that the schools will have rapid BINAX test kits on hand, but they are intended for staff or students who begin to exhibit symptoms of the virus while at school. "I don't want parents to be confused," he said, "to think that they could send their kids to school to get the rapid test."

Beck also reported that he and 37 other members of the Connecticut Valley Superintendents' Round Table had recently signed a letter urging Governor Baker to allow teachers and other educators to be considered as priority candidates for the COVID-19 vaccine.



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**MONTAGUE** from page A1

was not entirely clear which street the poles would be on – and re-scheduled the hearing for last Monday.

The issue that Kuklewicz has been complaining about for over six months involves the replacement of poles that are either old or need larger transformers. The old poles also serve Verizon and Comcast for telephone and internet service. The electric company can not seem to get the latter two corporate behemoths to move their lines onto the new poles, and so the old ones sit there generally with the tops cut off.

This leaves the neighborhoods in a rather unsightly condition and with no apparent recourse.

Kuklewicz, who had clearly had reached his limit, reported that he had taken a tour of the Upper Hill section of Turners Falls and catalogued the number of redundant poles he witnessed. This, along with the fact that Eversource officials missed the meeting, convinced his fellow board members to postpone approval of the new poles.

At this week's hearing the board quickly approved two poles on Central and Prospect streets, although concerns were expressed by one resident that the latter pole might have a negative impact on a garden. When it came to the postponed hearing, Kuklewicz then reiterated his accounting of the number of redundant poles on the Hill.

At this point Michael Kane, who identified himself as a "community relations specialist" for Eversource (and also a former city councilor from Holyoke), picked up the ball for the electric company:

"I certainly understand the issues that you face with your constituents, and I applaud you for the work you are doing, and I apologize for missing the last meeting," he said. "One thing we are working on diligently is to remove those double poles in any way we possibly can... Now it's our turn to step up and try to get those double poles off."

Kane then introduced Jamie Beauchesne, an "overheard supervisor" for Eversource who described himself as a "son of the town of Montague." Beauchesne announced that over the past two weeks Eversource had removed 34 double poles. "We are continuing to pull poles as I find them and see they are transferred off by Verizon and Comcast," he said. "I saw Comcast transfer off some poles on Crocker Ave today."

"I know they pulled poles last week, because I saw a truck go by my house with a trailer with twenty or so poles," said selectboard member Chris Boutwell.

"The last thing I want to do is hold a project hostage," said Kuklewicz. "But I was feeling at our last meeting that was our only choice."

Beauchesne said the reduction in redundant poles would continue. "I live in town," he said, "so I drive through and take a look all the time."

The board then approved the two poles on Unity Street and/or Broadview Heights.

**Ongoing Pandemic**

The selectboard entertained another discussion of the latest COVID-19 metrics, the current plan for partial reopening of town buildings, and the latest news on local sites for residents to be vaccinated.

Public health director Daniel Wasiuk stated that there were 21

"active cases" (positive tests) in Montague in the two-week period between January 24 and February 6, and a cumulative 184 cases since October 1.

Town administrator Steve Ellis then stated that since the number of cases during the past two weeks had fallen below 25, the town would begin the reopening plan approved the previous week.

Ellis said most town buildings would return to their status during the summer, prior to the late fall pandemic surge. Town hall will be open from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 3:30 to 5:30 p.m., Mondays through Thursdays, for limited entry by appointment.

Beginning Tuesday, February 9, all three Montague public libraries – the Carnegie Library in Turners Falls and the branch libraries in Millers Falls and Montague Center – would also be open by appointment. "Call the library you normally visit to schedule an appointment for browsing and computer use," Ellis said.

Reporting on the progress of vaccinations, Montague's emergency management director John Zellman said that the number of vaccination sites in the region was increasing rapidly, although booking could "take patience" due to limited vaccine supplies.

Appointments are now available for residents 75 years and older in Phase 2 at the John Zon community center in Greenfield, as well as Baystate Franklin, CVS, and Big Y, and in Orange at Mahar Regional High School. Larger vaccination sites in the region include the University of Massachusetts Amherst and Eastfield Mall and Mercy Hospital in Springfield.

The Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) is in the process of establishing rotating vaccination centers in Deerfield, Buckland, and Bernardston. Zellman said a center would probably be established in Montague, probably during the week of March 8, but that its location has not yet been determined. Information on these sites is available on the FRCOG website.

The state Department of Public Health website has an interactive map for vaccination sites around the state, as well as a listing that can be searched by zip code. The map and site list allows users to book appointments by computer.

For those without computers or who are encountering problems registering, the state has established a help line by dialing 211. Montague residents can also call the town's Council on Aging or Board of Health, and the agency LifePath has also established a help line at (413) 829-9285. (See page B1 for more information.)

Zellman also said that many residents over 75 were being scheduled for vaccination by their primary care physicians. "It seemed like we weren't doing much there for a while, but now things are starting to pick up," said the emergency director, who noted he had taken his own parents to Baystate Franklin Medical Center in Greenfield the previous day.

No information has been released about when the next groups in Phase 2, including residents over 65, those with two or more existing conditions, and workers in essential retail establishments will become eligible for vaccination.

Selectboard member Mike Nelson asked if staff or volunteers

from Montague would be assisting staff at the John Zon Center in Greenfield. Zellman said he had been to the center to help and the ambulance staff had been there. Ellis said that donating staff time "was something for the Board of Health to consider."

**Other Business**

In other news, parks and recreation director John Dobosz requested that the selectboard approve two youth winter sports programs – a basketball program, from February 22 to March 8 "if possible," and the "Bluefish" swim program, "possibly" from March 1 to early May. He said the emergency management team had given the programs "the OK," but that the school superintendent wanted to hear the opinion of the selectboard and board of health.

The boards of health and selectboard approved the winter programs. Town residents should check the town website for updates.

The selectboard also approved the department's annual "Peter Cottontail EGGstravaganza" scheduled for Saturday, April 3 from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. This year, instead of Mr. Cottontail being driven by Mr. Dobosz to various neighborhoods, he will remain stationary in Unity Park, waving while residents drive by. Residents will access the parking lot from Second Street and exit to First Street. The rain date will be April 10.

The selectboard voted on a lengthy list of twelve sewer user fee abatement requests presented by water pollution control facility (WPCF) director Chelsea Little. The board abated six requests, rejected four, tabled one, and took no action on another.

The highlight of the proceedings was the tabling of an abatement request from a sewer user who had not responded to calls from the WPCF but was defended by resident Ariel Elan, who stressed potential confusion caused by the mid-winter pandemic.

The board approved a six-month extension on an option held for the cannabis firm Flower Power Growers, Inc. to purchase land in the airport industrial park for a cultivation and manufacturing facility. The purchase and sale is being handled by an affiliated entity, River Bluff Group LLC.

Ellis said the extension was needed because the state Cannabis Control Commission had not yet considered the firm's state license, which is required to exercise the option.

The board approved the warrant for the special town meeting scheduled for Thursday, February 25. The warrant contains ten articles. The meeting will start at 6:30, but members and the interested public should register at 6 p.m.

There will be two virtual "practice sessions" before the meeting, one on February 18 at 6:30 p.m. and the other on February 20 at 10 a.m. In both cases registration begins a half hour earlier.

Ellis announced that he had received word that the Franklin Regional Transit Authority would be extending its "microtransit service," which allows riders to book trips via a smartphone app or a web portal, to weekends. The program, which will begin as a "pilot" on February 14, can be found on the town or FRTA website.

The next selectboard meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 22.



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**LOOKING BACK:  
10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK**

*Here's the way it was on February 10, 2011: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.*

**Erving Paper Mill Calls Proposed Agreement Unfair**

"We were confused and bewildered," Morris Housen told the Erving selectboard and approximately 20 other people attending the board's February 3 meeting.

The cause of the Erving Paper Mill CEO's confusion was a letter from Erving's attorney, after months of executive session discussions with the selectboard over the revenue-sharing agreement between the town of Erving and Erseco, the paper mill subsidiary that operates the town-owned wastewater treatment plant in Erving Center.

Erseco treats wastes from Erving Paper Mill, Erving Center residents, and also from fee-paying "third party" septage haulers. The town pays Erseco \$1 per year to treat the Erving residential wastes and has been receiving approximately \$150,000 annually from Erseco as its contracted share of third-party fees.

In December, the selectboard agreed to forgive a year's worth of revenue-sharing payments and to renew the existing contract for three years, starting in FY'12.

"It was a good move for us to help them out," selectboard chair Andrew Goodwin said, because the paper mill is presently operating under Chapter 11 bankruptcy. Erseco rejected the town's offer in a letter dated December 16.

In January, the selectboard extended the existing agreement until February 28.

"We appreciate the offer of a one-time reprieve, but it wasn't anything we discussed together," said Erving Paper Mill general manager Tom Newton. Newton asked if the board was open to further discussion.

Housen asked the selectboard, "How do you justify this agreement?" Regarding the third-party septage revenue, he said, "We built this business from nothing."

Erseco general manager Peter Coleman said costs for operating the treatment plant are "a heavy load" for the paper mill.

The selectboard agreed to schedule a working meeting about the agreement after the company's expense information is made available.

**Earning Their Money**

SPS workers cut loose a concrete covered I-beam from the edge of the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge on Monday. The Kobelco and Link Belt excavator operators worked in tandem to lift the beam after an iron worker sat on the beam with a cutting torch to cut it loose from lateral beams, high above the river and rocks below.

The workmen on the bridge are tethered to a safety line attached to the Jersey barriers, bolted to the bridge deck.

The excavator operators travel back and forth with the huge excavators on the edge of the deck, with the outer beam removed. These men earn their money. SPS trucked the beams to Mitchell's gravel pit in Northfield for concrete removal. The beams are then trucked to WTE recycling yard in Greenfield.

So far, the bridge reconstruction project is ahead of schedule, and SPS shows no signs of shutting down for the winter, despite the stormy weather.

**Noise On Ice**

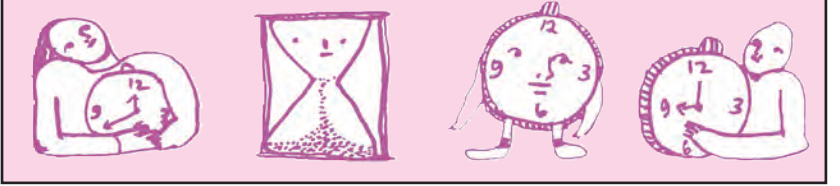
The word on the Avenue was, "An outdoor winter landscape sound and performance festival will take place on our main vein, the Connecticut River, at the intertribal nexus of the Peskeomskut Noisecapades," at high noon.

Performing for themselves alone, and their electronic recording devices, individual noise artists gave 24 five-minute concerts in rapid succession, some standing on chairs, some on blankets, some in the freezing rain, which fell steadily after the first half hour but did nothing to dampen their revel.

Josh Burkett worked with the weather and let the hail play his battery-powered acoustic guitar, with mesmerizing result.

Abortus Fever played a Japanese Fender through a number of distortion devices, sounding like Jimi Hendrix with his fingers caught in a very small blender. Cathe Janke passed out party favors from a plastic bag, singing the coda from "Hallelujah I'm a Bum" as she made the rounds.

Pronoblem Baalberith, another Holyoke noisician who made the scene, had this to say about the day: "This is the way it should be. Chaos and Order and Nature. Noise Music is the only true spiritual music. To do it outside with all these people, it is Truth, right here."



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ANDREW FRENKEL PHOTO

The bridge will be rebuilt using wood cleared after last October's windstorm. The water department plans to clear more trees.

**CLEARAGE** from page A1

attended a virtual meeting of the association later in the afternoon.

At the site walk, Brown said that some tree removal was needed to protect the bridge in the future, but also argued that a more extensive project was needed to cover the costs of "specialists" who will take down trees next to the bridge. He also argued that reducing the "over-story" in the broader area owned by the water district, which comprises about 11 acres, would benefit younger trees and wildlife.

During the walk, attended by approximately a dozen residents, Brown pointed specifically to two rows of pines on the northeast side of the bridge, and said one row would need to be removed because it was leaning in the direction of the bridge.

The need for more extensive tree-cutting has been questioned

by two members of the LPVA, who called the water district's proposal "upsetting" in an email to Matt Atwood, the chair of the association.

"We're sorry to hear about this plan, which probably doesn't come as a surprise," wrote Joy Kaubin and John Anderson. "One part of the problem related to the taking down of trees is that it helps create higher winds and stress on the remaining trees, structures, on top of contributing to our climate change crisis and extreme weather."

"We don't believe we are the only village residents noticing how much stronger winds are getting in [Lake Pleasant] since the state cut down all those trees on the plains across from the village and we're thinking that may have played some role in the devastation that occurred."

Kaubin and Anderson's last sentence is a reference to forest man-

agement projects recently implemented by the state agency Mass-Wildlife on the Montague Plains, a large, sandy glacial outwash that the state owns in the center of Montague. The project resulted in extensive tree cutting along Lake Pleasant Road. The village of Lake Pleasant was built on the Plains, though not on state land, and it borders MassWildlife property.

The agency has argued that its projects reduce the danger of wildfires on the Plains, such as the one which destroyed the village in 1907, and expands the habitat for a range of species. Critics argue that such management practices are influenced by the needs of the logging industry and reduce "carbon sequestration" needed to combat global warming.

At both the site visit and the association meeting, Brown distinguished sharply between the lim-

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ited tree cutting envisioned by the water district and the state projects on the Plains, which he referred to as "clear cutting." He said that the forester employed by the district would mark the trees before cutting, and that local residents living near the dingle area would also be welcome to flag trees on their property for removal, subject to discussion with the water department.

When reached for comment, Matt Atwood told the Reporter he had not yet heard of other strong opposition in the village to the water department proposal.

"Our LPVA email list has about 100 people on it, and although I certainly don't know everybody's opinion, Joy and John are the only folks I've heard express objection to TFWD's plan," he wrote. "I think, in general, folks have been

grateful to Mike Brown and the TFWD for being not only open and communicative about their plans, but also for actively seeking input of Lake Pleasant villagers.

"No one wants to see unnecessary trees cut, but I think people understand that cutting particular trees will prevent another disaster like we recently experienced, and that cutting a few other trees is a reasonable price to pay for removing the trees that threaten the bridge."

On Sunday's walk, Brown said the project near the bridge would need to be approved by the town conservation commission, and that work on the remaining land would require the approval of the state. He speculated that the project would probably take place early this spring.



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FEBRUARY 11, 2021

Above: Reader Don Plante of Gill captured these two swans trying to have a private moment on the Turners Falls power canal.

## Contact Dancers Use Props to Connect

By LEE WICKS

**MONTAGUE CENTER** – Contact improvisation is just what it sounds like. It’s a form of movement in which contact with other dancers informs a reaction that inspires the next contact. The physical reaction may invite or signal the need for distance, and the response may be yielding, or resistant, or persuasive.

Moti Zemelman, who teaches contact improvisation, says, “This dance practice explores the skills of falling, rolling, counterbalance, lifting using minimal effort, how to make ourselves light when being lifted, centering and breathing techniques, and responsiveness to our partners and surroundings.”

That doesn’t sound conducive to social distancing at all!

“There is a sweet surrendering that happens when our bodies stay faithful to what is happening now, and now... and *now!*,” adds Moti. “One learns to recognize and differentiate subtle impulses in our movement choices and our partner’s choices. When body, mind, and spirit are united in their instinctive wisdom, one finds oneself at home in every moment expressing one’s true nature.”

So how could people achieve this state of intimate communication now?

With a new dance program called Curbside Contact, Moti has found a



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Curbside Contact dancers on a pond in Leverett this winter.

way. “When COVID hit, the pandemic created a situation where I could not teach in person,” he says. “At first I was very cautious. I started a weekly online dance [called] ‘Another Bad-ass Corona Dance’ which lasted from March until May. I finally got ‘Zoom fatigue,’ and had to make another change.

“The idea of dancing outdoors with masks and props was born last May, and we’ve been going strong ever since. Weather has never stopped our hardcore group of dancers. We’ve danced through all four

seasons, moving with sun, heat, rain, and snow. It’s been a beautiful part of the dance to be part of that changing landscape, something that really doesn’t happen inside a studio!”

Moti has found ways to apply the basic principles of Contact Improv within the limitations of COVID-safe guidelines. Principles like the push and pull of counterbalance can be expressed through the use of bamboo poles and rope – and even a parachute – between partners.

“Most importantly, we have see **CONTACT** page B4



By LILITH G. WOLINSKY

**MONTAGUE CITY** – When I first moved to Montague City, I had a new boyfriend. Plus a new job, a new house, and a new cat. While I sorted through boxes and tried to figure out shelving, when to put out my garbage, and the logistics of getting a foam mattress via mail, he, a reluctant walker, and I, eager to put my feet down anywhere, explored Montague City together.

We walked the canal and bridges and old railroad paths, and headed into town on a February day back when businesses were still open.

He wore shorts, the cold biting into his legs, while I, an intergenerational worrier, was stiffly bundled. This was just the beginning of our numerous differences playing out manifestly.

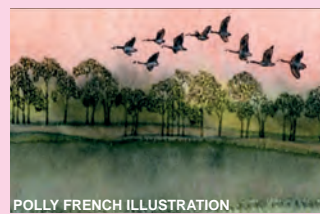
I was thrilled with the fullness of my life, and to have landed in a place so aligned with my interests – water all around, Victorian-era industrial buildings, quiet evidence of artistic endeavors, and an abundance of bridges, an early theme in nighttime dreams. The green hills within miles of my home, dotted with horses, sheep, cows, goats, chickens, and the occasional pig,

stimulated my barely constrained inner farm girl, while wilder things were stirred by the coyotes howling up the mountain, owls big and small, and the swoop of bats. I had my own green corner, full of promise.

Things don’t always last, and the relationship with the man became weighted and weary, a slow-ish trajectory to dissolution hamstrung by the connection, and a fog of pheromones. My sweet cat died, painfully and young, and I became more aware, and somewhat less thrilled during my COVID homestay, to realize that my village, starting with the almost crumbling General Pierce Bridge (which, rumor has it, nervous locals cross with their windows down, and an extra gulp of air) is a generally neglected, little mentioned, likely least funded (although I haven’t done the math), and sadly envisioned little gem waiting patiently to be asked to the dance.

Though some may take umbrage, the evidence is plain to see, particularly when viewed *en masse*. There is the bridge (under jurisdiction of the state, and slated to be closed within months for

see **RAMBLER** page B5



POLLY FRENCH ILLUSTRATION

## WEST ALONG THE RIVER THE SOUTHPAW GETS A LETTER FROM HOME

By DAVID BRULE

**THE FLAT, ERVINGSIDE** – In New England in mid-February, the Hot Stove League is heating up, and talk turns to baseball, with the Red Sox heading out for spring training in a week.

But my own thoughts turn to somewhere in upstate New York in 1919. This time-traveling was triggered by an artifact that we found just this past summer. Small forgotten mementoes can remind us of times past, and in this particular case, remind us of who we are. Bear with me.

Back in 1919, our fast-balling ace, Uncle Doug Smith, was still trying to make a living with his left arm. He had made it to the Big Leagues in 1912, just turned 18, and having been drafted out of Turners Falls High School at the end of his junior year. His fastball and spitter had won him a considerable reputation, and the Red Sox jumped on this young raw talent.

Fenway Park had just opened that year in 1912, and Doug found himself on the team with the likes of Hall of Fame Immortals Tris Speaker, Harry Hooper, and Smokey Joe Wood.

Suddenly, within a month of leaving this house on The Flat, he was on the mound in Fenway facing the St. Louis Browns as a relief pitcher in July of that year. He pitched three good innings of relief, but the Browns had built up a good lead that the Sox couldn’t

overcome. When he left the field that day, he thought he was at the beginning of a career that would help him escape the one-horse town of Millers Falls.

However, within a year, he was accused of Being Black While Playing Red Sox Baseball.

He didn’t *look* Black, but the mere accusation of having black blood was enough in those days to hustle him out of the Sox back door as fast as possible. On a tip from a disgruntled Greenfield informant, the Sox investigated his family, and sure enough they located his aunt, uncles, and cousins in Greenfield who were definitely dark-skinned.

We now know that they were of mixed race, Native American and African. His father Judah was a light-skinned man of the same mixed-race background, and Doug’s mother was a Scottish immigrant, but the mere suspicion of being less than 100% white was enough to drop him from the team. As we know, the lily-white Red Sox were among the last teams to integrate, hiring Pumpsie Green only in the 1960s.

Released from the Sox by 1913, our uncle stayed with the sport that he loved, and continued to play through the 1920s, at Camp Upton for the US Army during WWI, then with other semi-pro teams in cities all up and down the Eastern Seaboard.

At this point in the tale, we see **WEST ALONG** page B5

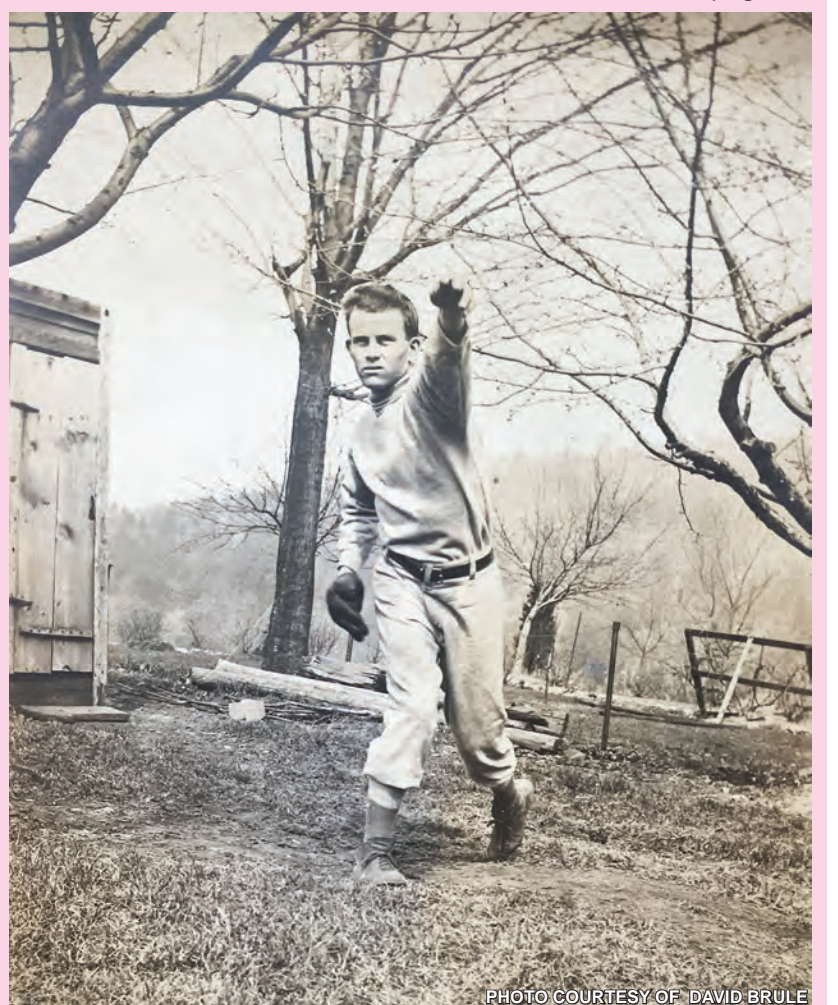


PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID BRULE

A young Doug Brown practices in the author’s back yard.

# Pet of the Week



CARMODY COLLAGE

## “BLACKIE”

Blackie has instant charm with a happy smile, a friendly wag, and legs that seemed to have stopped growing while the rest of his body matured. We are calling him a border collie body on basset hound legs. Blackie has tireless energy and, like most Border Collies, will likely remain a high-energy dog throughout his lifetime.

Before coming to Dakin, Blackie had little exposure to the world outside his small apartment, and as a result, he has a lot to learn. He will

need an experienced adopter to help socialize him. Blackie is not a dog for a first-time dog family, and Dakin will be screening applications to find the right match for him. His adoption fee is \$550.

Interested in adopting? Animals at Dakin are available only in Springfield currently. Contact adoption staff at [springfield@dakinhumane.org](mailto:springfield@dakinhumane.org) and include your name and phone number. For more information, call (413) 781-4000 or visit [www.dakinhumane.org](http://www.dakinhumane.org).

## Montague & Gill Residents: Are You 75 or Older? Here's how to get an appointment for the COVID-19 vaccine.

If you do not use a computer, you may call:

- Mass 211. Just dial 2-1-1 to connect to the COVID-19 vaccine help line, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- The Gill Montague Council on Aging at (413) 863-9357.
- The Montague Board of Health at (413) 863-3200, extension 205.
- LifePath's COVID-19 vaccination help line at (413) 829-9285.

If you have internet access, you may go to the Mass.gov website, [www.mass.gov/covid-19-vaccine](http://www.mass.gov/covid-19-vaccine).

You will see a map that shows sites in western Massachusetts where vaccinations are available. You select a site by clicking on it on the map, and scheduling information will pop up. As of February 8, 2021, the sites available in western Mass include the Greenfield Senior Center, Big Y grocery store, CVS, and the John Zon Community Center, all in Greenfield. The larger state sites in our area are at UMass Amherst and the Eastfield Mall and Mercy Hospital in Springfield.

Vaccines and appointments are still limited. You may have to try several times to get an appointment. Meanwhile, local medical practices – Valley Medical and Baystate Primary Care, for example – are calling patients to schedule vaccinations.

LifePath has transportation assistance for people needing rides to and from vaccination appointments.



MARY AZARIAN WOODBLOCK PRINT

### THE GARDENER'S COMPANION

## Long Johns and Needles

like us in their seventies are considered most vulnerable, so we are grateful to have these options. As it is we also feel very fortunate in the recent advances in medical care which have been developed.

By LESLIE BROWN

**MONTAGUE CITY** – After what had initially seemed like a mild winter, the winds built up, we got more snow, and contemplated the delivery of wood for the next season. We also dug out the long underwear we had packed away.

For several years we had been in the habit of spending the month of February in Florida to break up the winter. We'd leave in the last few days of January, weather dependent, and arrive in the St. Augustine area with a place booked for the month. The beach weather that time of year was mild and balmy, but not hot. Still, folks wore shorts most days and some more hardy souls swam. Temperatures ranged from the sixties to low seventies.

This winter, because of the pandemic, traveling did not feel like a good idea. We have been fortunate in being able to get the vaccine, Ken through the Veterans in Leeds, and I at our local hospital, via my doctor's office.

We are all too aware that folks

self. We love living, warts and all, and look forward to a large family reunion next summer when we can gather with kin once again and catch up on all the family news.

We've celebrated a Brown family reunion twice now. Next year we will try to schedule again in the late summer when most of us are here. Of course, this year the pandemic cancelled any hope of getting together, not to mention that the family is mostly on the west coast and one family group is in England. Who knows what foreign travel will look like next summer, and as is common in most families, we have lost two members. At least we won't be dealing with Trump and his changes at the drop of a hat – and for no good reason that we can discern.

Remember those family letters some folks shared with everyone? One of the most memorable included news that Uncle Dong died last summer, which brought humor to many, although certainly not to those closely related to Uncle Dong. Too bad the era of these group epistles seems to have died off – at least, no one in this generation continues to pen these family letters. Well, at least only one – and that family news is mostly illegible. Thus, you can feel free to create your own.

### PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

## Film Series Explores “Hidden Landscapes”

**TURNERS FALLS** – The Nolumbeka Project presents a film series entitled “Hidden Landscapes” starting this Saturday, February 13. The group will share these video stories that investigate the archeological history and modern legacy of the Northeastern Native civilization on Zoom.

The first film is called *The Great Falls: Discovery, Destruction and Preservation in a Massachusetts Town*. The film begins in Turners Falls when the town was attempting to expand the runway of its airport. The plan called for the removal of a low hill that contained what Native American tribal representatives identify as a ritual site – a ceremonial stone landscape.

The surprising discovery and the ongoing effort to understand and protect this historical asset is a dramatic story of environmental and historic preservation. It is shown in two parts, the first on Saturday, February 13 at 2 p.m. and then finishing on Sunday, February 14 at the same time.

The project represents the joined efforts of professional, Native, and antiquarian researchers who have generously volunteered to combine their expertise into a chronicle of research. The collaboration represents a new approach to the long standing and often very heated controversy that surrounds the ceremonial stone landscape of North America.

Join Doug Harris, ceremonial stone landscape researcher, Ted Timreck, director of the Hidden Landscape films, and guest panelists for a five part series featuring films, panel discussions, and question and answer sessions on February 13 and 14; Saturdays March 6, 13, and 20, at 2 p.m. Films include: *Before the Lake was Champlain, Working Together to Unlock the Mysterious Stone Ruins, and The Devil's Footstep, a New Vision of Early Native Life*.

Registration is required, and limited to 500. Donations are requested. Visit [www.nolumbekaproject.org](http://www.nolumbekaproject.org) to register. Pre-screenings are available for a fee at [www.twitimreck.com](http://www.twitimreck.com).

## Senior Center Activities

FEBRUARY 15 THROUGH 19

### 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](mailto:coa@montague-ma.gov) by email.

### ERVING

Senior Center director Paula Betters writes:

“Erving Senior Center is still closed to the public. We are here daily taking calls and doing outreach work for seniors and their families. Call with any questions or concerns, need help with SHINE, SNAP. We are also taking calls to help seniors sign up

for their COVID vaccine. We are here to help make a difference.” Paula can be reached at (413) 423-3649 or [paula-betters@erving-ma.gov](mailto: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](mailto:coa@leverett.ma.us).

### WENDELL

Wendell Senior Center is open for a foot care clinic the first-Wednesday of each month. Call Katie Nolan at (978) 544-2306 for information or appointments. Otherwise, there are no activities. The Senior Health Rides is also suspended until advisories change. For more information, call Nancy Spittle at (978) 544-6760.

## Local Supermarket Senior Accommodations

Supermarkets in Massachusetts are now required to provide special hours for seniors and immunocompromised shoppers. Call ahead – this information is accurate as of November 30; 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

**Green Fields Market:** Senior hours from 8 to 9 a.m. Monday-Saturday and 10 to 11 a.m. on Sunday. Curbside pickup available. Order by 8 p.m.; order ready for pickup between 1 and 5 the following day. Delivery also available. (413) 773-9567

**McCusker's Market:** Curbside pickup only 10 to 11 a.m. Order between 12 and 1 p.m. for pickup the following day. Email [pickup@franklincommunity.coop](mailto:pickup@franklincommunity.coop) (413) 625-2548

**Stop and Shop:** Senior hours from 6 to 8 a.m. (413) 774-6096

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Montague Community Television News

# This Week on MCTV

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

**TURNERS FALLS** – The usual committee meetings are up to date, with new Zoom recordings from the finance committee, the police advisory committees, and the selectboard. Three more Turners Falls High School basketball games are up on the MCTV Vimeo page, as well as a new episode of “Fabric’sCool,” which gives instructions on how to tailor a suit jacket. Video is a great way to share skills within our community, it can also increase awareness of your business! All community members are welcome to submit their videos to be aired on Channel 17, as well as featured on the MCTV Vimeo page. MCTV is always avail-

able to assist in local video production as well. Cameras, tripods, and lighting equipment are available for checkout, and filming and editing assistance can be provided.

The MCTV board is looking for new members, specifically someone interested in filling the role of treasurer. The station is also looking to hire a producer to make Spanish-language content. Please email [infomontaguetv@gmail.com](mailto:infomontaguetv@gmail.com) with a resume to schedule an interview!

Something going on you think others would like to see? If you get in touch, we can show you how easy it is to use a camera and capture the moment. Contact us at (413) 863-9200 or [infomontaguetv@gmail.com](mailto:infomontaguetv@gmail.com) for more information.

MINISERIES REVIEW

## The Right Stuff (2020, Disney+)

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

**GREENFIELD** – They have done tons of movies and miniseries on the history of the space program. The latest thing, which premiered on October 9, 2020, appears to be the history of the men who were the very first astronauts selected for the program. Not an unoriginal take to go about doing a TV series on. People can watch this on the Disney Plus streaming service.

These guys being recruited for the space program is not where the series starts. We get a look at some of these guys’ lives before they are part of it. Alan Shepard, before being recruited to it, wanted to be back in a cockpit very badly. “Gordo” Cooper and John Glenn are others whose lives before this are highlighted.

John Glenn was very interested in making history by being part of the space program. Gordo’s personal life was a mess, which apparently should have meant he never was a part of it. But he was involved in it anyway. John Glenn at this time is made to look like he was a devoted family man, which I think is what the people who were trying to recruit for the program wanted. All of these men were sent top-secret let-

ters when they were recruited.

In the first episode I watched of this, the actual testing process for them to become astronauts is shown. The first episode shows a rather nice character study of these men. I saw a trailer that indicated they will feature these guys’ personal lives getting a bit bumpy, which should be interesting to see, especially since before this Glenn’s was quite stable.

I don’t know all of the personal histories of these guys. But they were test pilots, and that’s got to be not an easy deal to have as part of your lives. So I wonder how much harder it may have gotten in their personal lives when they were part of the space program. I think I find myself surprised to learn that some of these guys’ marriages survived while they were making history.

This certainly has an interesting appeal to it, when it comes to what is going to come next, which I think is good for the show – it should help continually draw viewers to it. I would tell people to watch this. One reason being just to see what happens with these guys’ personal lives.

Apparently, this piece of history is called “America’s first reality show,” and I think people are right to do so!

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

# Snowing And Towing; Sled Ramp; Break-Ins; Ranting And Raving; Avowed Marijuana Overdose

Monday, 2/1

12:37 p.m. Report of four spent fireworks near the pulloff at the Lake Pleasant Road end of Old Northfield Road. Officer disposed of said items and checked area for any additional items.

2:55 p.m. Caller reporting that his vehicle went off the road into the woods near Franklin County Technical School and struck a tree; advising no injuries, smoke, or fluids; airbags did not deploy. Units advised. Rau’s requested for tow.

5:55 p.m. Report of two-car accident; caller was plowing his driveway when another car slid into him. No injuries reported. Rau’s requested for tow. Courtesy transport provided.

7:04 p.m. Caller states that a male party got his vehicle stuck in a snowbank at Unity Skatepark and appears to be intoxicated. Party has left area to get his truck to tow himself out. Units advised. Officer states party does not appear to be under the influence, but will make arrangements to have somebody else drive the vehicle.

Tuesday, 2/2

3:52 a.m. DPW requesting officer to Third Street for snow tow. Ran plate; no phone number found for registered owner. Party just came out; is heading to work shortly and will move vehicle.

6:27 a.m. Heard DPW on radio requesting assistance with two trucks that just hit each other on Turners Falls Road. Unknown injuries or fluids. Officers dispatched; Shelburne Control contacted to dispatch TFFD. Report taken. Courtesy transport provided.

7:27 a.m. MPD requested to Third Street lot for snow removal. Officer ad-

vising DPW is requesting tow of approximately 14 vehicles at this time.

Contacted Rau’s; not available. Contacted Byrne’s/Goly’s; en route.

8:33 a.m. Detail officer advising that someone struck the stop sign at Letourneau Way and Dell Street prior to his arrival; sign is bent over. DPW advised.

9:14 a.m. Officer assisting DPW with snow tows in Fourth Street public lot. Rau’s unavailable; vehicles towed by Byrne/Goly.

11:30 a.m. Report of male panhandling at Seventh Street and Avenue A. Officer spoke with male party and he was moved along.

2:58 p.m. Report of hit and run to caller’s vehicle on Park Street within the past hour and a half; red paint transfer present. Officer off on Millers Falls Road to speak with operator of vehicle in question. No damage to male party’s truck. Caller advises her neighbor has cameras but is not home at the moment; will email officer the videos when she gets them.

5:24 p.m. 911 caller from Fourth Street reporting an intruder in her home; states he does not live there but is a known party and is refusing to leave or let her leave. No weapons reported. Officer reports all verbal; situation mediated; male party has left.

Wednesday, 2/3

7:44 a.m. Caller from L Street states that someone broke into his vehicle at approximately 7 a.m.; has it on surveillance, which he can access on his phone. Caller at MPD to speak with officer. Report taken.

8:12 a.m. Report of lights malfunctioning at Third Street and Avenue A, flashing red/yellow and the crosswalk signal is

not working. Contacted DPW, who advised they reported same to MassDOT just before 8 a.m. and they said they would have someone there within the hour. Advised responsibility for those lights has been taken over by the state due to the impending bridge project. Officer checked intersection; advised Third Street side is flashing red; Avenue A side is flashing yellow. Advised traffic should be able to flow safely if motorists follow the traffic signals.

1:14 p.m. Officer shut down Comcast detail working on Turners Falls Road.

4:04 p.m. Town employee advising that some kids are sledding down a hill into the First Street public parking lot and have made a jump. Caller concerned for kids’ safety and town’s liability. Officer spoke to parties at parking lot and advised them of the complaint.

5:30 p.m. 911 caller reporting two-car accident in front of his home on Park Street. Tow requested; courtesy transport provided.

8:24 p.m. 911 caller from South Prospect Street states that someone smashed the window on his front door and reached in and unlocked it. He believes they came into the house for a minute then took off. He thinks he saw a vehicle with New Hampshire plates drive away. Shelburne Control advised to be on lookout. Caller advised of options. Summons issued.

10:48 p.m. Tractor-trailer unit driver requesting assistance backing up his truck on East Main Street because it won’t fit under the bridge. Services rendered.

Thursday, 2/4

6:36 a.m. Caller from L Street who is currently not home was contacted by her 11 year old who believes she saw a person looking into her window; stated she could make out a person’s head, messy hair, and possibly a cell phone being shown in the window. Investigated.

1:40 p.m. Report of tenant on East Main Street who smashed a new stove that was delivered for that tenant’s apartment and discarded it in the dumpster. Male is now reportedly “ranting and raving;” just walked around the building; unsure if he is inside or outside. Summons issued.

8:08 p.m. Caller states that while pulled up to the ATM at Greenfield Savings Bank, a male came up to the passenger side of her car and started knocking on her window, motioning for her to roll it down. She shook her head

no and left the bank. Party was still there and appeared to be approaching the car that was behind her at the ATM. Officer located party matching description standing on the side of Aubuchon. Courtesy transport to Greenfield provided.

9:18 p.m. Caller advising that there are some boxes and a few loose items left in a snowbank on the corner of Randall and Greenfield roads. Message left for DPW.

Friday, 2/5

10:16 a.m. Officer advising that traffic lights at Avenue A and Third Street are flashing red and yellow. DPW notified.

3:32 p.m. 911 caller reporting vehicle in ditch on River Road in South Deerfield. Shelburne Control conferred.

4:53 p.m. 911 caller from East Chestnut Hill Road states that a male party is kneeling in the snow at the end of her driveway and claims to be overdosing on marijuana. Male party does not want an ambulance, just an officer. Units advised; Shelburne Control advised to tone for medical.

Saturday, 2/6

1:51 p.m. 911 caller reporting seeing a male and female in a black Chevy truck snorting some kind of substance at Cumberland Farms; caller could also see some needles in the truck. Unable to locate. 2:26 p.m. Caller states that while walking near the Rendezvous, an off-leash dog jumped on her and scared her. Owner was right there and grabbed the dog then got into a white car and left. Medical attention declined. Unable to locate vehicle.

6:58 p.m. FL Roberts employee requesting officer to remove and trespass male from store. Officer located party on Avenue A and verbally trespassed him from FL Roberts. Advised FL Roberts how to get an official trespass order put in place.

7:06 p.m. Caller from Woodland Drive requesting officer to make contact with male to advise him to stop banging on her walls and screaming obscenities. Officer left message with male.

Sunday, 2/7

11:18 a.m. Caller from Wentworth Congregate Housing requesting assistance smoothing out a carpet that is keeping the front door to the building from opening; expressed concern for anyone in a wheelchair who may need to get out in an emergency. Caller advises he has attempted to contact maintenance without success. TFFD en route.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

# Black History Month Events at GCC

**GREENFIELD** – Greenfield Community College announces several events in conjunction with Black History Month this February. The first event will occur online on Wednesday, February 17 at 1 p.m. It is a virtual tour of the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia.

David Pilgrim, the Black founder and curator who started building the collection as a teenager, makes no apologies for the provocative exhibits which feature racial stereotypes in artifacts that span the period from Reconstruction until the civil rights movement – and beyond. He says the goal of the \$1.3 million gallery is “to get people to think deeply.”

Register for the tour through the college’s website, [www.gcc.mass.edu/events](http://www.gcc.mass.edu/events), by February 15.

Dr. Ron Stewart will talk about his career-long research focused on the social and economic conditions confronting African American males in the US in an online presentation on Thursday, February 18 at noon. Dr Stewart is the Chair of the sociology department at GCC. His book *African American Husbands: A Study of Black Family Life* is related to his research interests, as is his recent publication, “The Declining

Significance of Black Male Employment: Gendered Racism of Black Men in Corporate America.”

A regular presenter at national conferences, Dr. Stewart has also served on the organizing committee for a national conference and workshop on constructing progressive definitions of Black masculinity. Join via Zoom at [zoom.us/j/97523191491](https://zoom.us/j/97523191491).

On Monday, February 22, there will be an online Black History Month conference called “Embracing Our Legacy to Inspire a Brighter Future.” The event runs from 9 a.m. to noon and features Shanika Hope of Amazon Web Services, Imari Paris Jeffries of King Boston, Sabrina Gentlewarrior of Bridgewater State University, Elissa Chin Lu of Clark University, Mark Eldridge of ALKU, and Eric Dusseault of Mass College of Art and Design.

Through the lens of this multi-generational panel and moderators, participants will explore what a brighter, more equitable future looks like and how we individually and collectively can make that desired America a reality.

For more information and to register for the Zoom event, go to the GCC website: [www.gcc.mass.edu/events/](http://www.gcc.mass.edu/events/).

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**CONTACT** from page B1

kept the spirit of play and joy active in our bodies and lives," he says, "which is an essential part of nourishing the soul during challenging times."

The group meets on Tuesdays at the Greenfield swimming area from 1:30 until 3:30 p.m., and there are strict rules to keep the weekly gathering safe. Participants make clear boundary agreements with each other to ensure safety and ease. Masks must be worn, except when on your own appropriately spaced blanket. Participants must stay eight feet apart and hand sanitizer is available. The groups are limited to fifteen people, and no one should participate if they have any COVID symptoms.

Once that bit of housekeeping has been done, it's time for some fun.

I observed this group when they were meeting in Montague. What struck me was the serene joy on people's faces, and the fact that it looked like anyone could do it if they could yield to the desire to move, like young children do.

The hardy folks who have stayed with it through the changing seasons have a lot to say about contact improvisation in general and Curbside Contact in particular. Here are excerpts from a number of testimonials:

"Curbside Contact has been a cornerstone of resilience for me

during this time of social distancing," says Taina Lyons of Brattleboro. "Moti applies his longtime experience facilitating contact improv to this space, which unfolds with much the same qualities of playfulness, co-regulation, and improvisation as a typical CI jam. I look forward to dancing with the changing seasons, and connecting with other dancers, at Curbside in the coming months."

Rosario Torres of Williamsburg remembers: "At first I thought 'No way, with a mask? Six feet apart? With poles? It's not going to work, it looks ridiculous, so silly.' But I gave it a try... The truth is, magic happens anyway. Moving together outside with live music creates an atmosphere. We play, we shake off all negativity, we relax, we connect! I'm feeling grateful for this practice and the space and dedication of those who make it happen."

"It's such a gift to have the opportunity to engage with fellow dancers, playfully and safely, during this time of social distancing," testifies Bobby Dolan of Leverett. "I'm amazed how many of the joyful and connecting aspects of contact improv work, even when dancing at a distance using ropes and poles."

Moti brings a lot of movement and dance experience to the endeavor. He began practicing Contact Improvisation 33 years ago. Over the past 25 years he has taught and performed



Curbside Contact dancers use the jungle gym structure at the Greenfield swimming area to connect with each other during a session this winter.

across the US, Canada, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, Europe, and Israel. In 2008 and 2009 he taught as professor of dance at the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes in Mexico City. Moti has been a regular teacher and a board member at Earthdance Retreat Center in Plainfield.

Additionally, he is a featured dancer in Sanford Lewis' documentary film about CI, "An Intimate Dance." (For a clip, see [vimeo.com/38268635](https://vimeo.com/38268635)) He also designs and moderates an international Contact Improv resource website at [www.contactimprov.com](http://www.contactimprov.com).

Locally, he was leading regular

weekly dances that he first formed in 2010 as the "Greenfield Contact Jam" at Green River Yoga Studios. Around 2013, when he moved the dance to the Arts Block in Greenfield, he changed the name to ABCD Jam, an acronym for "Arts Block Contact Dance." After the group left the Arts Block in 2016, he changed the acronym to stand for "Another Blissful Contact Dance"; since then they have mostly met at the Montague Retreat Center in the summer months and Guiding Star Grange of Greenfield in the winter months.

And now there's Curbside

Contact.

"I think we'll go back into the studio and dance in contact with each other again soon enough," Moti says. "Meanwhile, I think we've learned some new things that will be part of our lasting experience and this evolving dance form. There's a way in which using the props has forced us to be even more subtly attuned to the intentions of our partners. I think this is great training for being human, and learning the fine art of communicating needs and boundaries through touch. I plan to continue leading outdoor dances with props even after the pandemic has subsided."

Moti encourages all who are interested to participate. "No prior experience required," he says. "It is a social dance that is not only for professional dancers. Anyone can do this dance form, including those with special needs and mixed abilities. The form is intended to be inclusive of all body types and abilities, with play and listening as the essential elements. We welcome all who respect the safety of our container to join our events, and we offer a no-fee option for BIPOC participants."

Otherwise, the sliding-fee scale ranges from \$10 to \$30 per session. There's still time to join in – if you are curious, contact Moti at [moti@contactimprov.com](mailto:moti@contactimprov.com) or (413) 475-2651.



## Call For Art



R. Sweeney, Turners Falls Mill, oil painting.

**ESSEX, CT** – The Connecticut River Museum in Essex, CT, is collaborating with Lyme Art Association on a topical exhibition titled "Hands on the Land: Art & the Environment in the Connecticut River Valley."

This themed juried exhibit seeks original artwork that speaks to man's impact on the environment of the Connecticut River and its Valley. The artwork should remind us of our love of nature and wildlife; enhance our respect and our relationship with the natural world; and bring awareness of environmental threats that exist.

The Connecticut River is 410 miles long and its watershed encompasses 11,260 square miles, connecting many tributaries, major rivers, lakes and ponds. It is home to many wildlife species including federally threatened or endangered species. Man's impact on this unique environment includes four centuries of settlement, altering the landscape through agriculture, transportation, industry, power, and recreation.

Artists should use this opportunity to share a personal reflection

or interpretation of man's impact along New England's Great River. Together, the artwork from this exhibit should spark conversation and encourage appreciation and stewardship towards preserving the natural heritage of this region.

Artwork does not have to contain historical content, but should interpret concepts of change, impact, inspiration, reflection, or other vision of "man's hand on the land." Artist's commentary on their piece (100 words or less) will be included in the show.

This exhibit is scheduled to open to the public at the Connecticut River Museum on Thursday, March 18, 2021 and run to October 10, 2021. The exhibit will then travel to the Lyme Art Association and open November 19 to January 2, 2022.

All artists are eligible to submit work. There is an entrance fee of \$10 for the first piece, \$10 for one additional piece. The juror is Dick Shriver, publisher of *Estuary* magazine. Submission extends through February 24, 2021. Visit [www.lymeartassociation.org](http://www.lymeartassociation.org) to submit your work.

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

## Cars Off Roads; 911 Hangups; Ice Fishing

#### Friday, 1/1

7:31 p.m. Assisted Erving PD with disturbance on the French King Highway.

#### Saturday, 1/2

10:09 a.m. Caller reported loud music coming from neighbor's house on Mountain Road Estates Street.

#### Sunday, 1/3

9:28 a.m. Tow company reported he is with a vehicle in the trees along Mountain Road. No injuries.

11:01 p.m. Caller reported he struck a deer on Main Road. No injuries.

#### Tuesday, 1/5

11:48 a.m. Caller from South Cross Road asked about identifying a VIN on a snowmobile.

11:58 a.m. Assisted DCF. 12:10 p.m. Report of a suspicious person at French King Bridge. Party was in his vehicle on the Gill side. He said he was fighting with his girlfriend.

#### Wednesday, 1/6

10:44 a.m. Assisted a citizen with fingerprint cards. 1:38 p.m. Assisted Bernardston PD with 911 call. 3:59 p.m. Served warrant on South Cross Road with state police.

#### Thursday, 1/7

11:25 p.m. Greenfield PD received a 911 silent call. They called back; caller said she had no need for police, fire or ambulance.

#### Saturday, 1/9

3:28 p.m. Report of a disabled motor vehicle at the French King Bridge in the middle lane.

#### Sunday, 1/10

3:04 p.m. Helped a citizen who was not injured, but needed help transferring to her wheelchair.

#### Monday, 1/11

11:44 p.m. Received a 911 call from Mount Hermon Road. Employee reported they're programming the phone; no emergency.

5:15 p.m. Report from the French King Highway of a vehicle driving erratically.

#### Tuesday, 1/12

4:53 p.m. Customer reported an issue with a local business on Main Road.

8:59 p.m. Caller requested an officer to remove an unwanted person.

#### Wednesday, 1/13

4:16 p.m. Resident called with questions about a Craigslist sale.

4:22 p.m. Caller asked to speak to an officer to show a letter he received.

5:43 p.m. Assisted citizen with an internet scam.

#### Friday, 1/15

10:38 a.m. Responded to restraining order violation. 5:27 p.m. False burglar alarm, Conference Road.

#### Saturday, 1/16

8:10 p.m. Car off River Road. Unknown injuries. 5:24 p.m. Caller reported erratic operation of a sedan on Route 91 toward Gill. Unable to locate.

#### Monday, 1/18

10:11 a.m. 911 call from Ben Hale Road. On call back, caller said she did not have an emergency.

4:15 p.m. Received a report of a suspicious vehicle on Main Road. Same vehicle has been seen in the past.

8:22 p.m. Caller from River Road said there are two ATVs riding around in the field by his house.

#### Tuesday, 1/19

12:32 p.m. Report of harassment on Hill Drive. 1:51 p.m. A caller from Main Road needs to file a report of identity theft. 8:10 p.m. Caller from French King Highway advised he heard what sounded like a cannon.

#### Wednesday, 1/20

9:57 a.m. Assisted Erving PD in responding to a disturbance on River Street.

10:40 a.m. Medical emergency on Boyle Road.

7:25 p.m. Motor vehicle accident on Prospect Street and Papermill Road in Erving. No injury.

#### Thursday, 1/21

10:40 a.m. Assisted Montague PD. Bike and backpack found on the sidewalk on the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge.

1:03 p.m. Assisted a citizen with fishing license issues.

#### Friday, 1/22

2:24 p.m. Notice of CO hazard on Mount Hermon Road. Determined testing the button. No emergency.

4:24 p.m. Caller from Bascom Road reported a car driving by her residence slowly around midnight for the last several nights.

#### Saturday, 1/23

10:53 a.m. Caller from Main Road reported a male party verbally assaulted her when she was walking her dog.

4:59 p.m. 911 cell hang up from Mount Hermon Road. No sounds of distress, no response to silent call procedures. Call mapping in area.

#### Monday, 1/25

12:09 p.m. Store clerk from Main Road reported a shoplifting incident 15 to 20 minutes ago. Subject left in a gray Pontiac Vibe.

#### Tuesday, 1/26

4:47 p.m. Caller reported speeding vehicles at the north end of Main Road.

5:57 p.m. Report from West Gill Road of a car hitting guardrail. Heavy damage; no injury.

#### Wednesday, 1/27

7:59 a.m. Caller from West Gill Road found a dog.

#### Thursday, 1/28

1:53 p.m. Report of suspicious wires, French Highway. Assisted with referral.

4:56 p.m. A resident from Main Road walked into the station. Assisted with property destruction.

#### Friday, 1/29

6:01 a.m. Two-car accident reported on French King Highway. No personal injuries or fluids.

7:10 a.m. Report of a restraining order violation.

10:31 a.m. Caller from South Cross Road reported a stolen package.

1:40 p.m. Assisted Erving PD with disturbance on the French King Highway.

#### Saturday, 1/30

3:45 p.m. Greenfield dispatch received a 911 misdiagnosis from Barton Cove Road. Subject is out ice fishing and had no emergency.

4:15 p.m. Assisted MSP, French King Highway.

#### Sunday, 1/31

11:20 a.m. Assisted state police, French King Highway and Peterson Way.

5:48 p.m. Fire alarm on Main Road.

7:12 p.m. Assisted Bernardston PD in looking for the operator of a vehicle involved in an accident.

8:18 p.m. Officer responded to a report of an open door on Center Road.

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**WEST ALONG** from page B1

pause to recount one of those quirky incidents that happened last year in 2020, and which makes us think that such coincidences were meant to happen.

It turns out that a relic turned up reminding us of those days of one hundred years ago: a letter, carefully folded and put away in the pages of the 1920 *Old Farmer's Almanac*. Now in this family, we definitely don't throw away the Almanac, so we have inherited a goodly number which at some point will likely need to find their way to the recycling bin.

I've mentioned to you before that when you live in an old house that has been inhabited for generations of your family, from time to time an unexpected message from the past makes itself heard. Sometimes a glimpse of an ancestor's life turns up, hidden until now in closets, drawers, and old books.

In the north bedroom of this old house on The Flat, all kinds of artifacts find themselves stashed away: the old furniture that we just couldn't bring ourselves to throw away; old suit coats; a dusty portrait of Irish great-grandfather James Heffernan in his WWI uniform; pictures of Doug Smith himself posing as a high schooler pretending to throw a pitch in our back yard. (I can recognize the legendary outhouse in the background.) Just to name a few of the forgotten objects lurking in that upstairs room on the north side of the house.

So sorting through some of those books, and figuring there might be some mementoes forgotten there, Sister Susan and I came across the letter that took us back to 1919.

Written in careful penmanship by Doug's mother Lizzie Moir Smith, it was a poignant time capsule revealing a little of day to day family life back then in July of that year.

*Dear Doug, just to let you no (sic) all is well at Home trusting this finds you in the Best of Health. So glad to no you were winning a game again.... Sunday night we went Blueberrying... and we canned 23 quarts Monday. I think it was very good picking...*

*Bessie was down last night. She works every day I did not expect to see her often, it is too late after a days worke.*

*Last week, Alan worked one day. Notice was posted to day that they don't no when the [Millers Falls Tool] shop will start up again. It's very hard times for a man with a family right now...*

Great-grandmother Lizzie herself was a staunch Calvinist, a little more than 5 feet 6 inches tall, and ruled the family of four boys and her husband Judah with an iron hand. Lizzie surely felt that Judah, at 6 feet 1 inch, needed to be kept and guided along the straight and narrow. They had married in the 1880s, she the white Calvinist Protestant, and Judah the lanky and raw-boned mixed race Congregationalist.

In those days, briefly after the Civil War, there was a token tolerance of mixed marriages before the laws of miscegenation appeared on the books. Judah's sister Sarah was so dark-skinned that she was listed as Black on the same 1880 census where Judah first passed for white.

Sarah married a white Civil War veteran, and continued collecting her war widow's pension

right on through the 1940s, living out her life on Lincoln Street in Greenfield.

But by the time Doug Smith had made it to the Majors in 1912, the KKK was rising up all over the country. Even some of the Red Sox players were members of the Klan. With simmering tensions between the Catholic and Protestant players on the 1912 team, there was no way they were ready to keep the likes of a Doug Smith.

When uncle Doug was dropped from the Sox in 1913, Lizzie surely grasped the fact that the only way to get ahead in this world was to be rid of any inkling that the family could be nothing but white. Lizzie may well have been at the root of the family denial of our Native and African roots. That truth was buried so deep that those of us born two generations later had no clue as to our lineage, even though most of our friends in the village of Millers Falls knew.

One memorable confirmation of the family's roots came when I was interviewing the venerable Walter Kostanski for the *Montague Reporter*. TFHS had fielded a team that won the State championship in 1942. Walt shared plenty of memories of the big game played in Fenway Park that year (see "Legends of the Summer of 1942," June 21, 2012), but I had a personal question to ask him about Doug.

Walter had grown up in Millers Falls, himself an outstanding pitcher, and he had at one time been on a town team coached by Doug Smith. In a roundabout way I asked him about "rumors" I had heard in the family about Doug's ethnicity, already knowing the answer, but wanting to see if Walt would level with me and confirm it, and the reasons why Doug was separated from the Sox.

Confirm he did, and he added a couple of anecdotes about Doug's managerial style. Let's just say Doug was an admirer of Ty Cobb, the notorious Georgia Peach, and emulated his take-no-prisoners style of baseball.

Lizzie continues her letter:

*Your father is working every day. So far he is a Lucky Man. So far Paper Mill seems to be the Best Place to worke at this time...It's thundering now I guess we will get the showers be for long. Perhaps it will cool it of a bit. Must be nice where you are right in the Mountains. I hope your arm will be alright.*

*Now with out any worke, it is hard on a man with a family and everything high but I guess it will come out all right if only we trust in God for everything he will never fail, Man will but God never will. I trust you will have the best of luck and Health till you come home again and I hope things will be a little Brighter then...*

Mother:

Doug did come home again, when his arm finally wore out. By 1922, he was working in the Millers Falls Paper Mill, his dreams of becoming rich and famous as a ball-player had vanished. Lizzie had been right; the only way to get ahead was to be white. Doug lost his chance to reach the heights of baseball, maybe even the Hall of Fame, but that was never to be.

In his biography of Doug, Boston sports writer Mike Foster opined in the book *Opening Fenway Park in Style: The 1912 World Champion Red Sox* (2012, The Society for American Baseball Research, Inc.): "Douglass Smith may have been the first African American ballplayer on the Red Sox – 35 years before Jackie Robinson."

Given that we are celebrating Black History Month now in February, the irony of Doug's situation has resonance. Back then, even being suspected of having African blood was enough to tear this young, apparently white man from a trajectory of fame and fortune, to send him to live out his life as a laborer at the local Paper Mill in Millers Falls.

Even though the color line in baseball has long been broken, racial prejudice continues to raise its ugly head.

We see even now in 2021 that little has changed. What will it take?



**RAMBLER** from page B1

an expensive band-aid solution); the soon-to-be-empty Farren, which includes a beautiful historic building (reportedly in need of repairs); and one block over, the pile of red and gray bricks, surrounded by partial walls and no ceiling, of what was clearly an elegant structure at one time (the old fishing rod factory).

Next is the block-long, bottle-strewn bramble of the late 18th- early 19th century barge canal waystation, bordered by Montague City Road, Masonic Ave, Solar Ave, and Rod Shop Road. This canal-side center of trade included, over time, a store, a pub/inn, a gathering place. A small stream, the Papacomtuckquash, coursed here, and while it's hard to say for sure, perhaps it still does. The school-house-turned-Masonic Temple has been boarded up for years, but hope flourishes since its recent purchase.

Montague City is the heavily traversed southwestern gateway to our town – people come through walking, on bikes, and in cars, big trucks, and motorcycle cavalcades.

Money may be in short supply, and jurisdiction possibly, too. But there's no need, no reason really, for a shortage of vision. We have not a single commemorative marker, no murals, no sculpture, no artist-in-residence at Cabot Station, no history centers or museums, no much-needed live/work space for artists – much less a public restroom, or a place to buy some water, a KIND Bar, and perhaps a map of town as one pedals by.

What we do have is a few bits of land, potentially some buildings, abundant beauty, historical interest, loads of travelers, and at least a few committed residents. We just need to be identified by town leaders as having value, of being worthy of time and energy and a deeper look.

We are at a critical juncture with the impending move of the Farren. Montague City can become more remote, more removed from downtown, and possibly more derelict, or we can become distinctly enlivened and create a mutually beneficial connection to Turners Falls proper. What are we waiting for?



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During this pilot phase (which will expire June 2021) four zones will have access to this application: Zone 1 consists of Greenfield, Montague, Deerfield, Whately, Gill, Leyden and Erving. Zone 2 will consist of Orange, New Salem, Warwick, Wendell and Erving. Zone 3 will consist of Downton, Shelburne Falls (Arms Library) and Charlemont Park & Ride. Zone 4 will consist of Athol Hospital, Athol YMCA and the Athol Market Basket Plaza.

Service there will operate from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Saturday and Sunday.

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This pilot project is funded through MassDOT's Discretionary Grant Program.

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# Aquí se habla español



Esta es la página mensual en español del **Montague Reporter**. Aquí podrá encontrar cuestiones acerca de la comunidad hispana en el área, eventos de interés, curiosidades, y noticias mundiales en español. Si quiere participar o compartir alguna sugerencia, envíenos un correo electrónico a [spanish@montaguereporter.org](mailto:spanish@montaguereporter.org).



• **Food Bank de Massachusetts** sigue ofreciendo alimentos gratis cada tercer miércoles de mes en el parking del Senior Center en Turners Falls cuya dirección es 62 5th Street. La próxima distribución de comida será el miércoles 17 de febrero de 1:30 a 2:30 p.m. Por favor, asegúrense de traer sus propias bolsas, así como mascarillas. Este programa se realiza en alianza con FC-

CMP y Montague COA. Si tienen preguntas, contacten con The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts en el teléfono (413) 247-9738.

• **Dispensa del pueblo.** Reparto de comida y ropa gratis cada jueves de 2:30 a 4 p.m. en La Mariposa en 111 Avenue A. Great Falls Apple Corps ofrece cada sábado comida y ropa de abrigo gratis en 109 Avenue A en Turners de 12 a 3 p.m.

• **Hope and Olive**, el restaurante en Hope St. en Greenfield, ofrece cenas gratis cada domingo de 1 a 3 p.m. Simplemente acérquense al restaurante y díganles para cuántas personas. Hay un número limitado de cenas, así que se basa en orden de llegada.

## Tres nuevos decretos relativos a la inmigración

Por VICTORIA MAÍLLO DE AGUILERA

WASHINGTON, DC – El martes 2 de febrero nos despertamos con la noticia de la firma del presidente Biden de tres nuevos decretos relativos a la inmigración. Estas órdenes ejecutivas intentan remediar las leyes dictadas por el anterior presidente. Especialmente importante es el tercer decreto que va se enfoca en la reunificación de los menores detenidos en la frontera.

Las medidas implementadas suponen un intento de acabar con el tono hostil impuesto por el gobierno anterior, pero siguen siendo muy cautelosas en el tono usado. Los decretos sirven para revertir políticas anteriores que se consideran equivocadas, pero no son leyes nuevas. En cualquier caso, estos decretos apuntan ya el camino que el nuevo presidente va a llevar en materia de inmigración.

La primera orden va dirigida a las familias que han sido separadas en la frontera con México. Biden ha creado un grupo de expertos que estudien como revertir la política de separación de familias iniciada por Trump y que de acuerdo al texto de la nueva orden dice que provocó la separación de miles de familias.

La segunda orden es acerca del programa de asilo en la frontera. La administración de Biden admite en el texto de la orden que la situación creada en estos cuatro años no va a cambiar de la noche a la mañana, pero que están tratando de crear una situación más segura para los aplicantes de asilo.

En una tercera orden, Biden reconoce que los inmigrantes son esenciales para los Estados Unidos y que el gobierno debe dictar medidas para incluirlos e integrarlos

en el país.

La intención de la nueva administración es anular muchas de las normas de política migratoria del anterior gobierno, como, por ejemplo, la Ley de Carga Pública dictada por el presidente Trump que permitía no contar con solicitudes de visado o residencia para personas que hubieran solicitado anteriormente algún tipo de ayuda del gobierno: bonos de comida, servicios de salud gratis, etc. La administración Biden va a evaluar el impacto que esta ley tuvo en la población migrante.

Otra de las medidas que Biden está investigando es la de MPP (Medidas de Protección a Migrantes) por la que los migrantes de asilo debían permanecer en México sin importar el país del que provenían. Esto hizo que los migrantes tuvieran que quedarse durante meses en ciudades de la frontera alguna de ellas conocida por su peligrosidad y sin recursos para poder subsistir.

El actual gobierno está siendo muy cauto en sus nuevas políticas de migración porque no quiere en-

frentarse drásticamente a los republicanos que pueden ver la creación de estas medidas como incremento de la "inmigración ilegal". Biden quiere trabajar en primer lugar con medidas que protejan a los beneficiarios del programa DACA, conocidos como los "soñadores".

Por último, Biden ha ordenado parar la construcción del muro en la frontera de México que era uno de los orgullos de la campaña de Trump y la congelación de un gran número de las deportaciones por un período de 100 días. El Congreso de los Estados Unidos ha recibido también una propuesta de ley para poder regularizar el estado de unos 11 millones de indocumentados que se piensa que viven en Estados Unidos si es que han cumplido con sus deberes como pagar los impuestos.

Biden con estos nuevos decretos deja claro que cree que la inmigración hace más fuerte este país y que esta debe ser regularizada para que pueda ser más accesible y segura, especialmente para aquellos que son más vulnerables.

## OPINIÓN

### Carta abierta al gobierno de Montague

Por VICTORIA MAÍLLO DE AGUILERA

TURNERS FALLS – Escribo esta carta dirigida al gobierno de Montague en relación con el artículo publicado en *The Montague Reporter* en su edición pasada acerca de los diez coches que fueron retirados por la grúa en el aparcamiento de 3rd Street. Lo primero que me impresionó fue leer la cantidad impuesta como multa al dueño de uno de los vehículos retirados: 213.60 dólares pagados al contado. Una cantidad exorbitante en estos momentos de crisis y más aún teniendo en cuenta los ingresos del habitante medio del centro de Turners Falls.

Esa mañana me levanté y desde mi ventana vi un coche de policía aparcado enfrente del aparcamiento de la tercera. Me pareció extraño porque en estos meses de pandemia solamente he visto a la policía pasar por el centro de Turners con un coche similar a una nave espacial con luces por todas partes y la velocidad de la luz. Más tarde llegó la grúa y empezó a cargar los vehículos y fue cuando entendí la razón del coche de policía.

Normalmente yo aparqué mi coche en otro aparcamiento público señalizado con otro espacio de tiempo reservado para limpiar la nieve.

Ese mismo día fui a sacar mi vehículo para realizar mis quehaceres. Acudí a las 11 de la mañana cuando la hora señalada es la 1 de la tarde. Me encontré allí una máquina quitanieves y un camión del DPW de Montague que estaban limpiando el aparcamiento, aunque la mayoría de los vehículos permanecían allí. Me acerqué a uno de los operarios y le pregunté acerca de la hora que aparece en la señal. Me respondió que ellos iban al aparcamiento cuando les convenía, sin tener en cuenta el horario. Cuando regresé con mi coche el aparcamiento estaba a medio limpiar porque la mayoría de los coches no se habían movido debido al cambio de horario.

En el artículo publicado la pasada semana me sorprende también que el periódico no pudo contactar ni con Steve Ellis ni con Tom Bergeron. Este asunto me parece lo suficientemente importante para que esté claro para todos los usuarios de aparcamientos públicos de Montague.

Por último, pero no menos importante, parece que el DPW ha gastado todo su presupuesto en construir el nuevo edificio y no le ha llegado para proporcionar mascarillas a sus operarios, que nos las llevan en público, aunque la orden haya sido dictada por el gobernador de Massachusetts hace meses.



Los inmigrantes estamos aquí para quedarnos. (Creative Commons photo by Flickr user Molly Adams)

## Última hora: Resultados lecciones en Ecuador

Por VICTORIA MAÍLLO DE AGUILERA

QUITO – El domingo pasado se celebraron elecciones en Ecuador. A la hora de escribir estas líneas no se habían escrutado el 100% de los votos, pero ya se apuntaba una sorpresa: Yaku Pérez Guartambel, el candidato indígena del partido Movimiento de Unidad Plurinacional Pachakutik, ha conseguido el 20% de los votos in haber recibido todavía los resultados de los votos de la Amazonía que posiblemente vayan para él.

Así pues, Yaku se sitúa inmediatamente después de Andrés Arauz, el candidato del exresidente Correa que

no ha podido presentarse a las elecciones por causas pendiente de corrupción. Pérez Guartambel ha sobrepasado a Guillermo Lasso que era el favorito en las encuestas. Yaku basó su campaña en la defensa del agua, la ecología y el movimiento indígena.

Yaku dio una rueda de prensa el domingo por la noche en la que denunció un posible ataque informático a la hora del recuento de votos. Junto con otros líderes de su partido decidieron pasar la noche de vigilia delante de la sede del CNE para proteger el conteo de votos.

La segunda vuelta se celebrará el próximo 11 de abril.

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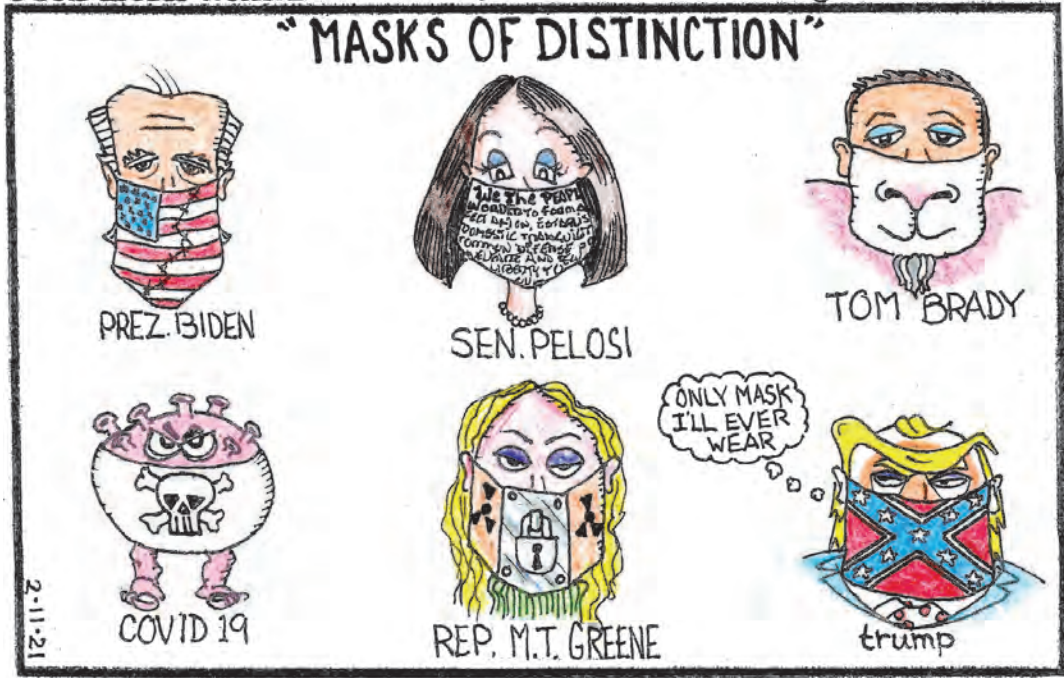
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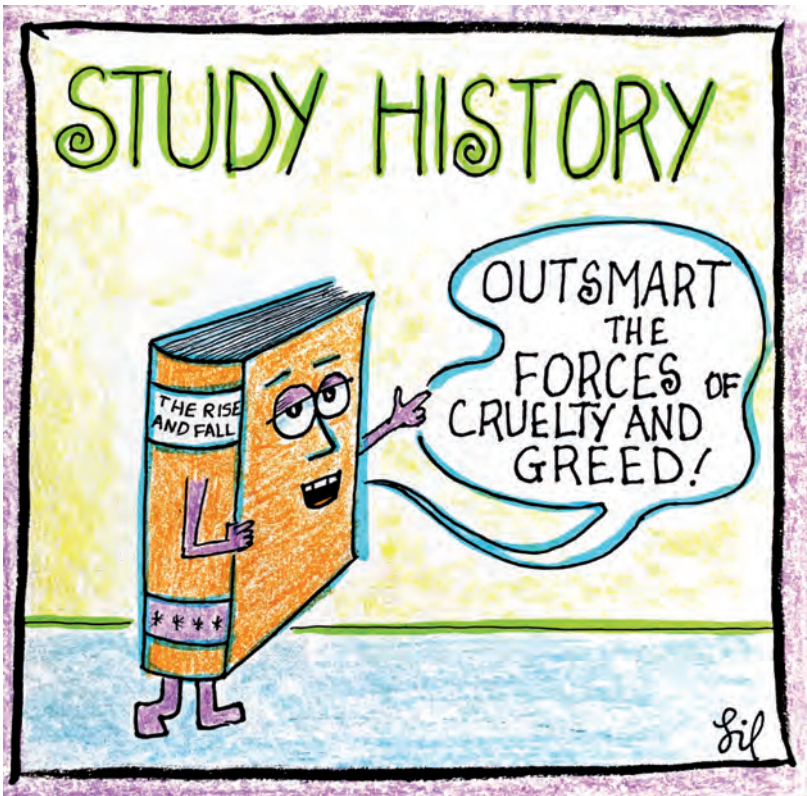
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# NOTES FROM THE HEARTFELT CAFE

## BY TROUBLE MANDESON

**GREENFIELD** – This month I've been musing on the ways in which cooks operate. From casual kitchen creators to high-class chefs, each has a system that works for them. Personally, I'm as careless and clumsy in the kitchen as I am in the rest of my life. I'm forgetful, I drop things, I read partway through the directions and then do it my own way and substitute ingredients once I start to mix a recipe – and then realize I'm out of (insert item here).

I'm well aware of a practice known as *mise en place* ("meez ahn

plahs"), which loosely translates to "putting in place." Many chefs simply call it *mise*. My chef friend tells me it's "a state of mind" that can be used everywhere we go. It directs one to take out, weigh, measure, and have at the ready all ingredients of a recipe before beginning to cook.

While *mise* won't prevent you from burning the roast or deflating a soufflé, it will help to make you a better cook by changing the way you prepare a meal from inception to cleanup. Another chef pal says it's her favorite concept, and

that calmly and lovingly preparing your ingredients and having them all lined up prior to turning on the flame imparts an ease to the cooking, and an ability to focus on what is happening on the stove.

Let's say you are making a stir fry with chicken and broccoli. You'd want to have your chicken defrosted and chopped into bite-sized pieces; broccoli, onions, and garlic chopped or minced; soy sauce, spices, and finishing sauces carefully measured and set aside, ready to mix in at the appropriate time.

In theory it sounds great, a simple way to make sure nothing is missing, everything is accurately measured, and so on. And yet, for me, I find it too rigid and takes away some of the spontaneous joy I find in discovering I have no eggs after I've already put butter and sugar in the mixer – and simply substituting them with applesauce or cooked squash or yogurt. No biggie.

*Mise* doesn't just cover the process of readying to cook, but it includes the stores of vegetables in the larder and the meat in the fridge, all in its place ready to use – otherwise, you might store your shoes in the fridge and your dairy in the closet. Even though I prefer to bake without careful planning, by having a fully stocked spice cabinet and a pantry full of ingredients, I have been practicing *mise* in my kitchen for years.

*Mise* also includes setting up the pans you will use, the knives and other tools necessary for the job, and even the plates you'll serve the food on. In addition, you'll need to know who you are cooking for, how many will be eating, and what time the meal should be served.

There are five steps to *mise en*

### SPICED UP GINGER COOKIES

- 2 cups flour
- 1 tablespoon ground ginger
- 2 teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground cardamom
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 2/3 cup vegetable oil
- 1 egg
- ¼ cup molasses
- ½ cup chopped candied ginger
- ¼ cup coarse sugar for rolling

In a medium bowl whisk together flour, spices, baking soda, and salt. In a large bowl, beat together sugar and vegetable oil.

Add in egg and molasses and beat until smooth. Stir these wet ingredients into the flour mixture until well combined.

Add in candied ginger. Shape dough into 1" balls, roll in coarse sugar and place on the baking sheet. Flatten slightly with the bottom of a glass. Bake for 7 to 8 minutes until they are very lightly browned.

**Makes about three dozen.**

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.



Ingredients prepared for a recipe in the author's kitchen using *mise en place*.

*place*: 1) read the entire recipe through; 2) prepare your workspace; 3) prepare your equipment and make sure it's clean and ready to use; 4) gather and pre-measure ingredients; 5) prepare ingredients and place in bowls or ramekins.

Although it can seem like a waste of time to measure and put in bowls what you could measure and add to the pot, it is so convenient to have your ingredients and tools ready to use at your fingertips. Imagine starting to cook and realizing you've forgotten an ingredient or used salt instead of sugar. It does happen. Employing *mise en place* in your

kitchen can transform your cooking experience into one that is consistent, coordinated, and efficient.

Since I didn't focus on a particular food this month, I'm including a recipe for Spiced Up Ginger Cookie. Try making them using *mise en place* in your kitchen!

*Trouble Mandeson is a west coast transplant who lives with wife and cat in Greenfield. She is a talker, writer, artist and all around mensch. Find her at troublemandesoncopyediting.com for your grant writing and copy editing needs.*

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