

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 19 – NO. 18

also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

\$1

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

MARCH 11, 2021

ERVING SELECTBOARD

Holst In As Permanent Police Chief

By KATIE NOLAN

On Monday night, the Erving selectboard appointed acting police chief Robert Holst as the new chief. Selectboard chair Jacob Smith recounted the “very public” hiring process, which included the development of a position profile, wide advertisement, a review of candidates by the preliminary screening committee, and public interviews on March 3 of finalists David Rice and Robert Holst.

“Both candidates have strengths, and areas of improvement,” Smith said. However, he said Holst had “clearly developed responses” during the interview, and showed his understanding of the community.

Selectboard member William Bembury described Holst’s background as a veteran, his tenure as acting chief, his education, and his extensive training as the reasons he selected him. Bembury said that as acting chief, Holst “has grown, and there is room for growth.”

see **ERVING** page A6

ANALYSIS

Vaccine Rollout: Frustration and Meditation

By JEFF SINGLETON

TURNERS FALLS – “The information from the state certainly changes every week, if not every day. When [Montague town administrator] Steve Ellis and I talked earlier today, he asked me to assure you that there would be a reliable and efficient system, and I cannot do that.”

So reported Linda Dunlavy, executive director of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG), at Monday night’s meeting of the Montague selectboard. Dunlavy was at the meeting to untangle the confusion surrounding the latest chapter in the ever-evolving regional rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine. FRCOG has established four vaccination sites in

different parts of the county, and Monday was the day for the public to register for doses at a new venue at the Franklin County Technical School.

After numerous plans, fits, and starts – including a seemingly aborted plan for a clinic in the Montague town hall basement – the Tech School site was ready to go, with registration on Monday for clinics on this Friday the 12th and Saturday the 13th.

But late last Friday, March 5, FRCOG found out from the state that it would be receiving far fewer doses than expected, that nearly half of those would need to be administered at a new clinic at the Mahar Regional School in Orange, and at least 75% of the appointments had to be listed on the state website for potential access

see **ROLLOUT** page A6

Timeless Wonder: A Mural to Puzzle Over

By LEE WICKS

MONTAGUE CENTER – Montague artist Kieta Grace Lambert has created a giant mural she calls *The Mothership*. The hand-cut

collage measures 8½ by 4½ feet – or 102 by 54 inches – and is made entirely of repurposed and recyclable materials. Lambert describes it as a “massive, super-detailed eyespy mural, inspired by nature and

timeless wonder.”

Lambert is a master of color, texture, and juxtaposition. Looking at the mural closely you will find a tiny insect, a larger-than-life sized flower, bunnies, tropical trees, a tiger, pieces of sky. Stand back and you’re hit with swirling color that both resembles our planet’s complexity from a great distance, or perhaps the entire solar system.

“I never intended it to grow this big,” explains Lambert. “I began making the *Mothership* mural in 2013 as a way to have fun and clear my mind during a time of upheaval and uncertainty in my life. I needed a way to put my thoughts and worries aside by focusing on creating something beautiful out of nothing.”

After four years of work, the mural began to hang over the edges of its table, and a friend helped Lambert painstakingly transfer the collage onto a larger surface.

“Most artists can relate to the timeless, meditative state induced during the creative process,”

see **PUZZLE** page A8

Take What You Need, Leave What You Can



The new community fridge in Shelburne Falls offers free food for anyone who needs it.

By LILY REAVIS

SHELBURNE FALLS – As the founder and director of Hart Farm in Conway, Anna Meyer works to educate and feed the surrounding area each growth and harvest season, which spans from early spring through fall. In the off-season, though, her creativity and drive to support local communities runs rampant. This year,

that drive resulted in the founding of the Shelburne Falls Community Fridge, which is consistently stocked with free food and is open 24/7 outside of the village’s Keystone Market.

Meyer came up with the idea of a local community fridge in December 2020 after noticing a lack of accessible and nonjudgmental food support in the area. She set

see **FRIDGE** page A4

High PFAS Levels Found In Swift River School Water; State to Test Wendell Wells

By SARAH ROBERTSON

NEW SALEM / WENDELL – Recent tests of tap water at Swift River School found high levels of a toxic class of chemicals known as PFAS, prompting the school to notify parents last month and begin investigating water treatment options. The source of the contamination is unknown, but a state program to test private wells in Wendell may help determine the extent of the problem.

Since November, water tests have shown PFAS levels at the school are more than double the

safe drinking water standard of 20 parts per trillion (ppt) established by a Massachusetts law last year. The average contaminant level detected at Swift River School so far is 49.9 ppt. The school continues to monitor the water on a monthly basis in accordance with state Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) guidelines.

“Even with our current levels of PFAS, our water is potable and considered safe for most people,” Swift River School principal Kelley Sullivan and water operator Larry

see **WELLS** page A5



Recent test results appear to exceed a new statewide limit for the manmade chemicals.

G-M SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Schools Required to Reopen Fully

By MIKE JACKSON

GILL-MONTAGUE – The state has mandated that all kindergarten through grade 5 students be allowed back into school full-time starting April 5, and the next three grades by April 28. “There’s no date set for high school yet,” superintendent Brian Beck reported to the school committee Tuesday night.

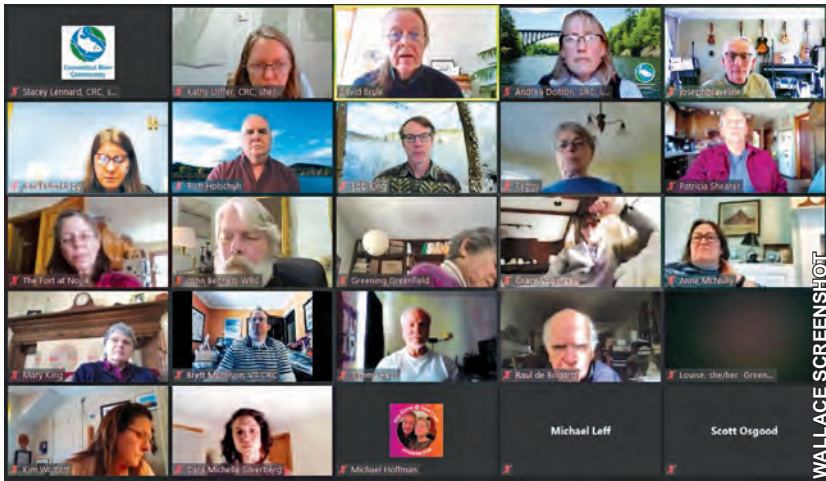
The Pandemic Response Advisory Committee was scheduled to meet Wednesday to begin planning for the new deadlines. Families will

have the option to keep students learning from home, but Beck said he discouraged it except in cases of serious health concerns. “We want to get back to school as normal as possible,” he said.

Chair Jane Oakes read a letter from Gill member Valeria “Timmie” Smith tendering her resignation from the committee. Smith, whose term was due to end in May, told the *Reporter* she was stepping down early for personal reasons.

Of the three members elected in see **GMRSD** page A3

Assessing Dams’ Impacts On ‘Traditional Properties’



Between 40 and 50 people joined the morning Zoom discussion.

By LILY WALLACE

GREENFIELD – Individuals from across the Connecticut River watershed gathered via Zoom on Wednesday morning for a virtual discussion of the possible impacts of hydropower relicensing in the area. The panel, hosted by the Connecticut River Conservancy, was a follow-up to the organization’s January presentations on hydropower relicensing aimed at helping residents learn more about their rivers.

The “coffee hour” series focuses on five hydroelectric project licenses in the final steps of renewal, including the Turners Falls Dam and Northfield Mountain pumped-storage generator.

The panel, led by river stewards Andrea Donlon and Kathy Urffer, featured Rich Holschuh, director of the Atowi Project; David Brule and Joe Graveline of the Nolumbeka Project; and Janel Nockleby from the Massachusetts Department see **RIVER** page A6



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The Montague Reporter

"The Voice of the Villages"

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Interference

It was with great relief that we heard the news on Wednesday that an Iowa jury had voted to acquit Andrea Sahouri, a *Des Moines Register* reporter arrested in May 2020 while covering an anti-police violence protest in her city.

Despite identifying herself as a member of the press to police, Sahouri was pepper-sprayed, cuffed, and charged with failure to disperse and interference with official acts. She refused a plea bargain and risked 30 days in jail, but we feel she made a brave and correct choice in taking it to trial.

Hers was not an isolated case. According to the US Freedom Press Tracker, 11 journalists were arrested in this country in 2018, and nine in 2019. In 2020, the count was 128. While the spike reflects a remarkable wave of confrontational protest reporters needed to cover, it also represents an abandonment of civil norms by frontline law enforcement and, in many cases, by prosecutors.

Sahouri's case drew wide attention and support, partly because the delineation of her role was so clear – she was on the clock, after all, as payroll employee of a legacy print daily paper that traces its roots to the mid-19th century. Unfortunately, less and less of our news is produced that way. A substantial amount of vital coverage is now produced by freelancers, who don't

necessarily have a boss on any given work day willing to post bail, or testify at trial.

The implication of the free press system that America congratulates itself for is that there is no truly legitimate press badge – any given outlet can issue credentials in an effort to vouch for its minions, but that comes down to one's access to layout software and a working laminator. Nobody wants the government to keep a list of approved publications; that's a short and slippery slope toward state-controlled media.

No person or institution is free of bias, and these days most people carry around the means of filing and publishing news reports in their pants pocket. The line between real news and fake is subjective. So how is a cop tasked with clearing a restive mob off a city block expected to tell a real reporter like Sahouri from some snotty activist livestreamer?

Well, they can't – and they shouldn't. When it comes down to it, freedom of the press is just part of freedom of assembly. The public has a right to bear witness to conflict, and the police have power to detain people. Journalists, therefore, are going to keep getting arrested.

In fact, the privilege to walk away while others were being swept up may have been preventing us from covering protest properly all along...

Tears, Times Five

In the mid-1950s, I witnessed my mom's tears of relief that her five children were able to be vaccinated against polio, a disease that had shattered the world for decades. In the 1970s, my tears were of joy that smallpox had been eradicated from every nook and cranny of the planet – and even wrote *Time* magazine when they got the year wrong.

More recently my tears have been of bitterness and frustration as polio was nearly eradicated worldwide but some people, fed propaganda about the vaccine's safety and real purpose, murdered resolute health professionals, causing new outbreaks and making eradication impossible for now.

Today, March 10, 2021, my tears, like my mom's nearly 70 years ago, are of great relief as I received my second vaccine shot. Tears of thankfulness for the scientists who developed it, the governments and others that paid for it, the volun-

teers who were willing to test it on themselves, the international infectious disease experts who combated vicious misinformation, the trucks that delivered it, the staff and volunteers who administered it, the Tylenol for my sore arm.

I also know the pain such public sharing can cause some people who have struggled unsuccessfully to be vaccinated or are not yet eligible, people for whom the vaccine came too late as friends and family members died of COVID-19. My tears for them are real.

But still I share... to express gratitude, to encourage others to get vaccinated when they can, to spread hope that the end of this pandemic is within our grasp.

And to let my 6-year-old granddaughter, who used to spend three days a week with me, know she will soon be in my house and arms again.

Maggie Sadoway
Turners Falls



Letters to the Editors

Rude Flag Not the Gun Club's

A guest editorial appeared in the March 4 edition of the *Montague Reporter* with an opening sentence that read, "Just because we have the right to do something doesn't mean it's the right thing to do."

It's too bad the authors of that editorial didn't follow their own advice because parts of their editorial can be construed as libelous and slanderous! The authors assert that an odious flag flies at the entrance to the "Rod and Gun Club" on Turners Falls Road. Next, they wrote, "It may belong to the club members, or it may belong to the people who live in the house next to the entrance."

As members of the Millers Falls Rod and Gun Club, we want to assure the authors, Diane and Richard Andersen, that the flag they cite in their editorial *is not* at the entrance to the Rod and Gun Club, and *does not belong* to the members of the club!

If anyone stops and looks, it is obvious that the aforementioned flag is clearly well into the yard of the home north of the driveway which leads to the Rod and Gun Club, a driveway that we share with a different neighbor's house who lives south of the driveway.

Our club fosters family activities, and we sponsor many local groups and charities. In the past we have supported Relay for Life teams, the Franklin County Sheriff's Dog Shelter, the Franklin County Technical School's Alumni events, and many girls' and boys' sport teams.

Besides insinuating that the flag in question could belong to Rod and Gun Club members, the authors drew a parallel between that flag's colors and the Confederate flag and white supremacy. If someone didn't realize that the "Biden" flag isn't on Rod and Gun Club property, the Andersens' editorial might make people think that we are somehow connected to a white supremacy group. Nothing could be farther from the truth!

The only flags we fly on our club's flagpole are "Old Glory" and the "POW/MIA" flag in honor of our nation's veterans.

The Andersens titled their editorial, "Who Are We? Who Do We Want to Be?" I would suggest that the authors might want to take a closer look at the flag that is at the center of their editorial, at where it is located, then come talk to our membership. An apology is in order.

Paul Hardy, President
The Millers Falls Rod and Gun Club

CORRECTION & CLARIFICATION:

In our March 4 edition, the captions and photo credits for two pictures on Page B4 were inadvertently switched during layout – our columnist, Trish Crapo, took the larger photo of a finished mural by artist Craig Roach on the side of a New Hampshire brewery, while Roach himself submitted the smaller photo of a crew working on a different mural in 2017. Sorry to both of them, and to our readers; *butterfingers!* And about this flag thing... We totally sympathize with the Rod & Gun for having their club's good name dragged into a controversy they want nothing to do with. One reader reached out to suggest we shouldn't be calling all reader-submitted op-eds "guest editorials" in the first place, which is good food for thought. We'll be more careful about it.

Sorry

We apologize for any inconvenience or offense we may have caused by identifying the site flying the "FUCK BIDEN" flag as belonging to the Montague Rod and Gun Club.

The flag flies on a plot of land adjacent to the club entrance; it belongs to a neighbor of the club.

Richard Andersen
Diane Lyn Andersen
Montague Center

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By NINA ROSSI

The second Sunday in March is when **Daylight Savings Time begins**. We “spring forward” one hour on Sunday, March 14 at 2 a.m. Be sure to set your clocks ahead by one hour before going to bed on Saturday night.

Republic Services has asked the town of Montague to remind residents who have **curbside pickup of trash and recycling** that they should put their trash and recycling out the night before their regular pickup day, because collection starts early in the morning. This will help in not having any missed stops.

LifePath is committed to helping seniors and those with disabilities who want a COVID-19 vaccine to access one. If you do not have access to the internet, need assistance with registering, need transportation to a vaccination site, or are unable to leave your home, call the **Life-Path Vaccination Help Voicemail line** at (413) 829-9285.

LifePath’s mission is to help older people, people with disabilities, and caregivers stay independent.

A free virtual town hall about the **needs of youth and children in Franklin County** is being held this Friday, March 12 from 10 a.m. to noon. Join members of the Opioid Task Force’s Education and Prevention Committee as they host this event, the third annual “Building a Resilient Community: A Community Response to Break the Cycle of Trauma: A Virtual Town Hall about the Needs of Children & Youth in Franklin County and the North Quabbin Region.”

The event will feature voices of individuals and interactive small group sessions, as well as a talk by First Justice Beth A. Crawford of the Franklin County Family Drug Court.

Information from the community gathered at the event will be used to create a Community Statement about the importance of build-

ing resilient communities through strengthening the resilience of children, youth, and families.

Looking for a housing lifeline? The Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) and Emergency Rental and Mortgage Assistance (ERMA) programs may provide income-eligible households with up to **\$10,000 to pay overdue or future rent**, or mortgage costs.

You can find out about these resources on March 18 at 2 p.m. on Zoom. The program is managed locally by the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority (FCRHRA). Featured speakers from the FCRHRA are Housing Consumer Education Center director Amanda Watson, RAFT administrator April Page, and housing navigator Sonia Cruz.

Find links to register at opioidtaskforce.org, or email info@opioidtaskforce.org.

Village Neighbors has put out another newsletter full of resources for seniors and others living in Leverett, New Salem, Shutesbury, and Wendell. Go to www.villageneighbors.org to read a copy and to find out about their free membership services, including transportation, classes, repair help, activities, and other assistance for residents ages 60 and up in member towns.

The **Montague Dems** will be holding a virtual caucus at 6:30 p.m. on March 23 in order to elect Democratic candidates in the upcoming annual town elections, which will be held on May 18. If you are a registered Democrat interested in an endorsement by the Montague Dems or would like an invitation to attend the virtual meeting, send a letter of interest to the chair of the town committee, Mark Wisniewski, at mpwisniewski@gmail.com.

The Hidden Landscape Project represents the joined efforts of professional, Native, and antiquarian researchers who have generously

volunteered to combine their expertise into a chronicle of research, a series of video stories that investigate the archaeological history and the modern legacy of the Northeastern Native civilization.

Stories about “lost races” are usually labeled “Fantastic Archaeology” and quickly dismissed, but a surprising new discovery along an ancient beach terrace of the Champlain Sea has introduced an unknown chapter of the Native history of Ice Age America. This tiny artifact suggests that an early and sophisticated culture once existed in the Northeast that anthropologists are just beginning to recognize.

There will be two more film and discussion sessions in the series. The first, this Saturday, March 13, features “The New Antiquarians” with guest panelist Evan Pritchard, director of the Center for Algonquin Studies. On Saturday, March 20, “The Devil’s Footstep” with Tim Mentz, former Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for the Standing Rock Reservation, will be shown.

Register and get links at nolumbekaproject.org.

MassDOT announces the installation of **new milepost-based signs** for all exits on Interstate 91, from the Vermont border to the Connecticut border. The MassDOT Statewide Exit Renumbering Project is converting all exit numbers to milepost-based signs on roadways, per Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) requirements. Previous to this project, interstates and major roadways in Massachusetts have always utilized a sequential exit numbering method.

For information on the installations, visit newmassexits.com/#it-schedule. If needed, a GIS shapefile with the specific numbering information is available at massdot.maps.arcgis.com.

For more information on traffic conditions, travelers are encouraged to dial 511 before heading out onto the roadways and select a route to hear real-time conditions.

Another website, www.mass511.com, provides real-time traffic and incident advisory information and access to traffic cameras, and users can subscribe to text and email alerts for traffic conditions.

You are also invited to follow MassDOT on Twitter @MassDOT to receive regular updates on road and traffic conditions, or download

their mobile app GoTime to view real-time traffic conditions before setting out on the road.

If any of you knows a young person in grades 8 through 12 or their equivalent, who is working in ways of peace such as involvement in social and environmental justice, Black Lives Matter, anti-bullying, anti-war, etc. issues and who lives or attends school in Franklin County, perhaps you would consider nominating them for a **Peacemaker’s Award**.

Nomination forms are available at local schools, or email Marcia Miller at marcia.miller65@gmail.com with questions or to suggest nominees. This is a terrific and sometimes unexpected way to acknowledge and appreciate young people. Helping and aiding others during the pandemic this past year may qualify them for an award. Groups of youth are also considered.

There will be a **seed starting workshop** online this Sunday, March 14 at 3 p.m. thanks to the folks at the Leverett Library. Learn about the skills and equipment you need to start seeds at home. Registration by emailing leverett@cw-mars.org for links to attend.

Meadowbrook Apartments in Florence seeks **volunteer teaching artists** to lead workshops with youth during the summer of 2021. Artists in all mediums are welcome to apply.

Contact Brielle Ruth at bruth@poahcommunities.com or (413) 584-8404 with your workshop idea and brief biography. Payments may be available for artists, and art supplies can be obtained by Meadowbrook for the workshops.

Looking for workers? Registration for the virtual GCC **Job Generation Fair** on April 1 is open until March 30! Employers can create their own appointment schedule anytime between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. on the day of the event.

To register and participate, employers will need to use a (free) Handshake Employer Account, which is connected to Greenfield Community College. To learn more about the GCC Job Generation Fair and/or register, please contact Career Services coordinator Shannon Doran at careerservices@gcc.mass.edu.

Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

GMRSD from page A1

2018, none are planning to run again. Nomination papers are due by the end of the month.

The committee discussed meeting in person again. “No non-essential personnel shall be in the buildings,” said Oakes, quoting state guidance on reopening. “The school committee really has a different role than the staff.” She noted that meetings held over Zoom have been better attended than any she could remember from before.

“I just got my first injection yesterday,” Gill member Bill Tomb shared. He suggested holding meetings in the high school auditorium, but the consensus was that holding properly socially distanced meetings indoors would create work for staff and dampen public attendance.

The committee unanimously approved an agreement with the teachers’ union, reached prior to the meeting, about the reopening.

MCAS testing will be delayed until May for grades 3 through 8, and it is still unclear if or when it will take place at the high school level.

Beck reported that the final improvement to school buildings’ air exchange – an energy recovery ventilator affecting four rooms at Hillcrest Elementary – had finally been installed, “although the weather’s nice now, so everyone’s going to

want to have their windows open anyway.”

The district will host a coop tennis program with Franklin County Technical School (FCTS) this spring, allowing boys’ and girls’ teams to play.

Business manager Joanne Blier introduced newly hired food service director Justin McArdle to the committee, and McArdle said he was already making preparations for meal delivery to homes during the April vacation. The district approved a \$4,000 donation for the meals program from Dean’s Beans – the fourth check the company has cut during the pandemic – and another of \$500 from an anonymous community member.

The committee approved a \$21,597,639 general fund budget for FY’22, pulling \$150,000 each from excess & deficiency and the transportation reimbursement account.

Blier reported that the planning committee for a six-town school district received another \$77,000 grant, which must be spent before July.

Blier and district treasurer Cynthia Caporaso took advantage of the teleconference format to premiere an experimental sound collaboration incorporating echo, digital artifacts, and institutional melancholy. The piece began 16 minutes into the meeting, which be viewed on the GMRSD YouTube channel.

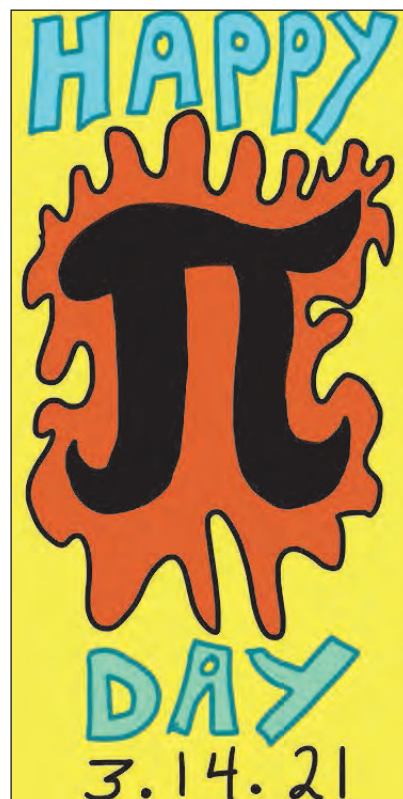
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FRIDGE from page A1

to work making the dream a reality, unsure of the obstacles that would lie in her way regarding funding, licensure, and location.

Luckily, Meyer was quick to account for the challenges of such a project. She met with community leaders and organizers, applied for a food permit through the town of Shelburne, and partnered with Common Good, a local nonprofit, to make sure the fridge was installed quickly.

After just three months of planning, the Shelburne Falls fridge was installed last Friday, March 5.

“It’s a mutual aid project,” Meyer said, “so it’s not necessarily a charity. It’s for the people, by the people.”

While there are guidelines for individuals using the fridge – no alcohol, sanitize the area before and after use, only take what you need – it is operated on an honor system. Anyone in the community is welcome to give or take food at any time, no questions asked.

The fridge’s accessibility is important to Meyer and others working on the project. Although Franklin County is relatively rich with food banks and soup kitchens, this fridge offers an opportunity to address food shortages without the added anxiety of having to prove need.

In order to get the fridge set up, Meyer had to apply for a food permit through the village of Shelburne Falls. “I had to navigate the FRCOG [Franklin Regional Council of Governments] and board of health, and I went to a lot of community Zoom meetings,” she explained. “I learned about a lot of other community supports that are out there and what’s going on, but it was still enlightening to know that there is definitely a need for



The guidelines posted on the new community fridge call for fruits and vegetables, non-expired dairy products, pre-packaged shelf-stable foods, and sanitary items, and list rules for labeling prepared meals. Raw meat, homemade or open meals, and leftovers are prohibited. Online forms for volunteering or donating will be made available via the Common Good website at www.commongood.earth.

this kind of mutual aid project in our communities.”

Meyer’s involvement in the legal side of the operation assisted greatly in getting the fridge set up in a short time period. After only a few months of planning, she asked Common Good, the nonprofit, if they would be willing to partner with her on the project. Both Meyer and Common Good are hoping to eventually expand into other nearby areas.

“By the time Anna had come to us with the project,” said Common Good communications director Linda Black, “she had pretty much already done that groundwork, being in touch with the board of health and securing the first location and those sort of logistical things.”

Black estimated that Meyer approached Common Good with a budget of \$800 to account for the purchase of the fridge and shelter

materials. On top of that, Common Good is likely to pay the electricity bill for Keystone Market, which has agreed to host the fridge on their property using their outdoor electrical outlets.

Without Meyer’s original vision, Black said that the local organizing community may not have thought about introducing a community fridge to Shelburne Falls. “[Meyer] is one of those people who has that sort of magic quality of having a great idea and a creative vision, and then actually being able to take the steps to carry it out,” Black said. “She definitely has that energy, where she’s excited about the idea, and anybody around her when she’s talking about it is going to be excited about the idea and want to help.”

One of the project’s main goals is to reduce anxiety around food insecurity in the area. According

to Meyer and Black, it can be difficult for struggling families to visit food banks and soup kitchens, as they may feel that others are more in need, or that their own situation is undeserving.

“Everybody deserves to be treated with dignity. Everybody deserves to have access to fresh food,” Black said. “In the current system that we live in, there can be a lot of unconscious judgment on food security. One of the beautiful things about the community fridge is that anyone can use it – anyone can be there, whether they’re stocking it or they’re accessing it to get food. It’s such a beautiful neighbor-helping-neighbor way of helping to alleviate food insecurity and hunger.”

Black and Meyer agree that they would like to extend the project into nearby communities. “Honestly, it would be our goal to have one in every community in Franklin County, because it really does provide an incredible service,” Black said.

For this project, the fridges will be placed in frequented local areas which are accessible without public transportation. On top of that, the unlocked 24/7 vision of the community fridges allows locals to access food on their own schedule and with less judgment.

“It’s definitely more accessible, and it’s more flexible for people who need the food,” Meyer said. “There are so many food distribution sites in Franklin County, and I think that we’re kind of a guiding light amongst the counties in Massachusetts.”

“It would be cool if they were everywhere, honestly,” Meyer said. “Even in Montague – I’m sure there’s a location, and a need, and a will there.”

OP-ED

Fin Com Blocks Police Budget Discussion

By JEFF SINGLETON

TURNERS FALLS – I would like to begin this statement by applauding the Montague Finance Committee’s role at the recent special town meeting on February 25.

As a former member and chair of the Fin Com, I have been openly critical of the committee’s failure to address warrant articles that come before town meeting which they have investigated and voted on. The Fin Com is essentially the Ways and Means committee of town meeting, appointed by town meeting moderator. It is there to investigate complex financial articles, hold hearings, and make recommendations to assist town meeting members who do not have the time to research the complexities.

But in recent years the Fin Com has often been silent, while the town officials who originally requested an article – and their critics on town meeting floor – totally dominate the conversation. This is understandable to a degree, but it has become extremely unbalanced due to the silence of the committee. There are many new members on town meeting who may not even know why we have a Finance Committee.

Last Thursday night at the special town meeting, this dynamic seemed to change. Fin Com members spoke to many of the articles,

and gave insight into why they as individuals and the committee endorsed them. Many of their responses clarified the small but important details about major financial commitments. This was particularly important during the discussion of the purchase of the Pioneer Aviation property by the airport – a purchase which involves a very large amount of borrowing by the town, complex bonding scenarios, and a good deal of risk.

We really needed the Fin Com in this situation, and they came through.

Unfortunately, this was in very sharp contrast to the hearing on next year’s police department budget, which took place the previous night.

As town meeting members may recall, last June during the Black Lives Matter protests, a sharply divided town meeting voted to level-fund the police budget, which amounted to a budget cut, and contradicted the unanimous recommendation of the Finance Committee. No one on the Fin Com defended its recommendation, and at least two members then changed their votes without explaining why.

The ostensible purpose of the police budget cut, which I opposed, was, in part, to “send a message” that the town reconsider how it funds public safety, not sending armed police into situations that

could be handled in other ways. The same issue was being raised by the national Black Lives Matter movement. As the vote suggested, this has significant budgetary implications.

Although I felt the BLM supporters raised legitimate questions that need to be addressed, the budget cut seemed “on the fly,” without any effort to examine the current level of police staffing, or what other agencies in the town or region could perform these functions.

I believe that supporters of the Black Lives Matter movement have a responsibility to do their homework and come up with some sort of concrete budget proposal, or at least a process for debating one, as opposed to a moralistic attack on policing at town meeting. We have an extensive budget process in our community for town meeting members to get involved in.

But over the past six months the Finance Committee, and particularly its chair, has consistently rejected my suggestion that the committee at least consider *how* we can have a town-wide conversation of the budgetary issues raised last spring.

The two police review committees formed last fall were very clearly not charged with evaluating budget questions, due to time constraints and perhaps because we already have a budget process.

I agree with that decision. Perhaps the Fin Com does not but, typically, we never heard from them as far as I know, because they took the whole problem off their radar screen.

This all came to a head on February 24 when, after I sent an email to the Fin Com saying I wanted to make a statement on the issue during a police budget hearing, the Fin Com chair responded by essentially prohibiting the public from speaking at the meeting, and not leaving any time for the committee itself to consider the issue.

The chair then added insult to injury by sternly chiding the police chief for not coming forward at the meeting with a plan to reorganize police services in response to last spring’s town meeting vote.

I hope all town meeting members – however you may feel about the substance of the issue – would be appalled by a Fin Com that ignores a key budget question and engages in blatantly repressive behavior to thwart public discussion. If the committee does not feel it has the time or capacity for that discussion, it should at least work with others to create a different venue, rather than bushwhacking the police chief at a budget meeting.

Jeff Singleton is a frequent news reporter for this newspaper. The views expressed here are his own.

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WELLS from page A1

Ramsdell told the *Reporter* in a written statement. “We are curious to see what levels we will test at in the future, and our hope is that numbers will go down.”

While school officials call the water “potable,” MassDEP director of public affairs Edmund Coletta hesitated to make the same claim. He said “sensitive subgroups” like pregnant or nursing women, infants, and those with compromised immune systems are advised not to consume or cook with water above 20 ppt. Anyone in this at-risk group using the school building has been advised to supply their own drinking water bottles until further notice.

“Following the receipt of the results, MassDEP is conducting a preliminary investigation, but has not conducted any additional sampling at this time,” Coletta told the *Reporter*.

A map on the MassDEP website shows that Swift River School is one of 39 public water systems in Massachusetts to discover PFAS levels greater than 20 ppt, the only one in Franklin County to detect excessive levels so far. MassDEP, in partnership with UMass, is in the midst of a widespread, free water testing program to find places where the PFAS have affected groundwater supplies.

“It’s a newly emerging contaminant,” Wendell board of health agent Elizabeth Swedsberg said during a meeting of the board of health on Monday. “Not that this hasn’t been around for a while. They’re still determining what the effects are.”

The term PFAS generally refers to a class of thousands of per- and polyfluoroalkyl chemicals characterized on the molecular level by fluorinated carbon chains. The most famous is polytetrafluoroethylene, sold under the brand name Teflon. Valued for their hydrophobic qualities, PFAS were manufactured in the United States since the 1940s by companies including 3M and DuPont and used in a wide range of industrial and consumer applications. Many are now banned in the US, but they persist in the environment.

Massachusetts adopted drinking water standards for the sum of six PFAS chemical variants on October 2, 2020, and environmental groups such as the Conservation Law Foundation and Community Action Works continue to lobby for regulation as low as 1 ppt.

“PFAS include presumed carcinogens and have been linked to a variety of severe health problems, including learning disorders in infants and children, fertility and pregnancy issues, and impaired liver, thyroid, pancreatic, and immune function,” Erica Kyzmir-McKeon, a staff attorney with the Conservation Law Foundation of Massachusetts, told the *Reporter*.

“By adopting the 20 ppt drinking water standard, MassDEP determined that it is not safe to drink water with PFAS levels above this limit.”

Underground Toxins

In a meeting with MassDEP officials last Friday, which was not posted publicly, fire chief Joe Cuneo, a quorum of the board of health, and UMass consultants talked about possible sources of PFAS contamination in town. The locals mentioned a landfill off Route 2 where construction crews dumped refuse from Boston’s Big Dig project in the 1980s.

“People in Wendell are very environmentally aware. They’re very concerned about contaminants of any kind,” board of health chair Barbara Craddock said at Monday’s meeting.

“I believe in science, but sometimes we start using these things before it’s researched enough,” she added, drawing parallels to what she saw as the overzealous use of nuclear energy in the past.

Potential sources of PFAS contamination include landfills, incinerators, hazardous waste sites, septic systems, or anywhere that processed sewage sludge, or biosolids, have been applied to land. Firefighting foam has been another potent source of PFAS, contaminating a water source near the Barnes Air National Guard Base in Westfield with some of the highest PFAS levels in the state. Craddock says the foam is no longer used in Wendell.

A map shared during Friday’s meeting with MassDEP, which the *Montague Reporter* was not provided a link to attend despite requests to the board of health and MassDEP, showed three clusters of private wells in Wendell that are targeted for testing as part of a state-wide regulatory rollout. The largest cluster is on Wendell Depot Road between Kemsley Academy and the library, and two more appeared in the northwest corner of town along Mormon Hollow Road and Farley Road.

Water samples from Swift River School were taken indoors from a sink. The first sample taken on November 17 detected 53.8 ppt of PFAS. A second test on January 6 showed 46.1 ppt, although that test was deemed inconclusive due to quality control concerns, Coletta said. Water was also sampled in February and again last Wednesday, with results still pending.



Swift River School sits on the border of Wendell and New Salem, at the edge of the region regulated under the Watershed Protection Act for the Quabbin Reservoir.

“The chemical could have traveled from anywhere through the groundwater system,” Ramsdell said in an email.

A well serving the Wendell Town Offices is the only other public water system that has been tested for PFAS in Wendell or New Salem, and it was below the 20 ppt threshold, according to Coletta.

When asked where else in Wendell there is suspected PFAS contamination, MassDEP’s Coletta said, “This is speculative and unanswerable.”

According to Craddock, the state will begin sending postcards advertising free PFAS testing to eligible private well owners this week. About 150 Wendell well owners will receive postcard invitations to apply online, but only 20 to 40 will be selected for testing. Some sites will be chosen based on proximity to potential sources of contamination, while others will be chosen randomly.

“There are a lot of people in Wendell who would like to have their wells tested. I just want them to realize there may be some cost correction on their end,” Craddock warned.

Boiling water will not eliminate the risk of PFAS, and will only concentrate the chemical as water evaporates. Public water systems will also have to foot the bill to fix PFAS contamination problems by purchasing technology such as granular activated carbon filters.

“Public water systems are obligated to meet the drinking water standards and would be financially responsible, but the Commonwealth does make certain grants and low-interest loans available for portions of this work to address PFAS contamination,” Coletta said.

Back To School

The Swift River School, which serves students from preschool through sixth grade, relies on one well for its water source. Last November was the first time the school had ever tested for PFAS.

The school has not issued a formal “public notice” about the contamination because it has not yet been charged with a drinking water violation. A violation is triggered once the “average of all monthly samples collected over a quarter” is greater than 20 ppt, according to state guidelines.

“Since this is the first time that we’ve tested, we do not know how long this has been a problem,” Ramsdell said. “If the levels continue to remain high, we will install a carbon filtration system.”

In early February, school officials sent an email notifying the households of about 92 students and 43 staff members about the water quality concerns. Families of students formerly enrolled at the school did not receive notices.

“For older children and adults... the 20 [ppt] value is applicable to a lifetime of consuming the water.... shorter duration exposures present less risk,” read the notice sent to parents via email. “In most situations, the water can be safely used for washing foods, brushing teeth, bathing, and showering.”

While most Swift River students have been learning from home during the pandemic, officials said some students and staff have been in the building since September, and the school plans to continue its scheduled reopening unabated.

“We anticipate more students will come when we are able to offer full-day in-person learning,” Sullivan said in a statement.

There is no federal standard for a maximum level for PFAS in drinking water, besides an Environmental Protection Agency-issued “health advisory” of 70 ppt. In Massachusetts any PFAS test results over 90 ppt are deemed an “Imminent Hazard” and will be referred to MassDEP’s Bureau of Waste Site Cleanup for immediate action.

“You don’t want anything toxic in your drinking water. You especially don’t want toxic PFAS chemicals in the water at your kid’s school,” Shaina Kasper, water program director for Community Action Works, told the *Reporter*. “PFAS are a serious threat to our health, and contamination like this requires serious and immediate action.”



NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Solar Discount; Rehab Grants; Bad Windows

By JOSH HEINEMANN

Colonial Power is the organization that aggregates electricity for Wendell ratepayers, and in most months saves residents money. Mark Cappadona and Denise Allard, representing Colonial Power, were connected when the Wendell selectboard’s March 3 Zoom meeting opened, and told the two board members present about a program that would give low-income electric ratepayers a discount of 2 cents per kilowatt-hour on their electric bill.

The discount will depend on new solar capacity being connected under new Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target (SMART) regulations, and will start after that new solar capacity is connected to the grid.

When selectboard member Laurie DiDonato asked about large arrays that involve clear-cutting forests, Cappadona said the amount of panels needed will be smaller than those large arrays, and that it could be accomplished with rooftop panels. Colonial, he said, can work within parameters that Wendell sets. The local electric utility provides Colonial a list of low-income ratepayers.

Selectboard chair Dan Keller said it sounded like a good idea, and that when the full selectboard meets together they will discuss the offer. Cappadona said he and Allard would be happy to return.

Housing Rehab

The next person scheduled to meet the board was Brian McHugh, director of community development at the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority. McHugh told board members the status of the community development block grant (CDBG) for housing rehabilitation in Wendell and Shutesbury. The grant period expired December 31, and was automatically extended to March 31.

Since the work is not finished, McHugh asked board members to allow another extension. The extensions are allowed in three-month increments, and DiDonato and Keller voted to give an extension to June 30.

The program’s original goal was to give 18 grants, aimed at bringing houses up to code. So far ten projects have been completed, and nine are still under construction.

Because some of the renovations cost less than the amount allowed for each repair, it is expected that one extra home can be paid for with the money allowed.

\$30,000 was allocated to help defray the cost of fiber-optic drops to individual houses, and that was not touched. It may be put into the housing rehabilitation fund, but only after a public hearing and a town meeting vote.

Window Quilts

DiDonato, as member of the energy committee, told Keller, town coordinator Nancy Aldrich, and anyone else connected to the Zoom meeting that the effort to install window quilts in the town hall hit a snag.

The windows themselves are in such bad condition that they should be replaced before quilts are added,

she said, and since those windows are so large, the replacement cost will be more than is left in available grant money. Getting an estimate for replacing those windows is easy, but getting the money is not so easy.

The Green Communities grant committee does not favor window replacement, but rehab money may be available.

Aldrich suggested historic grants, but DiDonato said those grants are very competitive, and would require Wendell to maintain the repair in perpetuity.

Police Agreement

Although the Leverett police have begun covering Wendell, including patrols, and Wendell has been paying a monthly bill for that service, there is still no contract between the two towns.

Keller said that Leverett still has \$5,000 in their succession money which can be used for a grant to create a long-term agreement, possibly one that could be expanded to include other towns.

Aldrich said that new state training requirements are more demanding, and would make officers who complete them inclined to take a full-time position in a larger town or city rather than the part-time positions that small towns often offer.

Other Business

The Wendell selectboard will connect with New Salem at their March 22 meeting to discuss the process of finding the next town coordinator. Nancy Aldrich plans to retire.

The board approved the state’s new recycled products purchasing policy – more demanding than the prior policy, but still with an escape clause that allows exceptions when no viable alternative exists.

The conservation commission asked that member Ward Smith be granted special municipal employee status so that he can be paid for work he does for the con com and not be implicated in a conflict of interest situation. Board members gave special municipal employee status to the entire conservation commission.


No work has been started toward improving the look of the veterans’ memorial. Former town officials Ted Lewis and Harry Williston got an estimate of \$6,000 for a proposal they developed, but given the town’s tight financial condition, only \$500 was allocated at the last annual town meeting.

Lewis and Williston considered soliciting donations independently, but neither Keller nor DiDonato knew of money raised in that effort. Keller recommended \$500 to \$700 be included on the warrant for the next annual town meeting.

Keller reported that state senator Jo Comerford told him that HD.1506, which would allow 16- and 17-year-old residents to vote in town elections, has been resubmitted for the current legislative session.

The suggested annual town meeting date of Saturday, June 12 at 10 a.m. fits into the schedules of both town moderator Katie Nolan and town clerk Anna Wetherby, so the selectboard set that date to hold the 2021 town meeting outdoors.

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ERVING from page A1

Leaking Waste Pipe

Wastewater superintendent Peter Sanders told the board a wastewater pipe going from the Route 2 pump station to the POTW#2 treatment plant had frozen during a cold snap several weeks ago. After inspection, it was determined that the repair could cost as much as \$48,000.

Selectboard chair Smith said the town had contacted the state Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance to find out if the town could accelerate the procurement process by treating the leak as an emergency, rather than using the normal, more time-consuming procurement process.

He suggested using wastewater maintenance funds originally intended for a smoke-and-dye testing of lines for the repair, and funding that testing from the wastewater retained earnings fund, under an article at the annual town meeting.

Town administrator Bryan Smith said he would provide more details, and the state’s answer, at the March 15 selectboard meeting.

Parking for Climbers

Assistant planner Mariah Kurtz reported that she has been working with the Western Massachusetts Climbers Coalition (WMCC) to provide additional parking for people climbing or hiking at Rose Ledge and Farley Ledge.

She said the WMCC had formerly created a 16-car parking area on property owned by the coalition. However, at times when the parking lot is full, people park along Route 2, creating a safety hazard.

The Franklin Regional Transit

Authority recently started the Access program, which offers point-to-point, self-scheduled transportation using a mobile app or internet. According to Kurtz, climbers or hikers can park at the Erving center municipal lot and schedule trips to and from the WMCC parking lot.

“It’s a great idea, and a great way to share local resources,” Bembury said.

“I hope it’s successful,” said Jacob Smith.

Special Town Meeting

The board decided to hold a special town meeting at 10 a.m. on March 27 at the Erving Elementary School parking lot, with voters remaining in their cars during the meeting.

Bryan Smith said it was unlikely that the weather would be warm enough on March 27 to hold the meeting under a tent. He said he had read accounts from other towns, including Orange, that have held drive-up meetings, and that he would be able to organize the meeting by that date.

The warrant will be sent to each residence in town. The rain date is April 3.

Other Business

Bryan Smith said that Franklin Regional Council of Governments helped prepare bid documents for supplying and installing an emergency generator for POTW#1. The documents will be published March 17, and bids will be opened on April 5.

Bembury asked if the current generator is beyond repair.

Sanders said, “It’s pretty bad, not viable to repair,” and estimated that it was 46 or 47 years old.

The board voted to appoint Denise Maynard to the senior housing committee.



RIVER from page A1

of Conservation and Recreation’s Great Falls Discovery Center. They were joined by regional planners, nonprofit leaders, and concerned citizens.

The panel delved into the relationship between Native people and the licensing process. “The river is the heart of the people,” said Holschuh, whose Atowi Project works to affirm native Native relationships to the land and its inhabitants. “The land is the people, and the people are the land.”

While the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the agency in charge of overseeing hydroelectric relicensing, has statutory requirements concerning projects’ cultural impacts, panelists argued that the black-and-white nature of the regulations can lack room for proper nuance.

The National Historic Preservation Act requires projects that are either funded, permitted, licensed, or approved by a federal agency to consider their impacts on historic properties and provide reasonable opportunity for stakeholders to comment. These studies, known as Traditional Cultural Property (TCP) reports, are required by FERC but administered by the licensees – a situation Holschuh, a public liaison for the Elnu Abenaki, described as “the fox guarding the chicken coop.”

Panelists also discussed the complexity of the relationships between Native people and land, and voiced concern that the studies are often conducted by outside firms who struggle to understand the full historical context. “It is not easy to understand what a cultural landscape is,” said Holschuh.

Graveline, representing the Nolumbeka Project, which works to protect and preserve sites sacred to Native Americans in New England, added that material evidence of a group’s connection to a place may not always be available at a site. “It’s such a sterile process,” he said. “When you check a box, you don’t see what is left behind.”

The advocates discussed challenges in ensuring the views of local people are reflected in these reports. All of the panelists described instances where they felt shut out by the licensees while going through this process. These included licensees focusing on databases of written historical accounts, while missing on oral histories that are prevalent in

many impacted communities.

Though the process provides some opportunity for formal comments, panelists expressed that these comments are often not included in the final studies. “They have been received, but not engaged,” said Holschuh, describing comments he has made on recent TCP studies for the projects in both Massachusetts and Vermont.

Panelists also raised the issue of which tribes, and which tribe members, are invited to participate. Federal law requires the inclusion of tribal comments, but not all local tribes are recognized by the federal government; some, including the Nipmuc in Massachusetts and Abenaki in Vermont, are officially recognized only at the state level.

“This is all about notification and inclusion,” said Holschuh of the federal government’s recognition of Native identity. “We are the only people who need to carry a card to prove who we are.”

While companies are required to perform archaeological studies on historical buildings that could be impacted by a project, advocates do not believe this is enough to address the cultural importance of many sites. “It’s not about arrowheads, it’s about the exchange of life forces of the people that live in and around the river, and the river itself,” said Graveline. “I have not seen anything on that.”

When the panelists were asked if they had seen the findings of the archaeological reports during the current relicensing, Graveline said that he had seen those relevant to Northfield in his capacity as the member of the town’s historical commission, but understood why those documents were not made public.

Holschuh agreed that much of the information was kept confidential for good reason, as it protects the sites from those who might seek their contents for economic gain. “You don’t allow the average person on the street to go rummage through your tabernacle,” he said. “This is a similar idea.”

To learn more about CRC’s Hydropower Coffee Hour series and to watch a recording of Wednesday’s discussion, visit www.ctriver.org/learn/livestream/. The series continues on Wednesday, April 14 on the theme of “river critters,” and on May 12 with a discussion of human river recreation.



ROLLOUT from page A1

by any Massachusetts resident.

So, Dunlavy told the board, the vaccines were divided up between the Tech School and Mahar, leaving one day for appointments at each site. The time to register online was pushed back until 3 p.m. on Monday.

Dunlavy told the *Reporter* that FRCOG attempted aggressive outreach to those on various local mailing lists, and arranged a robo-call from the Montague police department. In the end, a large percentage of those enrolling were from the area, but there were many unhappy residents who reported sitting in front of their computers for a good part of the afternoon. All the available slots were filled in well under an hour.

There will, no doubt be other changes to come. This Thursday, up to 3,000 kindergarten through twelfth-grade teachers, who are being required to return to full-time in-person teaching in April, will be added to the eligibility list. Officials are considering setting aside specific days for them to be vaccinated.

Dunlavy told the *Reporter* that FRCOG is considering consolidating its various regional sites in one central location, perhaps an outdoor site at Greenfield Community College, when the weather warms.

A Patchwork Response

The local version of the state rollout continued to evolve in other unpredictable ways this week. At the same meeting that the tale of the Tech School was told, Montague health director Daniel Wasiuk announced that the small vaccination site set up in the basement of Montague town hall, which seemed to have been abandoned months ago because the state nixed small local venues, was able to provide vaccinations that very day and the next.

The Moderna doses provided for the basement clinic were left over from vaccinations administered by the Montague Housing Authority, with the assistance of town nurse Cheryl Volpe, to eligible residents and staff at its Sunrise Terrace and Keith Apartments

housing complexes in Turners Falls.

Outreach for the unexpected basement clinics was provided by the town health department and the Council on Aging, and we are told a second dose will be allotted “sometime in April.”

The *Reporter* contacted the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority to see if they would also be vaccinating eligible residents at their apartment complexes. It turns out they have been doing this for nearly a month – first at the Moltenbrey Apartments in Turners Falls, then at the Winslow Wentworth House in the same village, and Stoughton Place in Gill.

Many of these vaccinations are being performed with the assistance of the elderly services agency LifePath and the Franklin County Sheriff’s Office.

Sheriff Chris Donelan told the *Reporter* that his office, with experience in vaccinating inmates and staff, reached out to LifePath to see if it could assist with the Phase 2 rollout. LifePath, in turn, got permission from the state Executive Office of Elder Affairs for the collaboration and distribution of targeted vaccines.

Donelan is currently working on a similar arrangement to vaccinate K through 12 teachers, who will become eligible for vaccines on March 11.

Another wild card in the regional mix is the hospitals. Hospitals received vaccines during Phase 1 of the process and were expected to continue their role during Phase 2, reaching patients through their primary-care physicians. But hospital vaccine distribution was abruptly terminated in mid-February without a great deal of notice or a public rationale. Several weeks ago most hospitals reached an agreement with the state to revive distributions and clinics, but their potential role has not been made clear.

Maura Tobias, spokesperson for Baystate Health in Springfield, told the *Reporter* that its hospital in Greenfield “is aiming to do a weekly clinic, most likely with first dose vaccines on Thursdays; however, it is dependent on sup-

ply. This would be by appointment only.”

Estevan Garcia, MD, chief medical officer at Cooley Dickinson in Northampton, said his hospital had received 500 doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine this week, but hopes to be allocated 1,000 per week by the state over the next four weeks. The brand of vaccine in these distributions seems uncertain. The Johnson & Johnson does not need very cold storage, and requires only one shot; the other two currently available do need cold storage and require two doses spaced either three or four weeks apart, complicating scheduling.

Garcia said outreach and appointments would be primarily made through an online patient gateway, but added that their efforts would be made to directly contact those without access to the gateway.

When this reporter checked the state website for vaccine locations in the region, Cooley Dickinson was not on it. Baystate Franklin was listed, but was not accepting appointments.

Mixed Reviews

The continually shifting venues for distribution and methods for booking appointments, along with the limited number of vaccines made available by the federal government, have produced massive frustration among eligible recipients. The perception is widespread that the statewide rollout has been a fiasco.

But the direct experience of those who have been vaccinated or worked at vaccination centers seems to have been quite different. Gina Govoni, the executive director of the county Housing and Redevelopment Authority, told the *Reporter* that she had just visited a clinic at Highland Village in Shelburne Falls – a collaboration between her agency, LifePath, and the county sheriff’s office. Govoni said that the partnership was “fantastic,” and that “to see so many people come out at Shelburne was heartening.”

Barbara Kuklewicz, who received a vaccine at the basement site in Montague town

hall, wrote the following to the board of health:

“Thank You Board of Health for organizing the COVID Clinic on March 9. It was extremely well done. The friendly, welcoming staff, the location, the ease of parking, and the clean, comfortable room, was such a great relief, especially after I have spent 30-40 hours on line trying to find a COVID Vaccine opening in the entire state over the last weeks for myself and my husband to no avail. You are all to be commended for your hard work and diligence to get this to our town. You have saved lives and illness, and stress to many residents. We have peace of mind knowing we have this vaccine, especially with our age and many health issues. Thanks again for all your coordinated time and effort.”

About a month ago, Montague town administrator Steve Ellis told the selectboard that he had volunteered at the John Zon Center in Greenfield, and found the experience “moving.”

Ellis is not prone to expressions of emotion at selectboard meetings, and neither is this reporter.

But he recently went to John Zon for a vaccination after weeks of frustration trying to get an appointment – while trying to report accurate information about the rollout for this newspaper. The vaccination site seemed to resemble a Buddhist retreat center or Quaker meetinghouse: well organized, with calm and friendly volunteers going about their business serving contented customers. Few words were spoken, and those spoken were in hushed tones. There was a lot of meditation going on.

On a final note, this reporter is also a member of a healthcare center linked to Cooley Dickinson Hospital. As this article was being written, he received a text from the hospital’s parent company, Mass General Brigham, saying that he can now go to the system’s online “patient gateway” to schedule an appointment, and that “the Assembly Row site in Somerville has the most availability.”



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NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Spring Town Meeting, Summer Festival, Farmers Market, Cannabis, and More

By JEFF SINGLETON

Montague town officials are barely recovering from a historic virtual special town meeting, but they must now quickly plan for a lengthier annual town meeting scheduled for May 1. The conversation at Monday’s selectboard meeting sounded very familiar: should the town hold another virtual town meeting, or hold the “annual” in the high school parking lot as was done last June? Should it be one long meeting, or broken into two or three parts? How should town meeting members be polled for their preferences?

The discussion began on a positive note with selectboard members applauding the efforts of town administrator Steve Ellis, executive assistant Wendy Bogusz, town moderator Chris Collins, and various town meeting staff for the successful “special.” According to chair Rich Kuklewicz, “everybody pulled extra duty, and the list of people is very long. The voting might have gone faster than a typical town meeting.”

Selectboard member Mike Nelson said he had been “one of the skeptics” of a virtual meeting, but was “extremely pleasantly surprised” by the outcome. “I think we made history,” said member Chris Boutwell.

Ellis said Collins “was pressed into a situation wholly unique for a moderator,” and called Bogusz “tenacious in making sure that lots of details and lots of unknowns were attended to.” But he went on to recommend the board not spend too much time “on the event that was,” but look forward to the annual town meeting, “which is rapidly approaching.”

“The world is going to continue to change in the next two months,” Nelson began. “It’s not a bad idea to be looking toward doing [a Zoom meeting] again in May.”

Kuklewicz agreed that the online meeting “went really well,” but suggested it might be difficult to achieve the same success at an annual town meeting, which usually takes up an entire Saturday. He also suggested that the town might consider “pushing off” the meeting until the end of May or the first Saturday in June, “to see if we can do another outdoor meeting.”

This produced concerns about the limited number of available Saturdays in late May and early June, as well as uncertainty caused by weather.

Speakers raised the possibility of breaking the meeting into two sessions, having a “hybrid” meeting, or holding the event in the Turners Falls High School gym. Finance committee chair Jen Audley suggested a “drive-up meeting,” while John Hanold called for tweaking the length of the potential meeting agenda.

The board decided to continue the discussion next week, and charged Ellis and Bogusz with developing a survey to poll town meeting members on the issue.

The board reviewed the latest COVID-19 metrics with public health director Daniel Wasiuk,

which once again showed only five “active cases” in Montague during the past two weeks. Wasiuk also briefly discussed the recent state decision to move forward with its reopening plan, which was put on hold during the fall pandemic rise.

The board and Ellis also discussed the latest vaccine rollout in Franklin County at length with Franklin Regional Council of Governments executive director Linda Dunlavy. *(See article, Page A1.)*

Out of the Woods

Cassandra Holden of Laudable Productions came before the board to request that the date of August 23 be reserved for a music festival in Montague Center called Barbès in the Woods. The event is named after a music venue in Brooklyn, which itself is named after a section of Paris, France that is home to a large African immigrant population.

First held two summers ago, the festival was deemed a great success with relatively few complaints from the neighborhood. Last year it was canceled in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“As an event planner, I am in the same boat as Cassandra,” said Nelson, who organizes the Turners Falls Spring Parade, Franklin County Fair, and Great Falls Festival in non-pandemic years. Nelson said he had “multiple events” scheduled for 2021, and “at the moment, I am planning for them all to take place.”

RiverCulture director Suzanne LoManto “strongly support[ed] Montague moving forward on this project.”

Police chief Chris Williams told the board that the 2019 event was a “great success,” citing only two noise complaints, but he also noted parking problems and congestion, particularly on Center Street. He also pointed out that this year’s Barbès would again coincide with the traditional Old Home Days event, and said he would like the festival “scheduled around that.”

Kyle Homstead of Laudable Productions, which produces Barbès, pointed out the need to finalize a date soon in order to lock in performers and sound companies. “With all of this up in the air it’s hard to start the planning,” he said.

Nelson agreed: “In the event planners’ world, we’re behind the eight ball already.”

The board agreed to put the issue on next week’s agenda while Laudable Productions reaches out to the organizers of Old Home Days.

Grant Pipeline

At the request of town planner Walter Ramsey, the board issued a “notice of award” to Virgilio Construction, Inc., for the removal and replacement of the Chestnut Loop Bridge. The award comes with a price tag of \$365,788.

The board also authorized a grant request to the state Municipal Culvert Assistance Program for \$16,280 to design and permit the replacement of a culvert on South Ferry Road. Ramsey said the work itself could perhaps be done by the town public works department at relatively low cost.

A request by Brian McHugh of the regional housing authority to endorse a letter to the state complying with “special conditions” on the Fiscal Year 2020 Community Development Block Grant was approved.

McHugh also discussed progress on the Spinner Park restoration project, including where to store large granite blocks that will be used for seating. Public works superintendent Tom Bergeron agreed with Kuklewicz’ suggestion that the blocks could be stored in the Butler Building behind town hall. “I’ll work with Tom on that,” said McHugh.

The board authorized a statement of interest in a state grant program called “MA One Stop For Growth” that is attempting to create a “pipeline” for infrastructure that are funded through every phase, from beginning to end. Ramsey listed a number of projects, including parking in downtown Turners Falls and separation of the combined sewer overflow system, that might be on the town’s priority list.

Other Business

The board approved a request from Annabel Levine of the Great Falls Farmers Market to use a portion of Peskeompskut Park for the market on Wednesdays from 1 to 6:15 p.m., May through October. The board also executed a state grant to fund equipment to process SNAP payments at the market.

A \$6,600 grant to the Montague Cultural Council was also approved. Rachel Teumim of the cultural council said the funds would support 14 projects.

The board approved two motions to be presented at an upcoming advisory board meeting of the Franklin Regional Transit Authority. One requested that the state Department of Transportation explain why the FRTA is the only regional transit authority in the state without weekend service. The other calls on the board to discuss and vote on a five-year plan for the FRTA being developed by a large infrastructure planning corporation hired by MassDOT.

Ellis discussed a process for using the revenues the town has received from local cannabis sales, and a potential agenda for an upcoming meeting with state legislators.

At the end of the meeting, Ellis reported that he had spoken to the site manager of the federal Environmental Protection Agency’s project to remove hazardous materials from the remains of the old Railroad Salvage Building between the power canal and Connecticut River in Turners Falls.

“They are on site as of today, beginning their process,” said Ellis. “It appears that we should expect this project to be completed, one way or another, by the fall.”

Ellis added that the EPA may take down the one remaining tall structure on the site, and urged residents to “stay away from that location.”

The next selectboard meeting will be held on Monday, March 15.





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MONTAGUE PLANNING BOARD NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH MEETING

The Montague Planning Board will hold a public hearing at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 23, 2021 to consider a special permit and site plan review application submitted by Hydroflower, LLC pursuant to Montague Zoning Bylaw Sec. 8.10 and 5.2.9(b) to permit a marijuana cultivation and manufacturing establishment within an existing mill building (known locally as the Southworth Mill). Notice is also hereby given that a Community Outreach meeting will be held concurrently with the hearing. The proposed facility is located at **36 Canal Road**, Turners Falls, MA and the property is identified as Assessors Map 3 Lot 2. The public are encouraged to ask questions and share comments. Application, plans describing the project, and project contact information is available at www.montague-ma.gov/calendar. Hearing will be held remotely via ZOOM due to COVID emergency orders.

ZOOM Meeting ID: 979 1965 8908
Passcode: 551284
Dial-in: (646) 558-8656

Ron Sicard, Chair.

LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here’s the way it was on March 10, 2011: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

Godin to Retire as Turners Fire Chief

Chief Ray Godin is retiring after 34 years with the Turners Falls Fire Department. His last day on the job will be July 30.

Godin started as a call firefighter in 1977, became a full-time member of the department in 1985, got promoted to captain in 1989, and was promoted again to chief in 2000 when Rich Morin retired.

“The changes are like night and day,” said Godin this week. “When I first got on the job, we wore three-quarter length boots and rubber coats.... We used to ride on the back step of the trucks with strap-on belts. It was a dangerous practice back then. But we’re better protected, better equipped than we were back in ‘77.”

He added, “The job is still the same – you have to go after the fire, and get at it.”

Mark Holley, chair of the Turners Falls fire department’s prudential committee, said his committee will be advertising the position for fire chief this month.

Montague May Shrink Number of Precincts

Town clerk Deb Bourbeau wants the town of Montague to reduce the number of voting precincts from six to three to save money.

With new census population numbers about to become official, Bourbeau discussed with state electoral officials the idea of redrawing and reducing the number of town precincts. Half the number of precincts would mean half the number of poll workers to pay for each election. Simply changing from six precincts to three would save the town up to \$1,600 in poll workers’ salaries per election, she said.

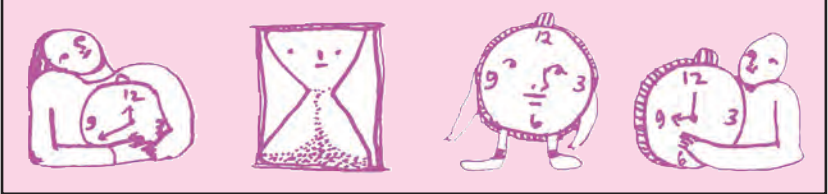
Bourbeau said now is the best time to consider redrawing precinct boundaries, reducing the number of precincts, and perhaps even reducing by half the number of elected town meeting members.

Some parts of town, like Montague City’s Precinct 6, have had to beat the bushes year after year to find enough candidates to run for town meeting, and Bourbeau said it is becoming increasingly difficult to find poll workers. Reducing the number of precincts would help alleviate both problems.

Wendell STM Moves Forward on School Repair

In a special town meeting lasting an hour and a half on Wednesday, March 9, almost 30 Wendell citizens unanimously approved taking \$50,000 from stabilization to pay Wendell’s share of a \$100,000 project manager and an engineer for repairs on the Swift River school building.

The state Municipal School Building Authority (MSBA) has federal money to reimburse that



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PUZZLE from page A1

Lambert says. “I couldn’t stop until it felt whole, and every single detail was in place. Eventually a friend built a custom frame for it, and it now hangs in my art studio in my home.”

When the mural was done, Lambert began to explore ways of sharing the beauty and meditative quality of its creation, and she developed the Mothership Puzzle Peace Project. This involved photographing the mural, hiring graphic designer Jen Jackowitz to create an impeccable digital image of it, and transferring the image to wood that would then be cut into puzzle pieces.

“The mural has been captured with a superior quality, high-definition, life-sized photograph, so the images appear crystal clear with exceptional detail,” Lambert tells me. “You will find a myriad of hidden surprises and gems throughout the *Mothership* puzzle story.”

Fifteen In One

Because of the size of the original mural, the puzzle project itself consists of fifteen smaller puzzles that are sections of the whole. They can be purchased separately, or someone can collect them all and recreate the *Mothership* mural.

“The intent of this project is to give the puzzler a similar integrative experience of exploration, discovery, wonder, and fun that I had while creating the mural over the span of four years,” says Lambert. “The *Mothership* mural puzzle series is a visual instrument for meditation in motion, encouraging us to find and create stillness within chaos, all while having fun.”

Lambert is working with a local business, Zen Art Design of South Deerfield, to manufacture the Mothership Puzzles. The vivid *giclée* images are produced with state-of-the-art wide format printers, then dry-mounted onto supreme quality, sustainably-sourced birch wood. The puzzles are then laser cut with



Above: The large Mothership mural, with a grid showing how the 15 individual puzzles are parts of the whole.

impeccable precision, providing super smooth edges, so even the most detailed pieces will not snag or get stuck together.

“They run a meticulous and eco-friendly production process,” she says. “I am beyond impressed with the quality, accuracy, and craftsmanship of this puzzle series.”

To add to the fun, every puzzle comes with its own eye-spy story card. On the back of the puzzle’s image is an uplifting lyrical tale, which doubles as an eye-spy story with clues in bold print. The level of detail and abstraction, combined with this feature, makes it easy to imagine these puzzles in an inter-generational setting.

When in-person visits become possible again, a granny like me could have a wonderful afternoon with her grandchildren, pondering

the shapes and colors, appreciating the clues, and discussing the environment and its wonders as displayed in the *Mothership*.

More Time for Majesty

In addition to its beauty, the Mothership Project is a study in entrepreneurship. Lambert funded her production costs with a Kickstarter campaign. “I thought of it when I saw one for Magic Puzzles at the beginning of the pandemic last year,” she explains. “They had an outrageously successful run, and I thought that since my idea is a completely new concept in the puzzle world, I should give it a shot!”

“As it turns out, there is a lot more to running a Kickstarter campaign than just telling your story and making Facebook posts about it. A lot of time and money are need-

ed for promotion. Time was not the problem for me. We are getting really close, though.” The goal was \$22,000.

This is also a story about resilience during this life-changing COVID-19 year. Lambert, who is also a certified massage therapist, had to put her massage practice on pause. Suddenly, she had more time to focus on art. Her second mural, called *Majesty*, is nearing completion.

“Once I have enough funding, I will turn *Majesty* into a series of puzzles as well – good news for puzzle-loving families,” says Lambert.

This is not Lambert’s first foray into art. When she first moved to western Massachusetts in 2004 she sold some of her art in Northampton shops. These were mobiles, dreamcatchers, and ornaments which she made from wild grape

vine, paper cranes, and glass and gemstone beads. “Nature is my main inspiration,” says Lambert, and that’s not a surprise. The *Mothership* mural and the puzzle project represent an explosive celebration of the natural world.

Lambert is selling the puzzles online only at this time. Small puzzles, approximately 50 pieces, are \$20, and large ones, approximately 300 pieces, are \$98. Full sets of 15 puzzles are discounted.

Lambert says she occasionally runs sales and promotional giveaways on Instagram @ *mothershippuzzleproject* and on Facebook. Her website, www.mothershippuzzle.com, should be up and running by April 1. Email Keita Grace Lambert at mothershippuzzle@gmail.com for more details.



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FEATURES@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER MARCH 11, 2021

Above: The Winslow Wentworth House in Turners Falls on a recent evening. Aredvi Azad, who also submitted the photo of the hydro dam on the front page of last week's edition, says they are taking these vivid night photos with a Pixel 3 phone!

NOTES FROM THE HEARTFELT CAFE

BY TROUBLE MANDESON

It is hard to imagine a civilization without onions.
— Julia Child

GREENFIELD – The common onion, a flavorful staple that is essential at mealtimes, is a member of the *Allium* genus, the largest plant genera in the world. There are up to 900 varieties of these potent root vegetables. Onions are seasonal, with the sweeter, greener varieties harvested in spring and summer and the more pungent, larger and thicker-skinned onions maturing in fall and winter. Although the majority of onions produced in the world come from Asia, they eat more than they export. The world's top onion exporter is the Netherlands; they account for 20.5% of all onions exported.

You will find onions used in every style of cooking around the globe. Their earthy taste is incredibly versatile, whether roasted, grilled, pickled, caramelized, battered, deep-fried, baked, sauteed, or eaten raw. Whether enjoyed alone or paired with other flavors, there's an onion for just about every palate. Onions are often the first ingredient used in cooking. One popular French technique is *mirepoix* (meer-



A variety of edible bulbs in the *Allium* family. Clockwise from top left: sweet onion, red onion, shallots, white onions, yellow onions, and scallions.

PWAH), a mix of diced onions, celery, and carrots cooked slowly over low heat in butter or oil to coax out their flavor without browning. This creates a savory base to flavor the dishes to come. Adding tomato puree to *mirepoix* creates *pinçage* (pin-sahge), a darker, thicker mixture named for tomato paste which stiffens when cooked. This version is good for

vegetarians and vegans, as it adds that wonderful savory “umami” flavor without using meat. Since Franklin County offers so much agricultural diversity, chances are you may find other more uncommon varieties of onions to cook with at our local farm stands, farmers markets, or in a CSA. A quick aside: what's a CSA, see **HEARTFELT** page B4

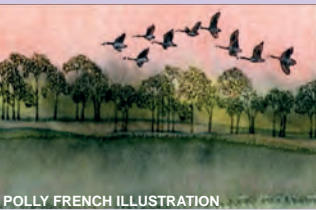


By LILITH G. WOLINSKY

MONTAGUE CITY – Before the ubiquity of laptops and the widespread use of cellphones, I spent a school year abroad in India. Many of the experiences I had there were jarring – noises and smells, customs, and class structure that cracked open and rearranged my existing cache of experience. India had had a female prime minister, Indira Gandhi, in 1966, but when I bumped my way through in 1993, it was unsafe for women to walk even short distances alone at night, show their shoulders

or legs in public, or visit a hospital for emergent care if unescorted. I was living in the hot, dry city of Jaipur, staying in a converted palace, and eating yoghurt out of a bright red clay cup, meant to be smashed on the pavement once its contents were consumed, when I received a telegram from home. “Mom has had a stroke. Come if you can.” Traveling through multiple time zones, and returning to the US during an April snowstorm characteristic of Colorado, is all a bit of a blur. I remember the surprise of hot water coming through faucets, a rarity in India at that time, and my

mother's head, grossly swollen and stapled, after her what-turned-out-to-be ruptured aneurysm was surgically repaired. She was in intensive care, then rehab, then home. One of my sisters and I took care of her for a year, and then she mostly returned to her prior life, although her short-term memory was impacted in ways I realize now I haven't always understood. Her life has not been easy. She is the eldest of five children, and the daughter of an immigrant steeped in trauma who valued boys above all. Headstrong, bright and creative in the '50s, her options were narrowed to few, and she – angry, hurt, and rebellious – resented it mightily. She married twice and when I was six years old her marriage to my father culminated in his disappearance. At age thirty, with two years of college education and little work experience outside of the home, my unemployed mother had five daughters under the age of twelve for whom she was solely responsible. She went back to school and became a lawyer, but twenty years later that brief burst of blood in her brain ended her career. see **RAMBLER** page B3



WEST ALONG THE RIVER

EARLY MARCH, SPRING CHORES

By DAVID BRULE

THE FLAT, ERVINGSIDE – March 1. The first encouraging sign is a slow dripping from ice-covered rooftops and from the sugar maples. Sweet icicles have formed, dazzling with the sun illuminating sparkling maple sap crystals. Squirrels visit the foot-long maple stalactites, and even the inquisitive and enterprising chickadee flits in to sample some sweetness. The snow out here is crusty, icy and hard to walk on, but here and there, bare patches of earth help the one out in the woods bent on early spring chores. My old pasture, gone to woodlands since the record floods of 1936 and 1938, is a source of stories and firewood, a home for woodland creatures, and a place to start March chores before tick season.

The nesting boxes of wood ducks need to be cleaned, the bedding refurbished. I need to shack out the grey squirrels from the potential ducklings' home; maybe out will come a flying squirrel or two. One year a screech owl, red phase, took over the box. He got preferential treatment and stayed the season, spending the warming March days taking the sun in the doorway, eyes mostly closed in the glare, looking for all the world like a contented house cat. Maple saplings, trees that are less than ten years old but a leggy 20 feet tall and only a few inches in diameter, need to be gleaned and harvested before the sap gets too

high. Snow has melted back from their thin trunks to make sawing easier. Already the Swedish bowsaw is wet with sap, but still glides through the tender wood. I hate to sacrifice these saplings, but their wood will be put to good use as kindling for next fall. Besides, trimming out these maples that grow like weeds will open up the canopy to allow more sunlight to reach the woodland floor, encouraging springtime trout lilies, wood anemone, ladyslippers, and the occasional trillium. I lay the long skinny trunks along the path, where they will be drying until next November when the snow flies again and I'll cut them into stove lengths for the cook's fire and baking oven. March 5. The icy wind has been cutting through clothing all week; there's no place to get away from it but to stay indoors. That option doesn't work for me, given that I've chosen a life outdoors. In spite of the 20 degrees and wind, I've got things to do! I've got a gaggle of red-winged blackbirds for company. They are all wind-tossed high up in the maples but cheerfully clucking, calling their *oak-a-lee* that passes for spring blackbird song. The first red-wing loner, of course a male, arrived home here right on schedule, February 24, no later nor earlier than all the years that I've been keeping records I started as a 10-year-old. see **WEST ALONG** page B5



Agelaius phoeniceus, the red-winged blackbird.



CARMODY COLALIGE

“PRIMROSE”

This beautiful canary has one weak leg which slides out to the side, but she gets around fine and does all her canary things!

Canaries like to watch people and be talked and whistled to, but they prefer not to be handled.

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The adoption fee for one canary is \$125, and each additional has a discounted adoption fee of \$115.

Interested in adopting? Animals at Dakin are available only in Springfield currently. Contact adoption staff at springfield@dakinhumane.org and include your name and phone number.

For more information, call (413) 781-4000 or visit www.dakinhumane.org.

Senior Center Activities MARCH 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 by email.

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.

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

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.

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 (413) 625-2548

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By MISHEL IXCHEL

TURNERS FALLS – Perhaps it’s just me, but this past winter felt like an eye blink. Normally, winter time has felt like it’s dragged on for ages, and for every warm March day there’s been at least a week of bitter cold weather.

And yet here we are, weeks away from the Spring Equinox, and one year since our world got turned upside down.

I once read somewhere that the transition from winter to spring must be tread lightly. This same article suggested that even though we may be cabin fevered and itching to squeeze more out of our days now that the sun takes longer to set, it is vital that we actually spend more time sleeping. These last few weeks of winter are a transition, no doubt, and I’ve taken this bit of advice to heart.

It’s also miraculous that during these last few weeks of transition, my kid has finally, finally, been sleep trained. So we’re all sleeping more than we have all winter – and more importantly, we’re sleeping through the night.

Spring has traditionally been a time for renewal, for growth, for change and all the glitzy things we humans love about newness. It’s like a second January, and it’s impossible not to feel inspired and mobilized by the new energy in the air.

In the past, I have wasted no time in shaking off winter and diving into the new season, with lists and

Dirty Work

visions and goals. For years, I have been at the frontlines of this change, eager to use all the tools available to me in order to create anew. To do away with all the clutter and breathe new air.

This year, though, I’m feeling a bit different about all of this. This past winter, I got the opportunity to explore a different type of spiritual work; one could almost say that this work is still mainly underground.

Here’s the thing about spiritual work: since I stumbled upon it, it’s been nothing but affirmations, positive thinking, mantras, meditation, the gamut. Just about any and every book on the subject proclaims the same message: you gotta change how you think, you gotta get clear on what you want for yourself and out of life, and you gotta do your damndest to manifest it by creating vision boards, or journaling, or visualizing, or talking about it until you’re blue in the face.

I’ve done all of that. Especially when Spring rolls around, I love to dust off all the books and practices that proclaim they will help me create a better life for myself.

And yet here I am, however many years later, still stuck with some gnarly patterns, behaviors, and triggers. How many Springs is it gonna take for me to finally see some of these changes that I work so hard for?

I share all of this because, being a mom, I can see how my behavior, and in particular, my reactions, get reflected back to me. Watching me is my five-year-old son, through the good and the bad, and even though when I lose my cool I’m quick to own it, it still doesn’t change the fact that I continue to lose my cool

time and time again.

Which brings me back to patterns, and triggers. It’s one thing to ride the change of seasons, to harness the newness of Spring and hope for the best for one’s self. It’s quite another to altogether stop the spiritual by-passing, and do the dirty work instead.

Dirty, as in shadowy.

This past winter, I’ve come to realize that no amount of wish or desire lists, or even vision boards, will help me create the lasting changes I see for myself. While it’s true that these things are helpful, I’ve realized that shadow work must come first and foremost.

Shadow work is subconscious work: the things that lie beneath the surface, away from the naked eye. The things that are not easy to look at, let alone contemplate. This winter I learned that unless we dive in deep and tend to our subconscious programming, manifesting or creating a new life or pattern for ourselves is next to impossible. It’s like buying a bunch of nice, new, shiny things for your home without first having spring cleaned and decluttered.

And so, during these final weeks of winter, I’ll be doing just that: sleeping more, cleaning up and composting old programming, and in the process modeling for my kid the right way to deal with sticky, messy stuff.

Ecuadorian-born and New York City bred, Mishel Ixchel is mama to a five-year-old, and currently resides in Turners Falls where she practices and teaches the art of sacred self-care. You can find her on Instagram @indiemamadaries.

Spring Hike: Skyfields Arboretum

ATHOL – This Skyfields trail map is reprinted here courtesy of the Mount Grace Land Trust.

The Skyfields Arboretum is open to the public for non-motorized outdoor recreation including biking, hiking, bird watching, nature study, and hunting. These 40 acres of meadows and mixed-deciduous forest surround the headquarters of Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust. The land has been protected since 1999.

Take a leisurely walk around the arboretum, where signs will help you identify and learn about native trees of our region. You may access the trail from 1461 Old Keene Road, Athol. Heading west across Old Keene Road, you can walk around the gently sloping hills of Willis Woods on a loop trail created in 2006. You can circumnavigate both the arboretum and Willis Woods trails in about an hour.

The Arboretum was owned for many years by the Willis family. It then became the summer home of noted organist E. Power Biggs and

Margaret Power Biggs, who bequeathed it to the trust so it could be maintained as a place for the community to encounter nature.

During the COVID-19 crisis, visitors are asked to maintain a distance of at least six feet between visitors, wear a face mask if social distancing is not possible, and keep dogs on a leash. If you arrive at a full parking lot, consider coming back when it is less crowded, or visiting another trail. If you have questions or concerns, contact KimLynn Nguyen at nguyen@mountgrace.org or (978) 541-1769.



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RAMBLER from page B1

Now, almost three decades after that internal explosion and perhaps in connection with a number of mini-strokes, words like *hallucinations*, *delusions*, *aphasia*, *paranoia*, *sun-downing*, and *confusion* are the ways my sisters and I describe my mother’s daily experiences. Her intact brain functions are woven together with haywire synapses, creating a dizzying mishmash of incisive social commentary, knowledge of esoterica, humor, and multi-syllabic vocabulary alongside concern that one of my sisters is plotting to murder her this very evening, via poison.

She believes that “Joe” (Biden, whom she may have known peripherally through Democratic politics over the years) has offered her a job tracking down immigrant children taken from their parents during the former administration – a should-be crime which still causes her to cry – and that she has been tasked with creating a national program to plant chestnut trees, Anne Frank’s favorite, to commemorate Frank’s courage and early demise. To initiate the program, she would like for me to plant one in my yard, a wish I would like to accommodate, although chestnut trees are large, and my yard small.

My mother does not always know who I am now, but she mostly knows she can trust me. Sometimes, she thinks there are multiple versions of me, including a man, and

she wishes to speak with someone whom I cannot manufacture at will. At these junctures she becomes irritated and thinks I’m up to something shady, a con artist of some sort, a shyster. Or else that I’m trans, and have neglected to mention it. An occasional upshot to this confusion is the nice words she says about me when she thinks she’s talking to someone else.

If “easy” is ever an appropriate adjective for a mother – although I wonder at that – it has never matched my own. She inherited difficulty, and wanted things for herself that she couldn’t have, and dreams she didn’t know how to contain. She gave much, and still does, and what she has been unable to give, the areas where she was hurt and stymied, hard edges and blind spots, has also been great.

None of the knowledge I have acquired in healthcare, working previously with elders and those with dementias, has prepared me for the sharpness of losing my mother in these unpredictable dribs and drabs. The love I feel for her, the desire to minimize her suffering as she navigates the loss of her mind, her brilliant and primary resource, is painfully clear. I carry it with me as I move through the lengthening days, trying to honor and comfort both of us, as individuals and inheritances, believing that much healing is intergenerational and bidirectional work.



TV REVIEW

For All Mankind: Season 2

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – The TV series *For All Mankind*, on Apple TV+, got a second season, and I reviewed it again when it premiered. The show’s “what-if” scenario – what if US space exploration had never ended? – continues, 10 years later. I saw a video online that previewed what things would be like in this scenario before watching the second season premiere.

Some of those things match up very well with what has gone on in this world. The women’s liberation movement and technology have gone faster. An example of the movement going faster is that the wife of one of the astronauts now runs a bar which used to be visited quite frequently by people in the show in Season One.

The level of the technology featured with NASA, and in the world, is what they said it would be. But I was a little surprised that multiple flights out of NASA seem to be taking place in the premiere.

A couple of historical facts have held up: Gordo Cooper and his wife still split up; Gordo doesn’t have much of a career at NASA; and Ronald Reagan is president in the ‘80s.

One more thing: the US has a space station, which is rather interesting since that is also not much of a difference with what has occurred in real life. There is a space station, but it’s an international one; it’s not a station under the US’s name. So, it’s rather cool they have decided to keep on par with that, more or less.

A storyline involving a Mexican



immigrant’s daughter is still going to be part of the show. I think people will be pleased with where that story goes. I certainly am. I will give you a hint as to where by saying her story is still connected to the space race.

I guess I should mention that the Cold War hasn’t gone away – it has gotten bigger. They appear to be fighting over the moon. At least, that is what it looks like in the preview for the rest of the season!

I don’t really know much about the history of the Cold War, but imagine if something like that hadn’t gone away. I know people were taking all kinds of actions. I wonder what people would be like now if the Cold War had gotten bigger instead of ending.

Lastly, I am curious to see how this season ends. There were some interesting threads left hanging last season!

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Wind-Sensitive Car; Showing Up; Trash Burning; Early Bedtime; Icy Trespass; Repeat Tire Slashing

Monday, 3/1

8:26 a.m. Caller from L Street requesting to speak with an officer about an adult buying alcohol for underage people. Advised of options.

10:42 a.m. Caller states that there are three needles on the ground in the G Street alleyway; he will stand by for officers. Services rendered.

11:59 a.m. 911 caller reporting strong odor of natural gas in area of Second and L streets. TFFD responding.

5:32 p.m. Report of tree across entire road and blocking traffic on Ripley Road; wires involved. Units and Shelburne Control advised. DPW on scene requesting that Eversource be notified.

8:30 p.m. Report of blue sedan whose alarm keeps going off in the Third Street parking lot. Officer located vehicle; all quiet upon arrival. Spoke with male in parking lot who happened to be a mechanic; he advised the alarms in those cars are sensitive, and it is probably being set off by the wind.

9:31 p.m. First of six reports of trees down around town: involved areas were Lake Pleasant Road, Industrial Boulevard, Turnpike Road, Dry Hill Road, Norman Circle, and Old Northfield Road. DPW advised.

Tuesday, 3/2

10:04 a.m. Large ice patch on Hillside Road. DPW notified.

3:47 p.m. Caller from Turners Falls Road requesting to speak with an officer re: property damage. Advised of options.

9:38 p.m. Report from N Street of a dog who has been left outside for the last few hours; it appears that nobody is home. Officer checked location; could not locate dog; possibly already brought in for the night.

Wednesday, 3/3

7:05 a.m. Caller from Newton Street reporting that the back window into her boyfriend’s vehicle was smashed overnight. Report taken.

8:08 a.m. Report of vehicle passing multiple vehicles in the breakdown lane on Millers Falls Road; last seen turning onto Industrial Boulevard. Area search negative.

9:32 a.m. Report of tree crew working without a detail on Turners Falls Road. Officer spoke with M.D. Tree crew, who will be moving along in two minutes.

10:58 a.m. Detail officer requesting patrol unit for motor vehicle accident on Lake Pleasant Road; one vehicle rear-ended another; no fluids or injuries. Report taken.

12:12 p.m. Shelburne Control received 911 misdial from male who advised he was trying to reach Family Dollar. No emergency. Confirmed misdial.

1:23 p.m. Caller from Lake Pleasant Road reports that people are cutting down trees on her property. Situation mediated; misunderstanding over property lines.

1:43 p.m. Caller requesting assistance with a woman who has been harassing him over a private vehicle sale; advises female has been showing up. Advised of options and to call if she shows up again.

2:20 p.m. Caller from Sherman Drive complaining that neighbor is storing more unregistered vehicles on his property and burning his trash every day. Advised someone would drop off a copy of the bylaw and advised caller to call the Board of Health and FD when he burns.

9:32 p.m. Caller from Montague City Road states he is trying to sleep and the people in the upstairs apartment are causing a disturbance with kids running around and moving furniture around. Caller states he has to get up at 4:30 a.m. for work and is sick of it. Caller states this has been going on for over a year. Officer advised; states it is only 9:30 p.m.; not a problem at this time. Caller called back stating it sounds like they are still moving furniture around and running back and forth; states it has been going on for an hour.

10:14 p.m. Caller from Montague City Road states there is a male in the driveway that she does not recognize as being from the area; male is yelling and acting erratic. Caller concerned male may be under the influence of something or need medical attention. Caller states there is also a truck not known to her parked in the driveway; unsure whether it belongs to male party. Contact made with

party who will be taking male for the night.

Thursday, 3/4

9:08 a.m. Fire drill at Hillcrest Elementary School.

9:34 a.m. Fire drill at Sheffield Elementary School called in by Northern 911, who advised of the nature of the call then conferred in the caller from the school. TFFD, school resource officer, and dispatch administrator advised test call performed on site and delay of over two minutes was discovered before being transferred to MSP Framingham. They will be looking into this to rectify the issue.

9:46 a.m. Report of scam where caller claimed to be with Montague PD and told the caller they were going to suspend her Social Security number. Advised of options.

10:06 a.m. Fire drill at Turners Falls High School.

4:04 p.m. Party from Turners Falls Pizza House at MPD with footage of a dog owner who has been letting his dog defecate on caller’s property. Advised of options.

4:13 p.m. Caller complaining of idling tractor-trailer unit on Canal Street; advised ongoing issue; reports it has been idling for approximately 1/2 hour but some nights it idles longer. Caller also expressed concern over the unit having out-of-state plates and some of the lettering is scratched off. Caller advises she has taken photos of unit and does not believe it should be on the road. Officer checked TT unit; advises unit is not idling and it does not appear anyone is inside. Owner is an L Street resident and has two winter parking permits issued by the town, but no permit for the attached truck plate. Officer spoke with caller; she was just concerned for the broken headlight and missing front license plate. Caller also inquired why trailer plate and license plate do not match.

Officer explained difference to the caller, who seemed satisfied.

Friday, 3/5

8:37 a.m. Caller from Turners Falls Road reporting that someone slashed one of her tires overnight. Report taken.

4:33 p.m. Officer conducting motor vehicle stop for expired registration. Owner renewed online while on traffic stop.

6:08 p.m. 911 caller from East Mineral Road reporting that a female in a pink coat, jeans, and a hat came walking up their driveway to tell them that their driveway is slippery and she fell on it. Caller states there is no reason for her to be on their property. Area checked; unable to locate any females walking in the area.

10:15 p.m. Verbal warning issued for failure to dim high beams.

10:47 p.m. Caller from Montague City Road complaining of loud, disruptive noise coming from the upstairs neighbors. Just normal noise, nothing abnormal. Advised of complaint.

Saturday, 3/6

11:18 a.m. Received four 911 calls from a cell number that is mapping to somewhere near Canada Hill in Greenfield but could also be the bike path in Turners. No answer on callback; voicemail not set up. Contacted Greenfield PD.

Sunday, 3/7

7:26 a.m. Caller from East Mineral Road would like officers to respond to remove an unwanted female from his residence. Situation mediated for now.

8:58 a.m. Caller believes that he saw a toolbox that was stolen from him when he lived on Griswold Street back in 2013 for sale on Facebook. Officer will look into it.

11:22 a.m. Walk-in reporting a second incident of vandalism on Turners Falls Road this morning; tire slashed again. Report taken.

Montague Community Television News

We’ll Edit Your Videos!

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

TURNERS FALLS – This week, the latest Montague finance committee meeting is up for viewing, as well as the final games of the Turners Falls High School Basketball season. Next up is volleyball!

All MCTV videos are available on the MCTV Vimeo page, which can be found linked to the MCTV website, montaguetelev.org, under the tab “Videos.” 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 available to assist in local video production as

well. Cameras, tripods, and lighting equipment are available for check-out, and filming and editing assistance can be provided.

The MCTV board is looking for new board 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 infomontaguetelev@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 infomontaguetelev@gmail.com.

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HEARTFELT from page B1

you ask?! CSA stands for “community sustained agriculture,” which means farmers sell shares in their future crops by soliciting seed money from community members, literally, money to pay for the seeds the farmer will plant. Investors are then repaid in a share of the weekly harvest. It’s a win-win situation for everyone.

It’s a great way to support local agriculture while opening your kitchen to farm-fresh produce, often picked the same day you receive it. You may receive recipes and storage tips so you’ll know your rutabaga from your parsnips and be able to create new and exciting dishes. I was recently introduced to meat lasagna where the pasta was replaced with thin slices of roasted rutabaga, and I swear I’ll never eat it any other way, it was that good.

Here is a rundown of some of the more common onions and their basic uses:

Yellow onions are the workhorse of onions that are suitable for any occasion. Their pungent, ivory white flesh is wrapped in crackly brown parchment skin. You wouldn’t want to eat a yellow onion raw because of its extremely high sulfur content but cooking brings out their sweetness. This makes it a great onion for French

onion soup or for caramelizing to top a burger, cheesesteak, or goat cheese on a crisp baguette.

Sweet onions include the Vidalia, Walla Walla, Texas, and Maui. They lack that powerful sulfur smell, which allows the natural sugar to come through. They are best served raw in salads and relishes, used as garnishes, or turned into onion rings. This sweeter type of onion is generally available in spring and summer rather than the fall harvest.

White onions have a thinner skin that is more papery than yellow onions and they’re milder and sweeter, which makes them great for salsas, guacamole, and other raw dishes.

Red onions are great raw. They have a natural sweetness that exceeds the white onion and makes them excellent for pickling. Pickled onions are wonderful toppings for tacos, pizza, and even fried rice. They grill better than yellow or white onions which tend to turn mushy.

Green onions or scallions are a variety of young onion that can be eaten raw or cooked, and are used as garnish for soup, stews, or deviled eggs. They add a pretty green color, crunch, and flavor to dishes.

Shallots, which grow with multiple lobes per plant like garlic, offer up a more nuanced and sublime flavor. They’re excellent minced in



A mixture of finely chopped onion, celery, and carrot called mirepoix.

salad dressings and sauces.

Leeks, which are sadly underappreciated, look like giant scallions, and their flavor is mellowed by baking or roasting. They are nice in soups and sauces and are lovely baked and topped with breadcrumbs and Parmesan or Gruyere cheese.

Besides their taste and flexibility in cooking, onions offer many great health benefits including antibiotic, antiseptic, antimicrobial,

and anti-inflammatory properties that may help to treat headaches, heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, toothaches, mouth sores, even insomnia. Nutrient-dense, low in calories and high in vitamins and minerals, and a good source of potassium, onions are full of antioxidants and cancer-fighting compounds.

Try filling a baking dish with thinly sliced onions, or halve them

while keeping the skin on to support them upright as they bake. (Surprise Quiz #1: which onion is good for caramelizing?)

Drizzle with olive oil, sprinkle liberally with Parmesan cheese, and bake at 350° for about 30 to 40 minutes.

Or try your hand at making quick pickled onions to use as toppers for tacos, nachos, and sandwiches. (Surprise Quiz #2: which onions are great picklers?)

Combine ½ cup of water with ¼ cup each of distilled white vinegar and apple cider vinegar, 1½ tablespoons of maple syrup or honey, 1½ teaspoons of fine sea salt, and ¼ teaspoon of red pepper flakes (optional), and heat in a saucepan to a simmer.

Pack a jar with thinly sliced onions and pour the hot liquid over them. Press down to cover all with liquid then cool at room temperature before refrigerating.

They can be kept for up to two to three weeks in the refrigerator, although they are best if consumed immediately.

Trouble lives in Greenfield with Wifey and Mama Catt Elliott and volunteers at many local agencies working with food-insecure populations. She loves to talk, read, write, garden/farm, cook, and make art.



FURTHER BACK: 100 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here’s the way it was on March 9, 1921: News from the Turners Falls Reporter’s archive.

Decision in Wire Service.

President W. T. Ellis of the Turners Falls Board of Trade has received advice that the Western Union Telegraph Co. is willing to place a Morse operator in the Turners Falls office for a certain trial period, and then make a final decision in the matter after this system has been tried out.

William H. O’Brien, chief of the telegraph and telephone division of the Public Utilities Commission, has recommended, however, that instead of an operator, two telephone trunk lines be installed from the local office to the Greenfield office. The final decision will be made soon.

Death of Frank H. Seiler.

Frank H. Seiler, a well known resident of Turners Falls, died at the home of his daughter, Mrs. D. J. Murphy of High street, with whom he made his home, Monday morning at 11 o’clock, following a long and very distressing illness. He was 79 years old. His wife died only about three weeks ago, and her death undoubtedly hastened his own.

Mr. Seiler was born in Werdau, Germany, coming to this country about 53 years ago. For a half century he had lived in Turners Falls. Until his retirement from active labor, about 15 years ago, he had been employed at the Montague mill of the International Paper Co., being foreman of the pulp grinding department for a long period.

Mr. Seiler was a man of great force

of character, and of more than ordinary intelligence, industry and thrift. He was devoted to his wife and family, and up to his last illness had been uncommonly robust and active. He bore his suffering heroically, and was as philosophical and uncomplaining in the dark days of life as he had been in the bright.

He was a member of Mechanics lodge of Masons and of Gustav Adolph lodge, D.O.H. The funeral will be held tomorrow afternoon at two o’clock, from his late home, Rev. T. H. Vincent officiating.

Japanese to Lecture.

The lecture on “America and Japan,” which will be given by Minosaku T. Yamamoto, a Japanese scholar and thinker, who received his education both in Cherry-blossom land and in the United States, at Hibernian hall on Wednesday evening, March 16. It should attract a large audience.

Yamamoto comes here under the auspices of the Turners Falls Board of Trade and the lecture will be open to the public, without charge of any kind. As a prelude to the lecture, exquisite stereopticon views of Japan will be shown.

Local Matters.

The annual business meeting of the town will be held next Monday afternoon at one o’clock, at Hibernian hall. Fifty-one articles are to be acted upon.

Grip and severe colds are very prevalent in town. In some cases whole families are laid low at the same time.

An interesting entertainment with

missions as the theme was given at the Baptist church last evening. The program was very pleasing and included a play, “A Day in India,” given in costume and portraying the happenings in a typical day of a woman missionary in India. Mrs. R.H. Chapman took the leading part and all the characters were finely given and in the right spirit. A strong impression was made.

In the firemen’s whist tournament just completed, Captain James T. Kelly’s side decisively defeated the team captained by Julius Blassberg.

Mildred, daughter of Charles Potter of Riverside, died at her home last week Tuesday from a throat disease. She was in her 12th year, and was apparently convalescing when she took a very sudden turn for the worse. Her death was a great shock to her parents and friends.

The funeral was held Thursday afternoon, Rev. T. H. Vincent of the Congregational church of Turners Falls officiating. The Riverside school children led by their teachers, attended the funeral in a body, and there were a large number of very beautiful floral tributes.

Mildred was a very attractive little girl and well thought of by all who knew her. She regularly attended the Congregational Sunday school, and her death made a sorrowful impression upon all her young friends.

Basket Ball.

Turners Falls was defeated, 23 to 18, by Springfield, at Hibernian hall, Thursday evening.

Turners Falls will play Westfield at Hibernian hall tomorrow evening.



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WEST ALONG from page B1

That male came first as male red-wings have been doing for 10,000 years since the glacier backed away off this backyard and valley, leaving the then unknown, unnamed month of March to the frigid spring that was advancing over the tundra landscape.

The lady blackbirds will come in a few weeks, after the males as always. It's the dashing gentlemen red-wings, with fancy scarlet epaulettes, who wing first into the yard from across the frozen oxbow just beyond my white pine tree island. Over there in the oxbow at the bend of the river, the males have already begun setting up territories, haggling over choices sites among the tufted and wind-battered cattail stalks.

The Full Snow Moon of February is on the wane, it's hard to imagine that by March 28 we'll be gazing up at the Full Worm Moon. Is it possible, with the apparent hard perma-frost underfoot, that the worm will actually turn in three weeks?

They had better be turning because the darling humpty-dumpty woodcock is checking his calendar and counting on it. He will likely arrive just before the 28th, ready to set up his dancing and courting place in our woods. He'll be needing plenty of sustenance in the form of earthworms to maintain his libido, to fuel his skyrocketing twilight dance. I'll let you know when that happens!

March 8. It's International Women's day in many quarters. Here in the out of doors it's another Monday in March in this 'twixt and 'tween season. It starts out frigidly again, but I've watched the thermometer rise from 17 degrees to 27 in less than an hour.

Sitting outside tending last night's campfire was a challenge in the deepening cold of early twilight. My job out here, as well as the snowdog's job, was to keep an eye on the sizzling Brazilian cut of *pichana* slow-grilling over the fire.

Of course, human and dog had different objectives for keeping an eye on that choice cut of beef. The husky was waiting for his chance to snake the steak off the grill and head for his favorite ice patch to enjoy devouring his prey at his leisure, and my job was to keep dog from doing that. We kept careful eye on each other, as well as imagining the eventual fate of that prime cut.

The author of *West Along the River* will be launching a new column, once a month, entitled *Field Notes*.

We invite readers to contact David at dprule@hotmail.com with their own observations or questions about birds and nature.

Trusting that the fire is too hot for Nick to get too close just yet, I dash indoors for a glass of vodka, a fire-keeper trick I learned one winter in Karelia, in the north of Russia.

Now and then, some iced vodka helps the cook who must watch over the evening's supper, and it puts the keeper in a poetic and sometime jovial state of mind.

As the Russians taught me, be thankful it is March! We have survived another winter! And that is something to truly celebrate with a toast! *Zastrovial*!

By the way, the cook survived the cold, the *pichana* was grilled to a wood smokey perfection, and the husky got his reward of a fare

share of the evening's efforts and patience by the fire!

But that was last night, and now with the steadily rising sun's warmth, there are still things to do outdoors before dusk. I still need to tend to harvesting more saplings, and there's more dry firewood to be sledged out of the woods on the sparse but lingering crusted snow, to be brought up to the 1872 homestead. The old Baldwin apple tree needs trimming; got to get around to those wood duck boxes and replace old bedding with new cedar shavings to make a soft nest for the ducklings.

This early evening will be time for another early spring ritual. A visit to the bike path along the canal in the Patch provides another annual benchmark. In the late afternoon and early twilight, hundreds of migrating ducks pour in, making splash landings amid quacking and cackling, enthusiastic honkings of hundreds of geese.

Special visitors are the ring-necked ducks among the goldeneyes, demure hooded mergansers and rowdy common mergansers. Those black and white diving ducks congregate in their cluster of kinfolk. They stir up the waters with their mating rituals, chasing females, chasing off rival males, and generally causing the basin's surface to turn white with their skittering splashing.

This spot is one of the northernmost locales of open water on the Connecticut. Those migrating waterfowl brethren are following the retreat of the winter's glacier ghost, whose ice will be fading away upriver in the increasing melt.

After the spectacle of arriving migrants, we turn home, cheeks aflame, eyes tearing up in the biting wind. Winter's on the wane, hurry up spring time!



PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Healthy Food Webs Talk Offered

GREENFIELD – What do birds, insects, and plants have in common? One cannot survive without the other. They are all necessary to sustain a healthy food web.

In a free virtual talk, Meredith Gallogly, program manager at Grow Native Massachusetts, will take a deep dive into the ecological links between birds, caterpillars, and native plants, and what we can do to support this system and add beauty to our yards and communities. Her talk, entitled “Birds, Insects, and Plants: Sustaining Healthy Food Webs with Keystone Plant Species” will be held at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, March 16. Registration is required.

Gallogly's talk supports Greening Greenfield's new campaign called “70% Native Plants: trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants count,” which was inspired by Dr. Desiree Narango's research. Dr. Narango found that chickadees must have 70% native foliage within 50 yards around their nest in order to find the over 6,000 caterpillars they need to raise their young.

“Caterpillars, the larval stage of butterflies and moths, play an outsized role in our ecosystem, because they are nutritious, soft, and edible,” says Gallogly.

“Some native plants are called keystone plants because they play a huge role in sustaining healthy food webs. Caterpillars eat these plants, which gather nutrients via photosynthesis, and then birds eat the caterpillars, moving all that energy up the food chain.”

Gallogly will highlight the top readily-available keystone plants of the northeast for a variety of landscape conditions. She will also offer tips on establishing and managing these plants, to help everyone steward the land in their communities and their backyards.

“Learning about butterflies, moths, and birds has completely changed what I choose to plant in my yard and community,” says Nancy Hazard of Greening Greenfield. “While milkweed is necessary for monarchs to survive, trees and shrubs native to our area play an outsized role in hosting butterflies and moths, and this is where chickadees find the majority of food for their young.”

Restoring natural habitat is a major focus of Greening Greenfield, which aims to work toward a more sustainable Greenfield. To register go to greeninggreenfieldma.org and click on events, or call (413) 774-5667.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

‘Scholars’ Program Seeks Applicants

WENDELL – It's time to apply for scholarships from Dollars for Wendell Scholars! All students who live in Wendell and plan to pursue accredited post-secondary education at a college, university, or technical school next year can apply by completing a short and easy application process.

Applications for the scholarship are available at local high schools, and through the contacts listed below. The application deadline is April 15. High school seniors are given preference, but current post-secondary students are encouraged to apply as well. Last year, the program awarded \$4,400 to four scholars.

The Dollars for Wendell Scholars' seventh annual fundraiser was initiated with a mailing to all Wendell residents in February. Donations are tax deductible and may be made to: Dollars for Wendell Scholars, P.O. Box 232, Wendell, MA 01379, with checks payable to “Dollars for Wendell Scholars.” Payments are made directly to the recipients with approved documentation.

For more information, call or email Carolyn Manley at (978) 544-7028 or dollarsforwendellscholars@gmail.com, or Christine Heard at (978) 544-2282 or cheard59c@aol.com.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

New Food and Paper Waste Compost Program at the Montague Transfer Station!



The Bernardston Transfer Station's compost dumpster, 2019.

By AMY DONOVAN

MONTAGUE – On Wednesday, March 17, a new, residential food and paper waste compost program will begin at Montague's Recycling Center and Transfer Station on Sandy Lane in Turners Falls. There is no cost to participate in this new program.

Similar programs are successful at 10 other transfer stations in the county: Bernardston, Conway, Deerfield, Greenfield, Leverett, New Salem, Northfield, Orange, Wendell, and Whately. Similar compost programs are also well established in 25 public schools in the county. Franklin County is a statewide leader in school and transfer station compost programs.

Why compost?

Composting makes a valuable soil amendment from food and paper waste, saves money, slows climate change, and reduces trash. Households that separate their food waste for composting can save money on Montague's \$3 town trash bag stickers.

How the program works:

Triple T Trucking will place a special compost-only dumpster at Montague's Recycling Center and Transfer Station. The container will be emptied weekly, and the contents brought to Martin's Farm in Greenfield for composting. This commercial composting facility is different from your average backyard compost system in that it can compost meat, bones, cheese, paper products, and other materials that are not appropriate for your home compost bin or pile.

Municipal compost programs accept many materials currently destined for the trash. All solid food wastes are acceptable, including meat, bones, poultry, fish, cheese, dairy (no liquids), eggs, eggshells, shellfish, fruits, peels, vegetables, bread, grains, tea bags, coffee grounds and paper filters.

Paper is also accepted: napkins and paper towels, paper egg cartons, paper to-go containers, and pizza boxes with stuck-on food. (Pizza boxes that are empty and free of food should go in paper recycling.)

It is very important that residents keep the following items **OUT** of the compost container: liquids; pet wastes or kitty litter;

plastic bags, wrappers or cling wrap; polystyrene foam or other conventional plastic; metal; glass; or anything else that is not biodegradable.

Yard waste, leaves and brush are also not accepted in this container. The Montague Recycling and Transfer Station has a separate area for yard waste materials.

Residents can bring compostable materials during transfer station open hours only: Wednesdays from 7 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., and Saturdays from 7 a.m. to noon.

Collecting compost at home:

Residents can use a compost pail, five-gallon bucket, or any other closed container to collect their food waste and bring it to the transfer station. To make clean up easier, residents can line pails with newspaper, a paper bag, or a BioBag. All compostable bags must be BPI-certified: see www.bpiworld.org.

If compostable wastes are transported to the transfer station in a traditional plastic bag, the bag must be emptied into the compost container, and then the plastic bag must go in the bulky waste or trash. Traditional plastic bags should never be placed in municipal or commercial compost bins.

The Solid Waste District office in Greenfield sells two-gallon “Sure-Close” compost collection pails for \$5, by appointment: 772-2438. These pails will also be made available for free to Montague residents later this spring at the Montague Transfer Station, while supplies last.

Home compost bins:

As always, residents are also encouraged to compost non-meat food waste at home. The Solid Waste District sells home compost bins to Montague residents for a subsidized price of \$25, by appointment; call 772-2438. For more information, see www.franklincountywastedistrict.org/composting.html.

All Questions can be directed to Franklin County Solid Waste District at (413) 772-2438 or info@franklincountywastedistrict.org. MA Relay for the hearing impaired: 711 or 1-800-439-2370 (TTY/TDD).

Amy Donovan is program director at the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District.

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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.



Receta de Tortilla de patata

Por VICTORIA MAÍLLO DE AGUILERA

TURNERS FALLS – La palabra *tortilla* en España tienen un significado muy diferente del que tiene en Centroamérica. En España tenemos la tortilla de patata o tortilla española e incluso la tortilla francesa que se traduce al inglés como “*omelette*.”

Se acercan días con mejores temperaturas en los que queremos salir al sol, pasear, disfrutar del jardín del aire libre y hacer excursiones a lugares cercanos para disfrutar del clima y del paisaje. La tortilla de patata es la comida favorita de los españoles para llevar al campo o a la playa. Es muy barata, y fácil de hacer, apta para principiantes en los fogones. Se puede comer como plato único, dentro de un bocadillo de pan, o acompañada por una buena ensalada de temporada.

Vamos con los ingredientes para realizar una tortilla de tamaño medio. Estoy segura de que todos los tenemos en nuestra despensa:

- 6 **patatas** de tamaño medio
- 9 **huevos** medianos
- 1 **cebolla** grande (opcional)
- **Aceite** de oliva.

En primer lugar, debemos pelar las patatas, lavarlas y cortarlas en rodajas no muy finas ya que no queremos que se frian mucho, solamente que estén blandas.

A continuación, debemos pelar la cebolla y cortarla también



Tortillas de patatas listas para comer.

no muy fina.

En una sartén de tamaño grande y que no se pegue, ponemos el aceite de oliva a calentar. Cuando esté caliente, echamos las patatas junto la cebolla y ponemos el fuego a medio gas. No queremos que las patatas se frian, simplemente que se ablanden.

Tenemos que cocinarlas a fuego medio unos 20 minutos, removiendo de vez en cuando para que no se peguen. Cuando se puedan partir con una espátula, ya estarán listas. Escurrimos bien el aceite con ayuda de un colador al mismo tiempo que las apretamos con la espátula. Las ponemos en un bol y las reservamos.

A continuación, batimos los huevos ligeramente y los mezclamos con las patatas y las cebollas. En este momento es cuando debemos añadir sal y pimienta y probar para saber si está a nuestro gusto.

Ponemos un poco de aceite de

oliva de nuevo en la sartén, lo justo para cubrirla y que no se pegue la tortilla. Cuando esté caliente, echamos la mezcla del bol en la sartén y cocinamos a fuego medio unos 5 minutos. Usamos la espátula para separar la tortilla de las paredes de la sartén y que queden lisas y bonitas.

Ahora viene la parte un poco más complicada. Necesitamos un plato grande y liso para dar la vuelta a la tortilla. Parece difícil, pero con un poco de maña la operación se puede llevar a cabo con éxito. Dar la vuelta a la tortilla y con cuidado, dejar cuajar por el otro lado otros cinco minutos. En mi casa nos gusta poco hecha, pero si a ustedes les gusta con el huevo más cuajado, déjenla unos minutos más.

Se puede servir caliente o fría, e incluso aguanta unos días en el frigorífico.

¡Que les aproveche!

Sororidad en Día Internacional de la Mujer

Por VICTORIA MAÍLLO DE AGUILERA

TURNERS FALLS – Termino de escribir estas líneas el 8 de marzo, el día elegido para celebrar el Día Internacional de la Mujer. En algunos países se están celebrando concentraciones, o debido a las restricciones del COVID-19, otras demostraciones como huelgas o incluso reivindicaciones en los balcones. La verdad es que echo de menos ese tipo de manifestaciones en los Estados Unidos donde apenas se menciona esta efeméride en los medios de comunicación.

En años anteriores, habría mencionado en estas líneas el gran paso que supone tener una vicepresidenta como **Kamala Harris**, o a **Rosa Park**, o a la más desconocida **Claudette Colvin** que cuando puso su granito de arena en la lucha por los derechos civiles tenía solamente quince años, o a **Clara Campoamor** que luchó por el derecho al voto de las mujeres españolas, o a **Cecilia Bolh de Faber**, la escritora que para publicar tuvo que cambiar su nombre y firmar como Fernán Caballero, o a la muralista mexicana **María Izquierdo**, o a **Prudencia Amaya**, natural de El Salvador que se presentó a las elecciones antes de que las mujeres en su propio país pudieran votar, o a **Jeanette Rankin** que hizo lo mismo en Montana, o a **Luisa Capetillo** de Puerto Rico que fue juzgada por llevar pantalones en público.

En otras ocasiones, habría escrito sobre las mujeres que han luchado en primera línea en estos tiempos de COVID y han asumido el cuidado de los enfermos, de los niños y de las personas dependientes en el hogar familiar. Las cifras dicen que 7 de cada 10 personas que trabajan en la salud o como cuidadores son mujeres.

Podría también haber escrito este artículo sobre como el virus ha impactado aún mas a las mujeres, como muchas de ellas han perdido sus trabajos y han tenido que volver a ser amas de casa, o como otras muchas han tenido que pasar el confinamiento con su maltrata-

dores, aumentando más si cabe su miedo a las palizas diarias, o como otras en plena pandemia han tenido que afrontar los recortes en los derechos reproductivos y a tomar decisiones sobre su propio cuerpo debido al cierre de las clínicas de planificación familiar. La ONU indica que 47 millones de mujeres se han quedado sin poder acceder a métodos anticonceptivos durante la primera mitad de la crisis de salud.

Sería incluso una buena oportunidad para refrescarnos la memoria acerca de que la mayoría de los trabajos precarios están ocupados por mujeres, muchos de ellos en bares y restaurantes, que permanecen cerrados por la pandemia, o en hoteles como limpiadoras.

Quizás habría escrito sobre la cifra de mujeres que son asesinadas o violadas cada día, en la mayoría de ocasiones por su pareja o alguien conocido, y hubiera puesto el ejemplo de México donde cada día son asesinadas quince mujeres.

O podría haber mencionado la preocupación por el embarazo adolescente que ha aumentado durante la pandemia y muchas de esas adolescentes o niñas ya no regresarán a la escuela porque no tendrán esa oportunidad.

Podría haber escrito sobre todo lo mencionado anteriormente, pero este año quiero escribir sobre un concepto que debemos tener en cuenta si hablamos de feminismo: la sororidad. La sororidad representa para mí las historias de esas mujeres que me encuentro cada día en el camino, de esas mujeres que creen en sí mismas, y que cada día y casi sin saberlo, echan una mano con sus acciones cotidianas a todas las mujeres que las rodean y crean un futuro mejor para las niñas que nos observan ahora.

Si queremos la igualdad entre hombres y mujeres, y todavía queda mucho por conseguirlo, solamente podremos lograrlo con pequeños pasos que representan grandes acciones al ayudarnos entre nosotras.

Y esto no siempre ocurre así, y lo digo por experiencia personal, pero eso ya es otra historia...

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

• **Despensa del pueblo.** Reparto de comida y ropa gratis cada jueves de 2:30 a 4 p.m. en La



Mariposa en 11 Avenue A.

• **Great Falls Apple Corps** ofrece cada sábado comida y ropa de abrigo gratis en Peskeomskit Park 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.

• **Oportunidad de trabajo en Holyoke Community College:** HCC está buscando un asesor bilingüe para programas de educación infantil familiar. Es un empleo a tiempo completo para trabajar con educadores de primera infancia en el occidente del estado. Si usted tiene experiencia trabajando con programas de educación infantil familiar y con licencia en Massachusetts, y está interesado en esta oportunidad, por favor, vaya a la página web de empleo de **Holyoke Community College:** www.hcc.edu.

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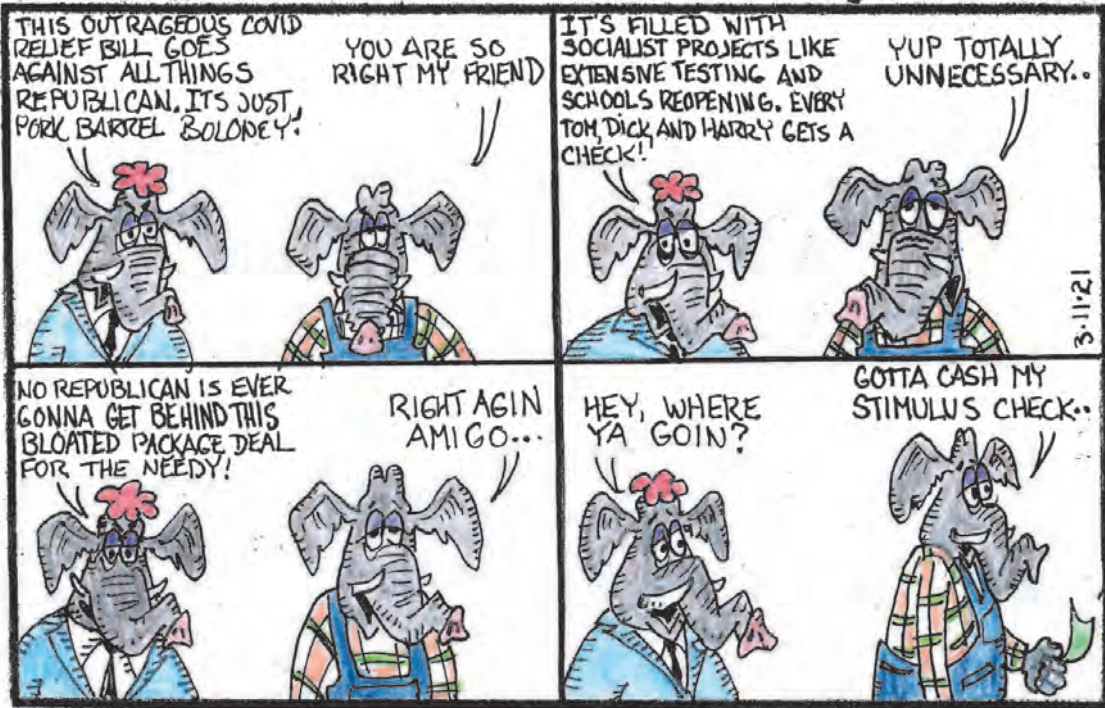
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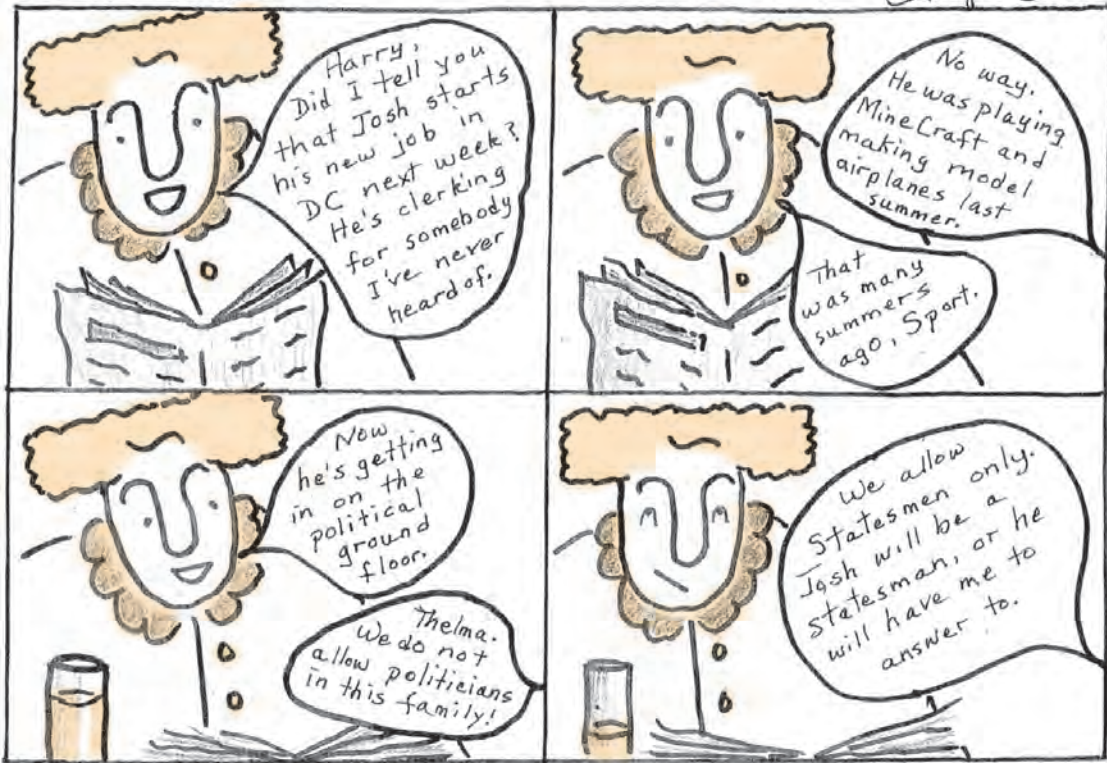
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THE AUTHORS' CORNER: STEPHANIE PERKINS

By IZZY VACHULA-CURTIS

TURNERS FALLS – Happy March! In February, I reread *Anna and the French Kiss*, and I just finished rereading *Lola and the Boy Next Door* by Stephanie Perkins. I fell in love with both books. They are some of my favorite books ever, and I am so excited to review them for you!

I interviewed Stephanie Perkins and reviewed *Lola and the Boy Next Door* in the October 4, 2018 edition of the *Montague Reporter*, but I thought it would be super fun to re-review it (since I was eleven when I reviewed it before), and re-view *Anna and the French Kiss* be-

cause I love it so much. Enjoy!

Anna and the French Kiss is about an American girl named Anna who is studying abroad in Paris for her senior year of high school. Anna's father is a popular author in America, who is trying to impress other authors by showing them how educated and wealthy his family is by sending Anna to Paris.

Anna is not very happy about studying abroad; she has friends, and a kind-of boyfriend in Atlanta, Georgia, and she does not want to go to Paris where she knows absolutely no one, and doesn't know any French besides "oui." Once Anna arrives at her new school in Paris, though, she meets Étienne

St. Clair, who is super cute, funny, and, most importantly, taken.

Anna and the French Kiss is one of my favorite books ever! It's so romantic, and I love learning about Paris. My favorite parts of *Anna and the French Kiss* are when Anna and Étienne have delicious french pastries, or find cute little cafes or boutiques in Paris.

All of the things Anna eats in Paris sound so *amazing*! Like in particular when Anna and one of her friends, Mer, go to a pretty bakery where everything sounds so yummy: "... caramel eclairs like ballet slippers, and red fruity cakes with wild strawberries dusted in powdery sugar. And more *macarons*. Bin after bin of *macarons* in every flavor and color imaginable. Grass greens and pinky reds and sunshine yellows."

Anna and the French Kiss reminds me an awful lot like *Love & Gelato* by Jenna Evans Welch, so if you read that book and enjoyed it, I am sure you will love *Anna and the French Kiss*!

Lola and the Boy Next Door is about a girl named Lola who lives in San Francisco. Lola was once in love with a boy named Cricket Bell, who lived next to Lola when they were little, before moving away and leaving Lola heartbroken. Lola is starting her junior year of high school at Harvey Milk Memorial when Cricket Bell and his twin sister, Calliope Bell, move back to San Francisco. Lola is convinced she isn't still in love with Cricket Bell, especially because she has a boyfriend already.

I absolutely *love* this book! My favorite sections of *Lola and the Boy Next Door* is when Lola puts together fun outfits. Lola is very unique and she loves dressing up in fun costumes, and expressing herself through fashion, so she always has the prettiest outfits!

One of my favorite outfits she

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PHOTO COURTESY IZZY V-C

Our correspondent holds up two books by author Stephanie Perkins.

dressed up in is the one she wore when she went for a picnic with her family. "I settle on a similarly checked red-and-white halter dress, which I made from an actual picnic blanket for the last Fourth of July. I add bright red lipstick and tiny ant-shaped earrings for theme, and my big black platform boots because walking will be involved. They're the sportiest shoes I own. I smooth my dress, erect my posture, and parade downstairs."

Lola also dresses up as Marie Antoinette for her Winter ball at school with a beautiful baby blue ball gown and fancy hair and make-up. I love fashion, so I think it is awfully fun to see all of Lola's outfits!

I also love *Lola and the Boy Next Door* because she has two dads, who are super fun to read about. One of Lola's dad's, Andy, owns a home pie bakery, and in one section of the book, Lola and Cricket Bell help prepare, bake, and decorate a pie order. This was one of my favorite parts of the book, because the pie-making process was fun to learn about, and I love all the sections where Lola and Cricket are together!

Like I said earlier, a couple years ago I interviewed Stephanie Perkins, and I thought it would be fun to include my favorite interview question-and-answer. I asked Ms. Perkins what kind of research she

does before she writes her books, and she said:


"I was a librarian in my twenties, so thankfully I feel very comfortable with research, because I do a lot of it! I'm a slow writer, which means that while I'm writing my current book, I'm also already preparing for my next few books. I read and study tons of novels in the same genre, and I research the topics that will be important to my characters."

"For *Anna and the French Kiss*, I even took a beginning French class at my local community college. Setting is important to my work, so I'll also read everything I can about the locations. I'll watch movies that are set there and study the backgrounds. In the beginning of my career, I couldn't afford to visit these places in person, but for *Isla and the Happily Ever After* and *There's Someone Inside Your House*, I was fortunate enough to finally be able to travel. On research trips, I take thousands of notes and photographs, because I'm never quite sure which details will be useful later."

I hope you enjoyed today's article. *Anna and the French Kiss* and *Lola and the Boy Next Door* are my favorite books ever, including the *Fablehaven* series and *Love & Gelato* of course! I hope everyone loves these books!

Have an amazing day!

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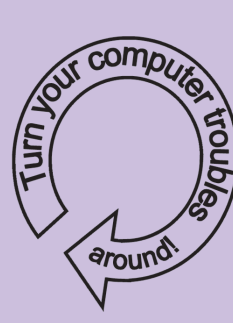
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