

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 19 – NO. 24

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EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

APRIL 22, 2021

THE BIG PICTURE

More Than Protecting the Habitat



JACKSON PHOTO

Emma Ellsworth shows me where a public canoe launch will be built in memory of her father.

By MIKE JACKSON

MONTAGUE CENTER – Emma Ellsworth became executive director of the Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust on October 1, after nearly three decades of leadership by Leigh Youngblood. Twelve days later her father, Dr. Allen Ross, died after a long illness. I didn't know either of them, but these facts were sharing space in my inbox last fall.

I did know of Al Ross by reputation, of course – he founded Connecticut River Internists, as well as the Sawmill River Race and the Mug Race; he was responsible for the renovation of the Bookmill; he served on the town selectboard.

Ellsworth, meanwhile, I learned had returned to the area after serving as vice president of UNITE HERE, one of the nation's largest service-industry unions.

These things made me curious. As someone who moved here as an adult, I'm always interested in people who moved away and then came back. I wondered how she sees this place changing, and how she brings all those experiences into her role as leader of a powerful and growing conservation organization.

The two of us took a long walk down Meadow Road on Monday and had a good, meandering discussion. It had just poured, so we brought umbrellas along with us, but everything was wet and glowing and springlike, and we got friendly waves from the person on a noisy old tractor and all the people dressed in spandex whizzing by on their bicycles.

This interview has been abridged, and edited for clarity.

MR: Have you always been in this area?

EE: No. Since I went to college, I came back in the summer, but then I was gone – from 18 until ten years ago. I lived around New England, primarily in Boston.

MR: You grew up on Taylor Hill, but you live in Orange now?

EE: Yeah. My husband is the son of one of my dad's canoe race partners – I did the Rat Race with my dad, and then got suckered into doing the canoe racing with him, and met Tom. My father-in-law was a seven-time Rat Race champion.

MR: That's intimidating. Do you still do it every year?

EE: Every year! This year it was canceled, and last year it was canceled, but we all paddle....

My mother is Ruth Charney, who founded the Greenfield Center School. She and Jay Lord were the founders of the Northeast Foundation for Children, those are my parents.

And then my dad – you know, my dad passed in October. And I knew that he was involved in the community, but I knew that as his kid, who was mostly involved in her own life.... Since he's died, so many people have reached out to share stories with me. I knew these things were happening, but I didn't know the depth of it, and what his role was, completely.

It's been really profound, learning so much more about my dad after he passed

see **BIG PICTURE** page A4

NEWS & ANALYSIS

Grand Vision for New Structure At 'Cumby's' Shrinks; No Apartments

By JEFF SINGLETON

TURNERS FALLS – At the April 7 meeting of a town board called the Montague Economic Development and Industrial Corporation (MEDIC), Dr. Sohail Waien, director of the medical firm New England Wound Care, presented a new proposal for a building at the site of the abandoned Cumberland Farms building on the corner of Avenue A and Second Street. The proposal would significantly downsize the plan previously accepted by MEDIC during a bidding process in 2019, which would have built a four-story structure modeled on the Grand Trunk Hotel that once occupied the space.

The new proposal would reduce the size of the building to two stories, eliminate residential apartments on the top two floors, and reconceptualize the design so it would not be a likeness of the Grand Trunk.



MIKE JACKSON PHOTO

The project's developer cites money as a factor.

Dr. Waien told the board that after discussing the project with the Greenfield Savings Bank and several development agencies, "they helped me come to realize that the scope of the project was too big. The funding that would be required was more than the revenues could sustain." He said those advising him were "committed to the project," but that he needed to "tone down the scope."

Waien showed a drawing of the facade of

see **STRUCTURE** page A7

Health Board OKs Seeking Alternate Mosquito Measures

By JEFF SINGLETON

MONTAGUE – The Montague board of health has unanimously voted to endorse opting the town out of the state's aerial mosquito spraying policy, and will present an alternative plan for mosquito control to the town selectboard, probably at the board's May 10 meeting. The selectboard must consider the opt-out plan after a public hearing in time to send it on to the state Executive office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, if approved, by May 15.

The case for opting out of the state spraying program was made by Dry Hill Road resident Jane Alessandra, who first approached the selectboard to recommend taking alternative action on April 5. The board asked Alessandra to bring her proposal to the health department, and also the conservation commission. Last week the con com voted to opt out of state spraying by a vote of 4 to zero, with two abstentions.

As she has at previous meetings, Alessandra argued that spraying, particularly with a commonly used pesticide named Anvil 10+10, was harmful to a range of animals, as

see **MOSQUITO** page A7

WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Wendell Holds Off On Low-Income Solar Discount Plan

By JOSH HEINEMANN

"Momentous decisions, made in record time," Wendell selectboard chair Dan Keller said as the board's April 14 meeting came to its conclusion a few minutes beyond an hour after it started.

In that time the board had agreed to opt out of state-sponsored aerial spraying for mosquitoes, wait for information before acting on Colonial Power's offer of reduced electricity rates to low-income bill payers seeking with solar incentives, moved forward on a reverse-911 system and the process of hiring a town coordinator for when Nancy Aldrich retires, and worked toward making the Wendell police station a useful useable building, possibly a satellite office for the Leverett police department.

As the meeting began, board of health chair Barbara Craddock told selectboard members that the state would only authorize aerial spraying if there is an outbreak of eastern equine encephalitis (EEE), a rare but deadly mosquito-borne disease. In 2020 Massachusetts had 12 cases, and six of those

see **WENDELL** page A4

FRTA to Launch Taxi Program

By LILY WALLACE

GREENFIELD – The Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA) has announced the launch of a new taxi service for Franklin County residents. FRTA is partnering with a team of local businesses and non-profit service providers to launch the service, which is



WALLACE PHOTO

The program is designed to help late-shift workers.

specifically designed to help local residents secure and keep late shift jobs. The service will provide the transportation they need to get to Franklin County businesses and home again during times that are not served by existing public transportation.

The MassHire Franklin Hampshire Workforce Board (FHWB) approached FRTA a year ago with a partnership proposal to team up on transit-assisted job development, according to an announcement last week.

"Transit is a critical issue for our participants," said Clare Higgins, executive director of Community Action, one of the project's non-profit partners. "Every time we do a community survey, transit comes up as a critical issue they are facing. Not everyone can afford to keep a car on the road, or can even drive a car."

Higgins also emphasized the potential impact of the program in providing

see **TAXI** page A8

KICKING INTO HIGH GEAR

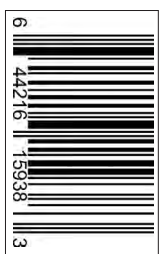


DAVID HOITT PHOTO

Franklin Tech's Sorin Cioclea clears the ball with Pioneer Valley's Joshua Glazier watching at his side. Cioclea scored a goal for the Eagles during the Panthers' 4-2 win at PVRS on Tuesday.

Little Issue

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The Montague Reporter

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Act Up

Remember COVID-19? Seriously, folks. Yes, the end is in sight in the US, and pandemic safety has become a culture-war punchline, and we are all incredibly, incredibly tired of hearing about it.

The World Health Organization is keeping a running global tally, and its last weekly count of positive cases of the virus – the week ending April 12 – was 5,273,718. That's a record, and it's rising. The previous record was the week ending January 4, with 5,044,120 confirmed cases.

Obviously, not every case of the virus shows up on that register, but it's helpful to look at the confirmed cases and the deaths. One in 47 confirmed cases results in a death worldwide. The deaths tend to rise or fall three weeks after the confirmed cases – the maximum number of deaths was 99,385, the week ending January 25.

This means we can probably expect a record-smashing number of deaths from the virus in two weeks, probably edging into the six-figure range for the first time. COVID-19 is worse than ever right now. A number of more virulent strains have evolved, and if the virus currently has more human hosts than ever, it is also more prone than ever to continue to mutate.

Roughly 27% of the United States population is fully vaccinated, and roughly 31% of Massachusetts residents. We're getting there, slowly. Better yet, around 40% of the country and 49% of the state have had at least one shot.

Though there are inequities in vaccine distribution within US borders that should not be overlooked or ignored, the global situation is sickening.

The WHO reported last week that "of the 832 million vaccine doses administered, 82% have gone to high- or upper-middle-income countries, while only 0.2% have been sent to their low-income counterparts. In high-income countries alone, 1 in 4 people have been vaccinated, a ratio that drops precipitously to 1 in 500 in poorer countries."

It's not simply an immoral and greedy approach on behalf of the first world – it's downright risky, since it increases the odds a vaccine-resistant strain will emerge.

A global initiative called COVAX is underway to deliver vaccines to underserved countries, but so far it has only delivered about 40 million doses. The African Union has a plan to build five mRNA manufacturing facilities on the conti-

nent, which is particularly and predictably suffering the worst neglect.

One of the biggest bottlenecks is intellectual property protection. It is within the power of the Biden administration to submit a waiver to the WTO that would effectively allow freelance manufacturing of the human-species-saving drugs; big manufacturers and the US Chamber of Commerce oppose such a move.

If their argument is correct – that an emergency waiver of intellectual property enforcement would disincentivize these companies from producing vaccines in the future – then it is one of the most stunning and plain indictments of our economic system imaginable: it is literally incapable of coordinating our activity to provide universal necessities.

We should certainly reward the scientists who developed these drugs, and all the other workers who supported them in that endeavor and have helped manufacture and distribute the product. But we have plenty of time to do that later, when the pandemic is finished.

The research that went into vaccine development was heavily publicly funded. By their logic, wouldn't we expect a refusal to surrender ideas to the public domain a disincentive to such funding in the future?

And there's another seldom-discussed dynamic at work here. The international disparity in scientific and medical capacity isn't simply an outcome of other inequities; it is reinforced by policies that discriminate among migrants, encouraging a "brain drain" of talented and trained professionals into the advanced industrialized countries.

Whenever the first world selectively opens its gates to human capital, it is performing a sorting operation on the global class structure. Immigrants represent 14% of our country's population, but 28% of its physicians, and a stunning 53% of our chemical engineers with doctorates.

Denying entry to non-technicians, inviting and hoarding technicians, and then denying the free sharing of the ideas they produce: the genocidal logic of the world's border system is often an abstraction, but COVID-19 has brought it to the surface with crystal clarity.

If every American who receives the vaccine takes action to ensure it is available globally, the problem will be solved. Every American who can but does not is guilty of perpetuating medical apartheid.



Leverett Transfer Station coordinator Annette Herda (right) explains recycling options to a new resident named Katie. The station is a very busy place, even though its popular toy, book, and clothing take-it-or-leave-it sheds are closed due to COVID concerns.

Letters to the Editors

DA Statement on Chauvin Trial

Jurors in the Derek Chauvin trial did the right thing Tuesday in unanimously holding him accountable for the killing of George Floyd. The prosecution of this crime was fair and it was just. The return of guilty verdicts on all three counts was a credit to the career prosecutors who built and presented a case that showed overwhelming evidence of guilt. It was also a credit to the victim/witness advocates who worked closely with the family of George Floyd over the past year and with bystanders who unwittingly became key witnesses after doing the right thing by drawing attention to the circumstances of the death of Mr. Floyd.

Despite the overwhelming evidence the prosecution team presented, the outcome of this case

was far from certain. Bringing cases of police misconduct to justice has not been an easy road. I am thankful that this jury's thoughtful deliberations resulted in accountability in this case of egregious misconduct by a police officer. It rightly sends a strong message that nobody is above the law.

The outcome in this case in no way diminishes the urgent need for systemic change to policing and other institutions in America and does not provide redress for the lives lost to unwarranted police shootings. We must work toward transforming and reimagining public safety.

The vast majority of police officers in this country work hard, with integrity and bravery, to protect the public and earn the trust of the communities they serve.

Derek Chauvin and officers like him bring dishonor to an honorable profession. We must be vigilant in holding accountable officers who, like Derek Chauvin, have a history of physical violence, by terminating their employment and permanently stopping their ability to end someone's life.

This verdict offers a measure of justice to Mr. Floyd, but true justice would mean preventing George Floyd's needless death. Instead, we mourn his loss and commit to preventing other such killings by committing to racial justice initiatives and compassionate policing that will make communities safer and more just.

David Sullivan
Northwest District Attorney

Drawing a Distinction

To the neighborhood,

I am one of your many friendly neighborhood Massage Therapists. We attend accredited schools and we like to talk about your pain, your back aches, stiff necks, and plantar fasciitis. We study anatomy and pathology. We own businesses and we work for spas and chiropractors.

The shootings in Atlanta recently were horrifying. No one should be shot. No one should be shot at work. No one should be shot because of their ethnicity, gender, profession, or immigration status.

However, the establishments that were targeted were not spas. In the news, they have been described as "Massage Parlors," "Adult Entertainment Businesses," "Spas," and "Massage Businesses." The people working there are probably

sex workers. Clearly they should expect to be safe at work. But having these concepts muddled at the national level only benefits the people who bill their illicit businesses as spas.

For everyone who thinks that normal people are not confused about this, I will refer you to the majority of my colleagues who have been propositioned at least once in the course of work. Myself, I have had to explain that sexual contact is not part of my job as recently as the last three years.

Please help raise awareness; we need clarity. No news outlet should conflate a "Massage Parlor" with a "Spa."

Gretchen Wetherby, LMT
Millers Falls

OFFERING

We have a glut of *Montague Reporter* back issues at our office! They are free for the taking. We are often given extra copies by our printer. Usually readers just show up to take bundles of these surplus newspapers for non-reading uses: arts and crafts; sheet mulching; woodstove starter; puppy cage liner; packing material, etc. Supply has exceeded demand for a couple months, though, at this point.

If you are interested in coming and taking some off our hands, please email editor@montaguereporter.org or call the office at (413) 863-8666 to arrange a time for pickup. Mondays and Fridays are typically best. Offer available while supplies last. Thank you!

Published weekly on Thursdays.

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By NINA ROSSI

It's not too early to look ahead to summer, and to the opportunity for you or someone you know to line up a **summer internship** through the Franklin Hampshire Career Center. Contact Matt Allen at mattallen@masshifhwb.org to apply for these four-week, unpaid learning opportunities.

Three biking and hiking locations in the valley are included in "**Spring Migration Trip Tip**," a new birding guide for sighting the thousands of migrating birds that fly north through our area to nest, joining our year-round residents. The Norwottuck Rail Trail, Mount Sugarloaf Reservation, and Canalside Rail Trail are all within 50 minutes of each other, and offer numerous opportunities to observe these birds.

Download the guide at www.mass.gov/doc/spring-migration/download. The activity is suitable for all ages.

Also check out the **birds in the North Quabbin area** with Jeff Johnstone on early morning walks every Friday, April 23 through May 21, as well as Sunday, May 9. The walks start at 7 a.m. from the Millers River Environmental Center at 100 Main Street in Athol.

"These are great events for the novice birder to learn from one of our best field naturalists. Come for as long as your schedule allows," reads the announcement. Severe weather cancels the walk. Call Johnstone at

(978) 249-9052 for more information. COVID rules will be in effect – wear masks, don't carpool, and don't share optics – though some rules may be modified as vaccinations become more common.

This Saturday, April 24 at 10:30 a.m., join the **Great River Survival Walk**, which highlights the plight of the Connecticut River and is sponsored by the Traprock Center for Peace and Justice. This three-mile community walk through the beautiful French King Gorge to the intake tunnels of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project and back will take about two hours.

This easy walk or bike trip starts and ends on Dorsey Road in Erving. The event is rain or shine, and children are welcome. Bring masks, water and snacks, but no pets. For more information, see traprock.org/event/great-earth-week-walk-for-river-justice.

Saturday is also the 20th National **Prescription Drug Take Back Day**. Greenfield, Leverett, Montague, Deerfield, and Sunderland police stations will take medications off your hands from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. There are also permanent drop boxes at those same police stations, available anytime. Medication can remain in the original containers with the labels on them. No liquids, syringes, IV equipment, or chemotherapy drugs will be accepted. Prescription and nonprescription drugs, vitamins, and veterinary medications will be taken for safe disposal.

While the exhibits at the Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls are still closed to the public, families may enjoy an outdoor Storywalk featuring the book *Call Me Tree, Llámame Árbol*, by Maya Christina Gonzalez. Follow the posts on the Center's grounds, with pages from the book, now through May 2, except on April 26 and 27.

The Franklin Regional Transit Authority is launching a **taxi service for late shift workers**. They are aiming to help Franklin County residents obtain and keep late shift jobs, and the help is available whether for lack of transportation, money, or other issues. For more information, see our article on Page A1, or contact Michael at (413) 774-2262 ext. 105.

Are you wondering about how safe **activities with friends and family** are, after you have been vaccinated? There are guidelines at www.mass.gov/guidance. Caution is still urged, but social opportunities are expanding. Meals with vaccinated friends – and hugs! – can start to make all our lives more enjoyable.

State senator Jo Comerford's office sent a reminder that the **People's Town Hall** is coming up on Monday, April 26, and registration is required. Registrants should have immediately received a confirmation email from Zoom with instructions on how to join. If you didn't receive one, please try registering again at senatorjo-comerford.org/town-hall-registration, or contact samantha.hopper@masenate.gov for assistance.

The Friends of the New Salem Public Library is hosting a **online book reading** and question and answer session on Thursday, April 29 from 7 to 8 p.m. with award-winning Northampton authors Sally Bellerose and Susan Stinson. Bellerose will read from her new novel

Fishwives, and Stinson will read from her newly released novel *Martha Moody*. For full details and sign-up, see tinyurl.com/sallyandsusanreading. If you want to submit questions, sign up by April 28.

The League of Women Voters of Franklin County will host a virtual **People Powered Day of Action** with state representative Paul Mark, former House redistricting chair, on Thursday, April 29, at 7 p.m. on Zoom. The League seeks to increase public awareness and engagement around the redistricting process, and make sure the public's voice is heard.

Redistricting is a process in which congressional and legislative districts are drawn to determine how communities are represented based on census data. The Day of Action is meant to shine a light on the process and educate the public on how to advocate for fair maps. "People should choose their politicians, not the other way around!" says Marie Gauthier, local League president. "This year we have a chance to make sure our communities are represented more accurately and equitably, and we want to encourage people to get involved."

To receive a link, email atlwv-franklincounty@gmail.com.

Spring clean-up postponed! The weather for this Sunday looks like rain, so the Great Falls Apple Corps is re-scheduling its **Unity Park Community Garden Clean-up** – with live music – to Sunday, May 2 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Sign up for a volunteer shift, and help them get the garden into tip-top shape for the growing season! For information, visit the Apple Corps on social media or send an email to greatfallsapplecorps@gmail.com.

Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

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OPED

The Dangers of Herbicides to All Life

By SARAH GREENLEAF

LEVERETT – It is a vivid memory, altho some years have passed. On a beautiful Summer's day, my husband and I were out walking with Mona, our family beagle, down Putney Road by Leverett Pond. We decided to go down to the dock at the water's edge to look at the water.

It was a happy, playful time, but while we were playing, Mona fell off of the dock into the water. She swallowed some water when she first fell in and dog-paddled around, but we pulled her back out onto the dock. She shook off and we decided to go back up to the open field at the beginning of the road, so that she could dry off in the sun.

When we got to the field, Mona suddenly began to choke and froth at the mouth. She stumbled and laid down, panting and shaking. Tremors and jerks of convulsions went through her body, her eyes rolled up, and her legs alternately made weird twitching movements and stiffened out straight.

We didn't know what to do, if we should try to move her or not, or if that would make her worse, so we just petted her down her back and spoke to her in soothing tones. After about 15 or 20 minutes she stopped shaking and was able to get up again, and we walked slowly with her back up the road.

We stopped by the side of the road to rest, and suddenly we noticed a sign that had not been apparent before. It said that the water of the pond had been treated with an herbicide, and that no one was supposed to drink, swim in, or water their gardens with the pond water. We had not noticed the sign before, because it was set back from the road, and we thought about all of the wild animals and also people's pets, not knowing that someone was poisoning their water, drinking it as they always did.

When we got back to the house, we thought

that Mona should go to the vet to see if there was anything that we could do for her. The vet couldn't give us anything to treat her, to counteract the poison in the pond water. He said that you never know when an animal, especially a sensitive one, will have a bad reaction to those kinds of toxic chemicals, as they can cause chain reactions with the systems in the body.

Mona, our family beagle, ended up dying of bone cancer just two years after her accidental swallowing of the poisoned water in the pond. She was our beloved dog, and it was tragic.

I believe that her death was a result of the toxic chemicals that she had ingested. Bone cancer is one of the health hazards found to result from herbicide exposure in recent research studies. Tests also found that herbicides caused lung lesions, lymph swellings, various other abnormal tumors and cancers, digestive difficulties, skin diseases, neurological and nervous disorders, and hormonal and fertility problems.

Herbicides can also be classified as being "endocrine disruptors," toxic chemicals which can accumulate in the body and cause bodily imbalances. They have gotten a lot of notice lately when a recent study was published about the alarming decline of human fertility, which would create a widespread need for assisted reproduction for most people within 20 or 30 years. Herbicides have also been implicated as the causative factor in multiple cancer lawsuits associated with their use in California, and there is no reason that can justify their continued usage.

There is a small group of self designated land-owners that have been promoting their use in Leverett Pond, to try to kill the Eurasian milfoil, so that the Pond can maintain large areas of open water for recreational use. Their use has simply made the water weed growth worse, as it has

been killing off the native pond weeds that do not grow as deep, and are therefore not as resilient or resistant to the herbicides; when the competing weeds are killed off, the milfoil can spread.

The use of these toxic chemicals is creating an imbalance in the ecosystem of the pond, and endangering all of the life that depends upon its waters, and the risks are not acceptable and damages have been tragic.

Therefore I am asking everyone who feels strongly against the continued use of herbicides in Leverett Pond to please write to the Leverett Conservation Commission before their meeting on May 3, when they will be reviewing another management plan for approval. They can be emailed at concom@leverett.ma.us.

This new plan proposes the continued use of herbicides, as well as the misguided idea of "drawdown," which would effectively kill a large portion of the life in the pond by lowering the water level for a period of time, comparable to a "bloodletting" of the pond. These outdated practices should be discarded. There are viable, ecologically sound alternatives that could be used instead.

Not only the life of Leverett Pond depends upon it, but also all of our lives, as these chemicals get into our environment and our bodies. We are all interconnected, and the Web of Life spreads far.

Sarah Greenleaf is a trained herbalist who has worked at fundraising and information sharing for various environmental and progressive groups. She grew up in Leverett, is of Native heritage, and is a member of Mount Toby Friends Meeting. She has lived around this area for many years and has often enjoyed the peace and beauty of Leverett Pond.

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WENDELL from page A1

people died — dwarfed by the COVID death count.

Mosquitoes also carry West Nile virus, for which there is a vaccine for horses, but not for human beings. Craddock said they would spray at night to impact mosquitoes when they are active, and avoid human exposure.

Keller said he was “very much against aerial spraying.” He cited the experience of Agent Orange, sprayed as a defoliant in Vietnam and said to be harmless to humans at the time. Exposed service members returned with genetic disorders, and birth defects in their children. He said he would be happy to jump through whatever hoops are necessary to avoid spraying.

In order to opt out of the state spraying program, the board must seek public input, coordinate with town departments including the road crew, and offer an alternative plan for mosquito control and disease mitigation.

As alternatives Keller offered fly swatters, insect repellent, and a general town-wide effort to avoid stagnant water. Other alternatives were discussed: a workshop on building and maintaining bat houses was proposed, and selectboard member Laurie DiDonato suggested a free tire disposal day at the WRATS, wondering how much it would cost the town. DiDonato said people in Montague are trying to get that town to opt out.

Craddock offered an alternative, a larvicide she called “dunkers.” At home she and her husband collect rainwater for the garden, and put dunkers in the rain barrels; bacteria in the dunker kills the larvae.

Selectboard member Gillian Budine said she contacted state senator Jo Comerford’s office about coordinating non-spray mosquito control efforts with other towns, but had not yet heard a reply.

Inspection of culverts for standing water is part of mosquito control, so the highway commission and road crew would be part of any

alternative control measures.

Split Coordinator; Solar Deal

The job of town coordinator has grown during Nancy Aldrich’s nearly two decades of working for the towns of Wendell and New Salem. Keller said he broached the subject of each town hiring someone to work more than the 20 hours per week Aldrich has been paid for. He said one possibility is that Wendell hires someone to work three-quarters time, benefited.

Keller admitted the choice would put pressure on New Salem to find their own part time coordinator, but said he had spoken with New Salem selectboard chair Randy Gordon, whose response was, “It has been coming.”

The new hire’s work might be supplemented, and added compensation offset, by the coordinator serving as clerk for other boards that have a paid clerk now. It would not be a perfectly clean change — Wendell’s assessors, who have a clerk, meet on the same nights as the selectboard.

Advertising in the Central Register covers a large area and is free. Keller specifically suggested advertisements in the *Montague Reporter*, as well as the *Greenfield Recorder*, in which two days of advertisement costs \$300. Keller suggested advertising only one day, and stating that applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Budine suggested posting the position at UMass.

Aldrich’s last day is July 30, after which she will use accumulated vacation time. The start date for a new hire is Tuesday, July 20, one of the two days Aldrich works at the Wendell office building. The finance committee needs to be kept aware of overlapping pay.

Colonial Power, the town’s electricity aggregator, sent Wendell an email asking for signatures on a proposal to integrate new solar-generated electricity at reduced cost for low-income ratepayers.

DiDonato said she thought it might be good to delay the deci-

sion. The proposal is still waiting for approval from the state Department of Public Utilities, and would not start until the solar generation is developed, so there is no urgency to sign on.

The agreement would be for 20 years. Wendell’s current agreement with Colonial Power, which provides reduced rates for everyone in town, is only for a few years. It is impossible to know with certainty what 20 years will bring in solar development, and electricity distribution.

DiDonato also said New Salem energy committee chair Zara Dowling has done enough research to show that Colonial Power would make much more money with this proposal than the low-income residents would save. She suggested the towns should band together and ask that a larger share of the savings be passed along to ratepayers.

Board members agreed to wait before signing up.

Police Building

Former Wendell town administrator and present Leverett town administrator Margie McGinnis sent off a grant application for \$100,000 for improvements to the police station.

The building housed the fire department until engines became too large to fit inside and the town built its present fire station highway garage. The police moved in, but plumbing and other comforts were not added.

The grant would allow connection to Wendell’s town water and septic systems, and make the building useful to the Leverett police as a satellite station. Overhauled and made more comfortable, it could be used to interview people, avoiding the need of bringing them all the way to Leverett.

The WRATS free store has been closed since the beginning of COVID restrictions, and the highway commission, which oversees the WRATS, is considering keeping it closed because it costs too much.

Budine noted that the free store is not a valid way to avoid paying

to dispose of junk; items put in the free store should be of decent tag sale quality. In the last year residents have had the choice of storing their unused, decent-quality items or putting them into the trash stream.

Keller said, “We’ll find a way to keep it open,” with volunteers if needed.

The next highway commission meeting is scheduled for May 4. Before then commissioners are invited to the next selectboard meeting to work out a way to keep the free store open.

Because the WRATS was not on the agenda, the board took no other action.

Other Business

Aldrich reported that Wendell got a discrimination complaint from a former employee, a white male. Before reading the complaint in open session she is checking with town counsel.

The Franklin Regional Council of Governments has received a District Local Technical Assistance grant from the state for a pollinator garden design for Wendell. They proposed the Fiske Pond property as a site. Keller asked how big the garden would be, and suggested that it fit well into the existing landscape.

Wendell native plant specialist Adam Kohl and solitary wasp expert Bill Stubblefield asked to use the town common for a plant and insect walk on May 1. Attendance is limited to 10 people, and slots are already filled.

Use of the common is a right of citizens, as long as that use is not destructive or obnoxious, so the selectboard took no action.

Greenfield Community College professor emeritus Richard Little asked Wendell to support his petition to call armored mud balls the official sedimentary formation of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Keller said he believed armored mudballs are unique in the world, and supported the effort.



Dual-Use Solar Decision Expected in Northfield

By MIKE JACKSON

NORTHFIELD — The Northfield planning board is expected to vote next Thursday, April 29 on a special permit for a group of large-scale solar arrays on land owned by Four Star Farms on Pine Meadow Road. The project is closely watched statewide as a large-scale application of the emerging “dual-use” option — combining solar with agriculture — under Massachusetts’ solar subsidy program. The state has provisionally approved the plan to graze sheep under roughly 26,000 panels as qualifying for the subsidy.

Next week’s deliberation follows several long, at times contentious, hearings on the proposal. It was postponed from April 15 to give developer BlueWave Solar time to suggest alternative ways to connect the northernmost array, Array A, to the power grid. Abutters and other residents who spoke at the hearings expressed concerns about the visual impact of the interconnection lines, poles, and access roads under the original plan.

“We took into account the visual concerns of the town, which were understandable, and we wanted to make a project where the interconnection was not quite as front and center,” BlueWave director of project development Jackie Firsty told the *Reporter*. “So we spoke with Eversource to get [two] additional options.”

If the planning board approves the permit, it will have to weigh trade-offs among the interconnection options now on the table. One would reduce the visibility of the power lines and poles, and relocate and shorten the access road to Array A, but entail cutting a quarter acre of trees.

BlueWave’s recent consultation with Ever-

source was only the latest in an extensive history of collaboration between the companies over the Pine Meadow Road proposal. If approved, the developer would pay the power company to upgrade nearly three miles of power lines, between the farm and the nearest substation on Route 63, from single-phase to three-phase wiring.

According to Firsty and Nathan L’Etoile, the son of Four Star’s owners, the cost of that wiring upgrade was what drove BlueWave to seek a special waiver from the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) in order to make the second large parcel, Array B, larger than would otherwise be allowed to qualify as a dual-use project under the state’s solar subsidy program. Array B would provide 3 MW of AC power to the grid at its interconnection, and the program guidelines ordinarily limit “Agricultural Solar Tariff Generation Units” (ASTGU) to 2 MW.

The “pre-determination form” submitted last June seeking preliminary approval for Array B made several appeals to justify the waiver. “This project will bring three-phase power to an area that has historically been underserved and lift the restrictions currently imposed by single-phase power,” it read. “Solar arrays in Western Massachusetts are especially susceptible to higher capacity needs. The electrical infrastructure in this area is chronically underdeveloped, leading to significant interconnection costs.”

The letter also argued that the waiver would “significantly enhance” the “agricultural capacity of the land,” given that the sheep would graze the parcels for 20 years, whereas “with a shrinking market that is becoming increasingly difficult in which to participate, other development types

such as real estate threaten its ability to remain agriculturally productive in lieu of better economic alternatives.”

Lastly, the letter argued that if the waiver were not granted, the project would need to be redesigned in a manner that would reduce the remaining land open for conventional farming.

Eric Steltzer, director of DOER’s Renewable Energy Division, issued a letter last July granting the waiver and announcing the state’s position that the Pine Meadow Road project “likely satisfies all criteria” for the dual-use subsidy. Steltzer stressed that this was “not a final Department decision,” and that a “final determination” would come after the developer formally submits the project to the subsidy program. Local approval must be secured before that step.

If the Northfield project is built, it may provide BlueWave with a central hub for a sheep grazing operation that could scale up and allow the company to build more dual-use arrays in the region. BlueWave plans to install a well, water lines, fencing, and housing, and a farmer named Jesse Robertson-Dubois has signed on to rent the facilities as the “winter home” and lambing site for a mobile flock of 450 sheep.

“That’s absolutely an option on the table,” Firsty replied when asked about the prospect of using Robertson-Dubois’s sheep at future sites. “It really does help provide a hub for him... Jesse’s been fantastic to work with so far, and we’d love to provide him additional opportunities to graze more projects.”

Though an agenda is not posted online as of press time, the planning board has been meeting Thursdays at 4 p.m. via Zoom.

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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.



“Immigrant Voices: A Celebration of Arts” vuelve al Shea virtualmente



Grupos de niños de Guatemala durante su actuación.

Por VICTORIA MAÍLLO DE AGUILERA

TURNERS FALLS – Center for New Americans celebrará su escaparate artístico anual “Immigrant Voices: A (digital) Celebration of the Arts” ya que regresa a los escenarios virtuales en colaboración con el teatro Shea el domingo 2 de mayo a las 7 p.m.

Debido a la pandemia podrán verlo desde el confort de su casa de forma virtual por segundo año consecutivo. El evento muestra las ricas y variadas tradiciones artísticas representadas por inmigrantes que viven en el oeste de Massachusetts. En años pasados las actuaciones han incluido cantantes provenientes de Haití, un violinista de Rusia, y bailarines de Ecuador, Venezuela, y México, entre otros.

“Immigrant Voices” se lanzó en el Shea hace varios años cuando Christopher “Monte” Belmonte renovó el teatro con la misión de ofrecer a la comunidad un espacio para eventos y actuaciones. *Center for New Americans* presenta “Immigrant Voices” cada año como una afirmación de la vasta diversidad de nuestra comunidad. Según Biani Salas, que fue estudiante de sus programas y, ahora ejerce como maestra de ceremonias del evento, *Immigrant Voices* es como una celebración familiar que forma parte de una tradición.

Las entradas están a la venta por 10 dólares en la página web de CNA. Como en años anteriores, existe la posibilidad de hacer una donación en apoyo al trabajo de esta organización sin ánimo de lucro.

Así mismo, las empresas pueden comprar un anuncio en el programa del evento para demostrar el apoyo a los inmigrantes, único segmento local de nuestra población que sigue creciendo y que proporciona una fuerza vital para el crecimiento de nuestras empresas.

Acerca de Center for New Americans: Esta organización ha dado la bienvenida y servido a inmigrantes en el oeste de Massachusetts por cerca de treinta años con clases gratuitas de inglés para hablantes de otras lenguas, instrucción en tecnología, educación cívica y preparación profesional; una capacitación anual en primavera para auxiliares de enfermería dirigida a antiguos estudiantes interesados en trabajos de salud, y por supuesto servicios legales de ciudadanía e inmigración.

Center for New Americans tiene sedes en Amherst, Greenfield, Northampton y ofrece clases de inglés en Turners Falls en colaboración con Brick House. Si quieren comprar entradas para el evento o más información, la pueden encontrar en www.cnam.org.

- **Food Bank of Western 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. 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.** Reparato 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 delante de Shea Theater en Avenue A en Turners de 12 a 3 p.m.

¿Qué está pasando en la frontera con México?

Por VICTORIA MAÍLLO DE AGUILERA

TURNERS FALLS – El presidente de los Estados, Joe Biden, dio su primera rueda de prensa el pasado 25 de marzo en la que contestó preguntas acerca de la pandemia y especialmente acerca de la crisis migratoria en la frontera de los Estados Unidos con México. Biden volvió a repetir que, como aseveró en su campaña política la presidencia, su objetivo es revertir la política que había llevado a cabo su antecesor, Donald Trump.

Esta última idea que ya formó parte de su campaña política antes de las elecciones y en la que siempre habló de medidas urgentes para lograrlo. Una de estas medidas fue reunificar a los menores de edad con sus familias y la decisión de no seguir construyendo el muro en la frontera con México. Lo cierto es que los centros de detención que vimos durante la era Trump se siguen utilizando ahora mismo, aunque las condiciones de vida en algunos de ellos hayan sido mejoradas.

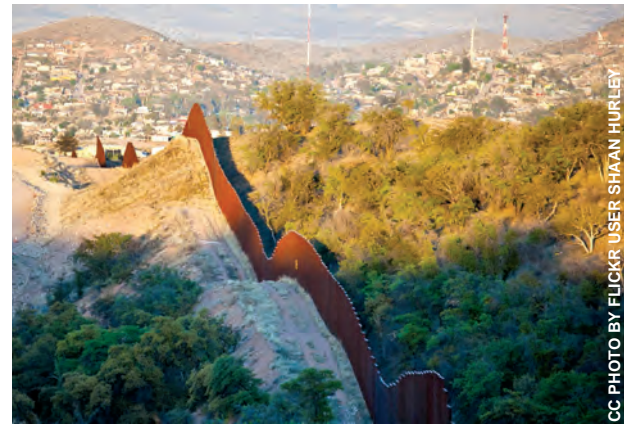
En enero, la Administración del presidente de Estados Unidos, suspendió el programa creado por Donald Trump llamado “Permanezcan en México” que consistía en que el gobierno estadounidense podía devolver a México a los solicitantes de asilo. Con esta norma, el gobierno del anterior presidente devolvió unos 70.000 migrantes indocumentados a México en espera de los trámites migratorios que en algunos casos y debido al gran número de solicitudes, puede llevar muchos meses.

La crisis migratoria se lleva agudizando desde antes de la toma de presidencia de Biden, pero especialmente durante el mes de febrero pasado cuando fueron detenidas más de 100.000 personas que trataron de cruzarla sin tener los documentos para ello. Esta cifra es la más alta desde 2019. En marzo la cifra se repitió y ha sido la más alta desde el año 2006.

Los detractores del presidente Biden dicen que esto se está produciendo por el efecto llamada de las políticas migratorias del actual presidente. El gabinete de Biden se defiende diciendo que esto no es cierto, sino debido al incremento de la violencia y la crisis económica agravada por la pandemia.

El presidente Biden ha prometido ayudas a los países de Centroamérica de los que provienen los migrantes si ponen en marcha medidas para acabar con la corrupción política. La presidenta Kamala Harris ha sido designada por Biden para coordinar las medidas migratorias y supervisar la lucha contra la corrupción y la violencia en los países centroamericanos que impulsan esta migración.

Añadido a la gran cantidad de personas que quieren atravesar la frontera está el problema de los casi 6.000 menores, no acompañados de adultos, que han tratado de llegar a los Estados Unidos.



Muro entre México y Estados Unidos.

Todos hemos tenido la oportunidad de ver en las noticias un vídeo reciente de un niño de 10 años perdido en Texas, cerca de la ciudad fronteriza de McAllen, un lugar desértico en el que habitan serpientes de cascabel, caminando solo y desorientado hasta que se encuentra con un agente de aduanas fuera de servicio. Se ve la cara del muchachito llena de lágrimas y con un gesto de miedo y desesperación cuando le pregunta al agente que si le puede ayudar. El niño le explica al agente sin dejar de llorar que estaba con un grupo de personas y cuando se quedó dormido le abandonaron.

La intención del niño procedente de Nicaragua era reunirse con familiares en Estados Unidos y viajaba solo con su madre que huía de un caso de violencia de género. La madre fue secuestrada por los coyotes que pidieron un rescate a la familia. El niño fue llevado por el agente a un centro de menores en la frontera, cerca de Donna en Texas, centro que es motivo de controversia en los medios de comunicación, que alegan que los menores están encerrados en jaulas.

Precisamente por este gran número de menores no acompañados que llegan cada día a la frontera hace que la administración de Biden se vea imposibilitada a cumplir la medida de que la deportación o liberación en menores debe ser resuelta en máximo de 72 horas.

La frontera entre Estados Unidos y México está cerrada excepto para viajes esenciales hasta el 17 de abril. Esto se debe a las regulaciones sanitarias establecidas después de la pandemia de Covid-19 el 21 de marzo de 2020. Esta medida se extiende también a la frontera en el norte con Canadá. Solamente los ciudadanos estadounidenses o los residentes permanentes tienen permiso para atravesarla. Es interesante señalar que esto no sucede si viajas en avión con un visado de clase turista, ya que los aeropuertos sí que aceptan este tipo de visado.

En este momento según cifras gubernamentales hay unos 21.000 menores en custodia de las autoridades.



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STRUCTURE from page A1

the new project, which abandoned the Grand Trunk design with its 19th-century mansard roof in favor of a boxier, two-story structure. "It's not just a box thrown in there with two stories," he told the board. "There's some thought to the design itself."

The design Waien projected was labeled to say that the "brick material" on the facade would "match the original hotel brick," and the "streetscape [would] match the original hotel building." The left or southeast side of the structure is said to be "similar to storefront context along the avenue," while the northeast side "references a more civic or factory feel."

Waien also said there would still be retail space at the front of the building at street level and offices in the back and on the second floor.

MEDIC member James Mussoni said he was "disappointed" with the new design, which he called "boxy," and that it "doesn't fit in with what is going on downtown." He also criticized the elimination of rental units because "there is a demand for housing downtown."

Member Ella Ingraham, on the other hand, said she thought the new structure was attractive. "I think that, because the Discovery Center is a relatively low building, [this] will be a transition from the center to downtown," she said.

In response to a question about potential occupants, Waien said that one of the medical tenants with whom he had discussed the property was having second thoughts due to COVID-19. "Many of the physicians' offices have changed their approach to providing care. The model is changing," he said. "But it will be full quickly, I can say that."

Waien told the *Reporter* that New England Wound Care still plans to move into the building.

Town planner Walter Ramsey said that the elimination of 14 residential spaces under the new proposal was disappointing, but "there's what we want, what the de-

veloper wants, and then there's what you can get financing for. There are no subsidy programs that we are able to take advantage of for this."

Ramsey said that "putting aside debates over the architecture," the building was compatible to the downtown and "to scale." "Importantly, it is adding more retail spaces," he said, adding that downtown Turners Falls has very low storefront vacancy rates. "We have underutilized storefronts, to be fair," he said. "But for the most part, vacancy is not the problem."

Time Takes Its Toll

Creating a viable structure on the corner of Avenue A and Second would perhaps be a historic event. The fate of 26 Avenue A may reflect the ups and downs of Turners Falls as a post-industrial village.

The Grand Trunk Hotel – originally called the Farren House after one of the village's original financiers Bernie Farren, then probably renamed for the Grand Trunk Railroad, which carried factory workers into Turners Falls – was constructed in the 1870s. According to one account, it was once considered "the town's premier place to stay." The town of Montague's administrative offices were for a time located on the ground floor before moving across the street to their current location.

The building began to decay significantly after WWII, and was torn down in 1968, eventually replaced by a Cumberland Farms and a garage combined with a hair salon. It was taken by the MEDIC by eminent domain in the early 1990s, in a legally contested case.

MEDIC, a rather idiosyncratic town-controlled "corporation," played a key role in the development of the Great Falls Discovery Center, which eventually came under the control of the state. Cumberland Farms and its gas station moved to its current location on Avenue A and Montague City Road. The garage-salon was torn down but the "Cumby's building," as it

came to be known, remained.

As a renaissance in downtown Turners Falls, with new streetscape improvements and building facades, was visible all along the Avenue, the old Cumby's was the odd man (or building) out, coming to resemble a moldy remnant of a 1970s TV detective series. Residents and planners engaged in a 2013 "Downtown Livability" report agreed that it was not the ideal welcome to the village after crossing the newly renovated bridge from Route 2.

Montague has struggled for years with the conundrum of whether to try to fix and market the building or tear it down. The structure was coveted by the local access station Montague Community Television, but MCTV's overtures to purchase the property were consistently rejected by MEDIC.

After a minimal roof fix and mold abatement project, a whitewater rafting company was on the verge of purchasing the structure, but bailed out in early 2019 when the federal relicensing process for the Turners Falls dam, which held out hope for downstream upgrades to the Connecticut River access, was extended.

A new request for proposals was issued later that year. MCTV and Mr. Waien responded, the latter with a very ambitious proposal to recreate the Grand Trunk Hotel. MEDIC awarded the bid to the medical director of New England Wound Care, and the rest is history in the making.

New Life?

Speaking of history in the making, one member of MEDIC, John Furbish, asked the *Reporter* to urge younger residents to consider joining the committee when there is an opening.

"I hope your new article will include an appeal for new people to become interested and participate in MEDIC," Furbish said. "I became a member seven or eight years ago after taking an interest in Lisa Davol's plan of bringing new groups into the old Cumby's space. Now MEDIC has started to look at



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ways to develop the unused mills that lie across the canal...

"Jim Mussoni has developed a specific plan for a Native American Cultural Center in the Strathmore Mill, and there are many other possibilities to use these old buildings as multimedia museums, exhibition venues, incubator spaces, and so forth. MEDIC as a group is unique in that it can look at the prosaic details of pedestrian footbridges as well as the broadest picture of re-inventing old spaces, so it allows room for varied people with varied interests."


Ramsey said that while MEDIC's goal was to "honor historical aspects" of the Cumby's site, no specific design requirements were included in the RFP for the project, even though the structure is located in a historic district.

"We're not trying to recreate a historic building," Ramsey said. "We're trying to create a modern building that honors history."



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Big Read: Keynote Event

DEERFIELD – The NEA Big Read: Pocumtuck Valley is presenting its keynote event, "A Conversation with Emily St. John Mandel," on Tuesday, April 27 at 7 p.m. The virtual program with the author of *Station Eleven* is hosted by New England Public Media and sponsored by the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association and its Big Read partner library, Tilton Library, along with the Libraries in the Woods, the Care Center, Springfield Public Forum, All Hamptons Read, and NEPM.

Participants can register for the live Zoom event through a link on PVMA's website, www.deerfield-ma.org, where they will also find a full schedule of confirmed and developing NEA Big Read: Pocumtuck Valley events. For more information, please contact sdamkoehler@deerfieldmuseum.org or call (413) 774-7476.

St. John Mandel's 2014 novel is set in a dystopian post-pandemic world. PVMA chose it from a list of NEA Big Read offerings before COVID-19 hit. "This year marks 150 years that we've been collecting objects and telling the stories they reveal," notes outreach coordinator Sheila Damkoehler. "We were drawn to *Station Eleven* in part because of the Museum of Civilization that emerges in one of the surviving communities. We thought about the artifacts in our Memorial Hall Museum and how many of them were once a vital part of everyday life, but are now obsolete.... Now that we're experiencing an actual pandemic, the NEA Big Read of this fictional story provides an opportunity for local communities to discuss our real pandemic experience, as well as the role the arts play in our lives (a central theme in *Station Eleven*.)"

MOSQUITO from page A1

well as humans, and ineffective when compared to more sustainable methods. She said that pesticides were "toxic" to aquatic animals and bees and has been "suspected" by the federal Environmental Protection Agency to be a carcinogen.

Alessandra added that measures such as public education, habitat reduction, and "personal protection" were far more effective protections against mosquito-borne disease than spraying.

Alessandra also criticized the new power given under the new law (MGL Ch. 120) to the state Commissioner of Public Health who, she said, may order aerial spraying if they deem that there is an "elevated risk of arbovirus," the class of insect-transmitted disease that includes Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). She called the criteria for state spraying "vague."

While the criteria for towns opting out of the program was also vague, Alessandra said that the only clearly required element of a nine-page checklist issued by the state Department of Public Health was public education. This point was seconded by Kayla Bennett of a group called Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility. Bennett said her organization had several more detailed local plans that she would share with the Montague health board.

Bennett said she was "cautiously optimistic" that the state might approve a proposal from Montague, but she also noted that if there was a serious viral outbreak, like that of EEE a few years ago, the state could still override local programs in favor of aerial spraying.

Mike Brown, superintendent of the Turners Falls Water Department, said that his "job is to protect the water supply," but that he had "no power to resist spraying." However, Brown

then declared that "the water department recommends that we opt out."

At the beginning of the agenda item, acting chair Michael Nelson had made it clear he was not going to encourage discussion if there appeared to be a general consensus. So without further ado, the health board voted at this point to opt out.

The discussion then turned to the process for developing an alternative plan. Public health director Daniel Wasiuk said the town would need to go beyond public education to manage "source reduction and water management," particularly in wetlands and ditches during rain events. He said he was "optimistic," but would need the assistance of the town's public works department.

The board tasked Wasiuk with developing a draft plan, hopefully by the selectboard's May 3 meeting, and present a proposal to be voted on May 10. There was some uncertainty as to whether the health board itself needed to approve the final plan.

The state checklist for towns opting out of spraying does require a "well documented public hearing" on any alternative local opt-out proposal.

The opt-out portion of the new law was not in the original legislation proposed by Governor Baker, but was the result of lobbying by critics of pesticide spraying and their supporters in the legislature, including senator Joanne Comerford, who represents Montague.

These efforts also led to the creation of a state-level commission to review state spraying policies called the Mosquito Control For the 21st Century Task Force, which is to issue a report on October 31 of this year.

"[Opting out] is a stopgap measure," said Bennett. "Hopefully this is the last year we have to do this."

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TAXI from page A1

transit to underserved routes. “We are partnering on this issue on the second and third shift because we work with a number of manufacturers in the area – we have individuals that we want to work, and we want to be able to help them get to these employers.”

MassHire identified health care and manufacturing as the two major employment sectors in Franklin County where most of the second- and third-shift jobs take place. For that reason, the Workforce Board recruited ten Franklin County employers – Baystate Franklin Medical, BETE Fog Nozzle, Buckley Health Care Center, Charlene Manor, Charter NEX Films, Faren Care Center, Hillside Plastics, Mayhew Steel Products, Pelican Products, SWM International, and Yankee Candle Villages – to co-sponsor the initial proposal.

These companies, clustered in the core Franklin County towns of Greenfield, Montague, and Deerfield, collectively employ about 3,500 workers.

The pilot program, funded through December 31, 2021, enables people who are newly employed, but may have transportation difficulties – a broken car, suspended license or lack of funds to buy a car – to get hired and stay employed by signing up with FRTA for taxi service to work.

The program can also assist late shift workers who lose their transportation due to accidents, breakdowns, expensive repairs, or

other challenges.

Funding for the pilot is provided by a \$150,000 grant from the Metro Area Planning Council (MAPC). The grant was secured by FRTA by recycling a successful “micro-transit” grant proposal to MassDOT, which was awarded last year before being withdrawn when the COVID lockdown began.

“It became clear pretty quickly that we were not going to be able to transport people in vans due to COVID risks,” said Michael Perreault, assistant administrator of the FRTA. “The MAPC grant is allowing us to offer an individualized Uber-like service by contracting with local livery and taxi companies.”

Workers can sign up for short-term or longer-term contracts. For the first month of employment, the transportation is free. If usage extends into a second month, the rider pays half the access fare rate; for the third month and beyond, they would pay the full fare. Rides can also include drop-offs of children at childcare facilities.

“The contract aims to help people solve a temporary problem,” said Perreault, “or create a bridge to allow users to fix or buy a car and become self-sufficient.”

The taxi program, which helps fill a gap left by a lack of robust fixed-route bus service in Franklin County, provides employment counselors an increased opportunity to match job seekers with employers, as many entry-level job openings are on second and third shifts.

“There is currently a big mis-

FACES & PLACES



JOE R. PARZYCH PHOTO

Asphalt milling and paving was underway this week on Route 2 in Gill, as the state Department of Transportation hastened to improve the intersection at the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge in anticipation of increased traffic from Turners once the General Pierce Bridge is closed for repairs. Wet weather extended the Route 2 job, presumably also delaying the imminent General Pierce closure. Thanks to our photo correspondent Joe R. Parzych for this photo!

match between the high unemployment rate and strong late shift hiring demand, particularly in manufacturing and health care,” Andrew Baker, special projects coordinator at the FHWB, wrote of the project’s announcement. “We are hoping this will help job seekers in Montague get off the sidelines and into good jobs.”

The FRTA and FHWB are now reaching out to work with non-profit

partners – Community Action, local housing authorities, Center for New Americans, the Literacy Project, Greenfield Community College, and temp agencies to advertise the new service at job fairs, social service agencies, and education sites.

“Until people know they have a reliable way to get to and from a second- or third-shift job that starts or ends at 11 p.m. or midnight, they tend not to apply,” said Bak-

er. “This potential workforce will become visible and available to employers now that we can offer a reliable transportation option.”

Anyone interested in using the service to get to work can get started by contacting FRTA assistant administrator Michael Perreault at (413) 774-2262 or michael@frta.org to set up a contract.



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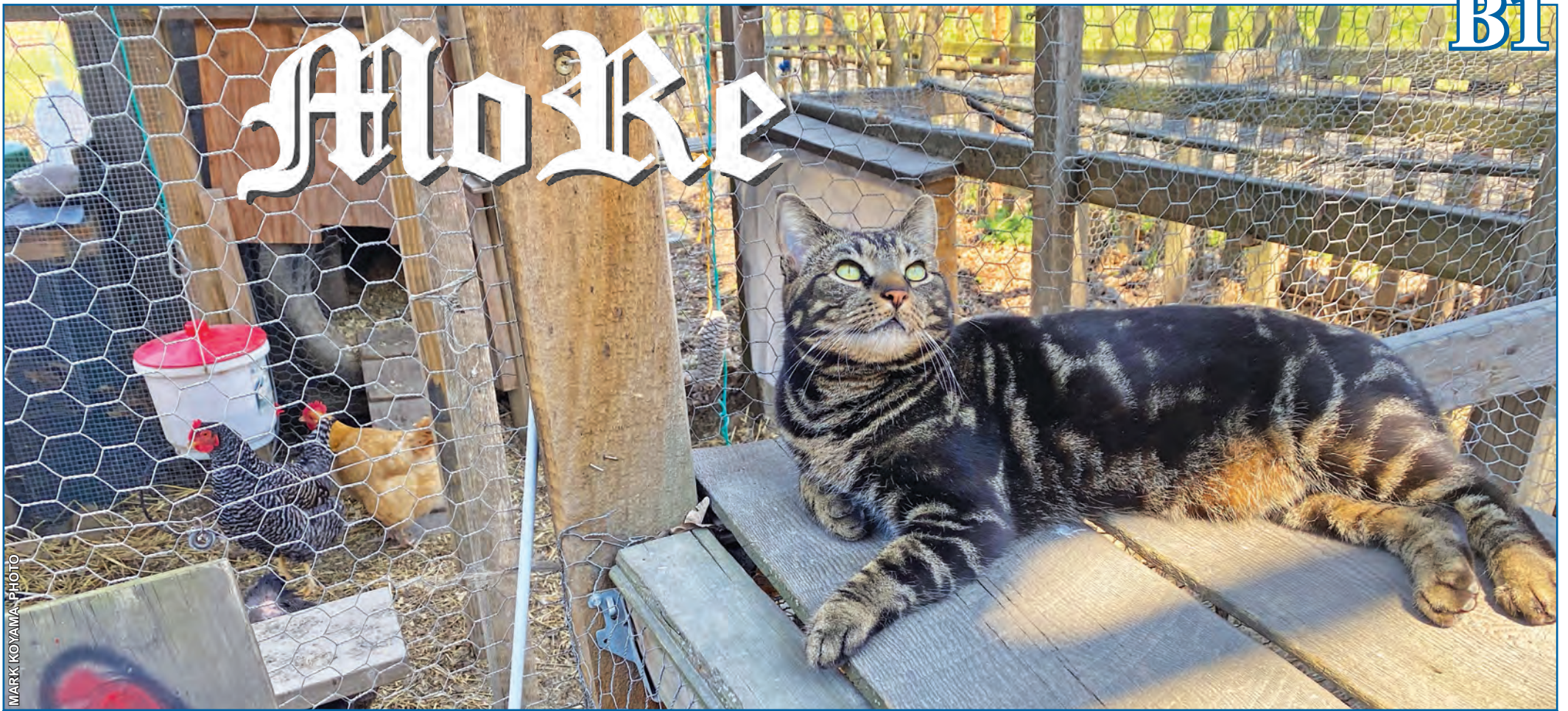
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Above: The strapping tomcat Totem fancies himself the guardian of this Montague City chicken coop.

NOTES FROM THE HEARTFELT CAFE
BY TROUBLE MANDESON



New plant starts for gardens.

GREENFIELD – Spring is here and, like many others, I’ve got gardening on my mind – specifically, what’s going to be living in my own kitchen garden this year. Typically, I like to grow my own garlic and onions and sometimes potatoes, but now that I’m employed at a local farm and have access to veggies year-round, I’ll likely grow extras of what we use most in our home and bring what I need from the farm as part of my paycheck.

With two west-coasters in our home with a deep love of Mexican cooking, peppers are the largest group of veggies grown in the garden. We so love experimenting with chiles rellenos (stuffed) as there are so many delicious things one can put inside a chile. So, poblanos are a must, as are jalapenos. Wifey loves the hot sizzling “poppers” stuffed with cream cheese and broiled; I like to mince them into coleslaw for a nice heat that works well with the sweet and tangy dressing.

There’s also the Joe Hatch chile, originally grown in Hatch, New Mexico’s Rio Grande Valley. This chile has a crisp, spicy flavor and a mild pungency similar to an onion. When roasted, it gives off a smoky, rich, earthy flavor. While you may find Hatch chiles being grown around the US, if they aren’t from New Mexico, they aren’t truly the original, or so I’m told. Nonetheless these are often available locally as starts, and I find them at the farmers market in Greenfield.

In my garden I’ll also plant several dozen greens, a variety of mixed wild lettuces, and lots of my favorite salad green, arugula. I like to rip the tiny heads off of the newly growing plants and enjoy a baby green salad week after week. Like magic, they grow back each time, and I never tire of the wonder I feel when I return to the garden to find the formerly headless plants

see **HEARTFELT** page B6



Growth Requires Pruning

By **MISHEL IXCHEL**

TURNERS FALLS – I’m all of a sudden getting caught up in it once more. “It” being the need to start, move, create, ignite, and expand. It’s inevitable, and it comes with the territory, as we’re now officially a full month into Spring.

I spent the last month pruning to varying degrees, slowing down. I took note of what was in front of me, as well as the things that stood waiting for me in the near horizon. And I began to prune. I busted out my shearing scissors and went to town. I got clear on what felt right to nurture and cultivate versus what my intuition was guiding me away from.

And in case this resonates with anyone, I even learned how to say no without burning bridges. There’s

an art to creating healthy boundaries for ourselves without necessarily telling the world to f-off, an art form I’m learning to refine. But this whole business of saying no and setting up boundaries is another conversation for another time.

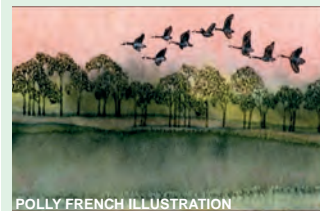
It took me a long time to learn to listen to my intuition. For me, it’s an inner knowing and a gut feeling that something is off. And often, it is. Unfortunately, I have also experienced clearly listening to my intuition only to completely ignore it. Only to go back and say, “I should have known!” knowing, of course, that you already did.

I let go of a business partnership. The pragmatic in me was against it, but all I could hear was my gut saying, “just cut your losses and bid them adieu.” I let go of a few friendships; I realized that I need to be more mindful about which relationships I nurture and tend to versus the relationships I feel obligated to keep around.

Pandemic revealed to me just how much I love my privacy, as well as how small I like my inner circle to actually be. Mostly because I enjoy spending a lot of time by myself to begin with, and these days even that feels like a luxury, let alone making time for everybody else!

I’ve also been busy pruning a deep-seated emotional reflex, which I’m not exactly proud of. I realized that when triggered, I lash out in the same way my caregiver lashed out at me when I was young. In other words, I remember being on the receiving end of that interaction, and promising to myself that I would never do that when I grew up. Since those days, I’ve done a myriad of things within the realm of self-growth and evolution, and yet it was only recently that I even realized this about myself. What gives?

I don’t have the answer. All I know is how I am wired to respond when triggered. And, I also know see **INDIE MAMA** page B4



WEST ALONG THE RIVER
THE ENIGMA OF THE FRENCH KING ROCK, PART II

By **DAVID BRULE**

ERVING/NORTHFIELD LINE – As those of us native to this place know, there is a massive glacial erratic rock in the middle of the Connecticut River, just upstream from the bridge that bears its name...

Have you ever wondered how the Rock got its name of “French King”?

In trying to puzzle out the origins of the name of the Rock which now designates a magnificent bridge, as well as a local restaurant that is an enduring local institution, it seems that the historical reality has yet to be pieced together, but we’re getting close.

In Part I, we narrowed the list of French Kings down to three: Henry IV, Louis XIII, and Louis XIV. We are assuming that permanent French presence in North America began in roughly 1603 with the earliest voyages and colonizing efforts of Samuel de Champlain. And, noting that the French military presence in Canada ended with the Treaty of Paris in 1763, it is likely that the Rock was named for one of the above-mentioned Kings who reigned prior to the English domination of the Connecticut.

We probably can rule out Henry IV, who was a chief sponsor and promoter of the voyages of Champlain, given that Henry was assassinated in 1610, early in the history of New France.

Louis XIII reigned from 1610 to 1643, and although we have records of the continual voyages of Champlain, Etienne Brûlé, Guillaume Couture, and other *coureurs des bois* who explored the regions west to the Great Lakes and even down to Chesapeake Bay, we have no evidence that any French person of official standing ever came down the Connecticut River in that period.

However, by the time Louis

XIV, the Sun King of Versailles, ascended the throne, events were precipitating in New England – and in New France. During the very long reign of Louis XIV (1643-1715), France was very active in this part of North America, with growing military and diplomatic ambitions challenging the rival English presence here. This was the beginning of the period when New France found itself pitted against New England for domination of this part of the continent.

Most scholars, local historians, and researchers now agree that the Rock was likely named for the French King Louis XIV. But who named the Rock is still open to speculation, and should be considered in the light of what was happening during that period here in our valley backyard. Dates and local events are important.

The histories and foundings of the settlements of Northfield, Deerfield, Springfield, New Haven, Hartford, and even the Massachusetts Bay Colony all have bearing on who named the Rock.

With the establishment of Plymouth in 1620, Massachusetts Bay Colony a decade later, and the founding of the New Haven/Hartford axis around the same time, there is a period of separate and somewhat rival colonies. The Hartford-based colony pursued its interests on the river, oftentimes in opposition to the Bay Colony’s desire for control of lands to its west.

As English colonial expansion leapfrogged up the Connecticut River Valley northward from Hartford, we note that the founding of Springfield/Agawam under William and then his son John is established in 1636. By the 1660s, John Pynchon was acting as land agent for Massachusetts Bay Colony and acquiring Indian deeds for the lands around the region we now know as Deerfield, which at

see **WEST ALONG** page B4

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR



The French King Bridge was constructed in 1931 and 1932.

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

Senior Center Activities

APRIL 26 THROUGH 30

GILL and MONTAGUE

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

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

ERVING

Senior Center director Paula Betteres writes:

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

for their COVID vaccine. We are here to help make a difference.” Paula can be reached at (413) 423-3649 or paula-bettters@erving-ma.gov.

LEVERETT

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

WENDELL

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

Local Supermarket Senior Accommodations

Supermarkets in Massachusetts are now required to provide special hours for seniors and immunocompromised shoppers. Call ahead – this information is accurate as of November 30, 2020; 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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Sex Matters

a sex-positive health column

by STEPHANIE BAIRD

April is Sexual Trauma Awareness Month. The CDC defines sexual violence as “sexual activity when consent is not obtained or not given freely. Anyone can experience SV, but most victims are female. The person responsible for the violence is (often) male and usually someone known to the victim.”

This has certainly been true amongst my own clients over the years, all of whom noted knowing the perpetrator in some way prior to the assault. However, some of my clients – male and female – have also reported being sexually assaulted by cis-women.

One of my first jobs out of counseling graduate school, in the early aughts, was working at a rape crisis program where I provided one-on-one counseling, co-facilitated groups for survivors (including separate groups for the parents of children who had survived sexual trauma), answered hotline calls for individuals who didn't know where else to turn, and conducted many outreach and educational events.

These outreach events, my favorite part of the job, included holding sexual assault candlelight vigils and “take back the night” marches, and presenting workshops on healthy relationships to local schools. It was invigorating to hold a beacon of hope for any number of the silent survivors out there who were still mustering the courage to tell someone what had happened to them.

I even participated in a fundraising campaign that involved parachuting out of a plane in Orange. I had to raise \$750 for this endeavor, and found the skydiving 100% terrifying in the anticipating, and 100% exhilarating as I free-fell, ironically feeling secure with a certified sky-diving instructor (a man I had never met before that day!) attached to my back.

One statistic mentioned at these outreach events was that 25% of women and about 17% of men – one in six – will experience sexual trauma before age 18. Twenty years later, the WHO reports that 20% of women and 5 to 10% of men have been sexually abused as kids, slightly lower than in 2000, but still unsettlingly high. The Office for Victims of Crime also notes that one in two transgender folks report experiencing sexual trauma at some point in their lives, and perhaps even as high

as 66%. According to the CDC, “lesbian, gay, and bisexual people experience sexual violence at similar or higher rates than straight people,” with half of bisexual women likely experiencing sexual trauma sometime in their life.

These statistics are heart-wrenching. We all need to work hard to reduce these numbers in all populations.

The Adverse Child Experiences study (ACE) looks at the impact of particular childhood difficulties on the future adult's physical and mental health. The ACE questionnaire is a simple list of ten items that a child may experience before turning 18. These ten items include five related to direct adverse experiences on the child such as physical, verbal or sexual abuse, and physical or emotional neglect. Five items relate to other family members: a parent who abused alcohol or street drugs, or was a victim of domestic violence; a family member in jail or diagnosed with a mental illness; and losing a parent through divorce, death or abandonment. Each type of adverse experience counts as one point.

You can easily answer the ACE questionnaire by Googling it online. The CDC and Kaiser Permanente teamed up to conduct the largest study to date of 17,000 individuals, finding that nearly 40% of participants had been exposed to two or more of the different categories. These results confirm what those of us working at trauma centers have known for a long time: adverse childhood experiences are much more common than previously thought – simply consider the rates of sexual trauma mentioned earlier.

The CDC notes that more adverse experiences “can increase the risks of injury, STIs, maternal and child health problems... involvement in sex trafficking, and [relate to] a wide range of chronic diseases and death (by) cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and suicide.”

All of the current ACEs are preventable. Prevention tactics include bystander/upstander strategies, teaching boys and men to be allies in prevention, increasing financial security and family-friendly work policies, safe dating and healthy relationship skill building, evidence-based sexual education programs like Planned Parenthood's and OWL, and early intervention and treatment

of an adverse experience.

This underscores the importance of noticing if someone (especially a child) seems to be suffering, withdrawn, or acting out in some way, and finding a way to connect with that child and bring help, if necessary. Truly looking out for each other and noticing something amiss can go a long way in increasing someone's life expectancy, quality of physical and mental health, life possibilities, and reducing the financial burden on our healthcare system and society. It indeed takes a village to provide health and safety.

So how does someone specifically heal from sexual trauma – whether experienced in childhood or later – and go on to enjoy a fabulously pleasurable and powerful sexual life? My profession involves helping my resilient clients traverse this arduous and complicated journey over weeks and months, and there is no “one size fits all” answer.

Trauma-informed psychotherapy is integral, and EMDR therapy is an evidence-based way to efficiently and quickly accelerate a survivor's adaptive healing from PTSD. I also spend a fair amount of time providing psychoeducation (much of which has shown up in these columns), directing folks to books and other resources, and giving folks permission to bring up and explore sexual concerns, as well as validating their right to experiencing a pleasurable and healthy sex life. Lastly, sending children through evidence-based sex ed programs, starting in Kindergarten, teaches them how to recognize inappropriate sexual intentions and get help.

Ultimately, I'd love for there to be globally available, accurate, evidence-based sexual health education (i.e. “good touch, bad touch”) as early as possible, so that humans can eliminate sexual abuse as a thing – once and forever – and so that the next time I jump out of an airplane, it's purely for pleasure and fun.

Stephanie Baird, LMHC is an OWL Facilitator, EMDR Consultant and Psychotherapist, certified in Advancing Clinical Excellence in Sexuality (ACES), and encourages her clients towards thriving sexual health. She welcomes feedback and suggestions at sexmatters@montaguereporter.org.

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Montague Community Television News

Capture The Moment

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

TURNERS FALLS – Volleyball, volleyball, volleyball! The Turners Falls girls' teams are almost through with a great season. All of their home games are available to view on the MCTV Vimeo.

There are new meetings up for the Police Equity and Use of Force group, as well as the most recent meeting of the Montague finance committee.

All MCTV videos are available on the MCTV Vimeo page, which can be found linked to the MCTV website, montaguetv.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 Vimeo.

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

The MCTV board is looking for new 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 infomontaguetv@gmail.com with a resume to schedule an interview!

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

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Lost In The Woods; Local Scammer; No-Masker; 4-Wheelers; Harassing Blog Entry; Stolen Purple Huffy

Monday, 4/12
12:30 p.m. Walk-in requesting to speak with Chief Williams about speeders on Country Club Lane going to and from Thomas Memorial golf course. Detailed note left for Chief Williams.
12:51 p.m. Caller from Bridge Street would like it on record that the large tent set up outside of his apartment windows has not been taken down yet. Landlord was advised on April 7 that it needed to be removed.
5:23 p.m. Town Hall employee received a call re: a manhole cover at High

and Marshall streets that is either sunken in or completely off. Officer reports manhole cover is inside hole; traffic cone placed next to it. DPW advised.
Tuesday, 4/13
6:47 a.m. Multiple calls to dispatch saying inappropriate, sexual things.
7:45 a.m. Caller requesting check on vehicle parked in the Montague Wildlife Management entrance on Ripley Road. Caller states vehicle was parked there yesterday and is still there today; concerned someone may have gotten lost or injured on the trails. Officer spoke with vehicle's registered owner, who said it was her son's vehicle. Registered owner's husband heading to vehicle to see if it is disabled. Male party located by his father; was lost in the woods from a hike yesterday. Both male party and vehicle returned home.
8:25 a.m. Large bag of trash in road on Eleventh Street. DPW notified and responding.
2:18 p.m. Caller complaining of very loud music from a house on Randall Road. Advised of complaint.
2:53 p.m. Caller would like assistance removing a dead opossum from her yard. Animal control officer will be by in the morning to pick it up.
3:05 p.m. Caller states that a tractor-trailer truck purposely tried to hit him while he was on his motorcycle in the Mayhew parking lot on Industrial Boulevard. Officer spoke with both parties; no action required.
3:46 p.m. Report of excessively loud music on Randall Road. Advised of complaint; residents advised they will turn the music down.
4:43 p.m. Report of used hypodermic needles at Great Falls Discovery Center. Services rendered.
7:40 p.m. Anonymous caller requesting third response to Randall Road for report of loud music. Officer reports that music was not unreasonably loud upon arrival. Residents agreed to turn it off for the night.
Wednesday, 4/14
5:09 a.m. Multiple calls from party speaking about recent events in another state. No response to dispatcher attempting to speak; party just started yelling louder.
8:31 a.m. Caller reporting that a Montague resident has been scamming multiple people by taking payment for items and never sending them. Caller advises he spoke with subject's uncle, who told him MPD was very familiar with him. Caller advised

another victim will be calling shortly. Officer spoke with caller; report taken.
8:45 a.m. Second caller reporting that a Montague resident has been scamming multiple people by taking payment for items and never sending them. Report taken.
10:56 a.m. Caller from Salvation Army inquiring about mask regulations, and his abilities through the store he works for if someone refuses to wear a mask or show proof of a medical condition. Caller advises there was an altercation with a customer earlier, but the customer has since left. Referred caller to board of health, and advised to call back if the customer returns and assistance is needed. Caller called back advising that the customer returned; they refused her service due to her refusal to wear a mask. Customer went out to her car to retrieve an affidavit to bring back in demanding the caller's information so she can sue him. Customer has since left store again. Advised of options.
10:57 a.m. ACO removed opossums from Central and Dell streets.
3:53 p.m. Report of female party who appears to be impaired walking toward Cumberland Farms. Caller concerned for female. Officer provided courtesy transport to the Patch.
6:42 p.m. Report of two quads and one dirt bike riding erratically down Greenfield Road before turning into a driveway on Montague City Road. Officer spoke with parties. Only one was licensed; all vehicles were unregistered. Advised parties that call will be passed to environmental police; advised of consequences if complaints persist.
7:50 p.m. Report of two female parties fistfighting on Randall Road. Both parties report verbal argument only.
Thursday, 4/15
6:39 a.m. Calls received from male talking about recent police activity in another state and repeating, "Black lives matter." No response to dispatcher asking if assistance was needed; caller just keeps yelling and getting louder when dispatcher tries to speak.
8:01 a.m. Report of multiple dumpsters sticking out beyond owner's property lines into the public way at the L Street end of the Second/Third Street alley. Officer advises dumpsters are not a hazard; no action needed.
11:03 p.m. Report of suspicious female party who does not reside at the Crocker Building smoking cigarettes in the lobby. Officer made contact with

female, who was waiting for an Uber and stated she was smoking outside with the lobby door open. Advised of complaint.
Friday, 4/16
7:56 a.m. Report of large tree down across Turners Falls Road; no wires visible. Officer checked on tree. Party showed up and cut it up with a chainsaw. Road is clear.
8:29 a.m. Two additional annoying/harassing phone calls to dispatch.
10:09 a.m. Caller requesting options re: being the subject of a harassing blog entry. Advised of options.
10:46 a.m. Report of trees on wires on Wendell Road. Eversource called in; officer en route for emergency detail.
11:54 a.m. Caller requesting to speak to ACO, who followed up on a complaint of a husky outside at a Vladish Avenue residence. ACO advised owner not to leave dog out for more than five hours.
12:50 p.m. Fax from vet for ACO reporting a cat bite. ACO picked up paperwork and will follow up with animal inspector.
3:11 p.m. Caller from Fourth Street reporting that she had two Amazon packages stolen from the common hallway area of her apartment building. Caller was sent a picture from Amazon of the packages being delivered in the hallway. Officer spoke with caller, who would like incident kept on record.
3:53 p.m. Complaint re: road conditions on Green Pond Road. Officer advises road is fine; slushy but not slippery; passable at safe speeds.
Saturday, 4/17
8:59 a.m. Shelburne Control received call reporting smoke in area of Kells Road off Route 47; unknown source. MCFD responding.
Sunday, 4/18
11:01 a.m. Caller states that a man named Brent is harassing people for money in the Food City parking lot. Area checked; unable to locate.
12:44 p.m. Caller from Bridge Street advising that the tent blocking his windows has still not been removed despite the landlord being told several times about the issue. Referred to an officer.
4:19 p.m. Off-duty officer states that his vehicle was just involved in a minor accident in the Thomas Memorial Country Club parking lot. Report taken.
6:43 p.m. Caller from Fourth Street reporting that her daughter's bike has been stolen. Described as a purple Huffy bike with green around the frame. Serial number provided. Advised units will keep an eye out.

Learning to Fly Fish: Part II



JONES PHOTO

Ariel Jones, who recently passed away, penned a series of 14 articles in the MR on her experiences learning to fly fish. This is the second one in the series which ran from March 24 to August 11, 2005. Jones was a pioneer of the local art scene when she moved to Turners Falls from NYC and opened a photography studio on Avenue A in 2000.

BY ARIEL JONES

MONTAGUE – The first twenty or so minutes in the river were concerned mainly with balance and learning to walk in the moving water. My preoccupation with leeches shifted as we waded upstream and into deeper water. I realized that a river bottom is not a sidewalk. This particular section of the Ware River was very muddy in parts. The squishiness was unnerving, and it felt like there was an underground suction pulling at my feet with each step.

Since the river was slow moving I had not expected to feel the pressure of it so strongly. Walking upstream against the current was not difficult in itself, but the combination of that, plus not being able to see what I was walking on, made me feel very insecure. How could you deal with all this and still manage to fish?

Why was I here?
We stopped with a few yards between us. Tom had selected a fly and put it on the tippet for me and it was time to cast. I managed to put the line on the water away from me and without hooking either of us. It wasn't graceful and

it wasn't pretty, but it was better than trying to walk. The longer I stood in the water, however, the more comfortable I felt.

As I began to relax, the river began to look and feel different from my first impression. It was still threatening to be up to my waist, and I had not completely forgotten the leeches, but a feeling was coming over me that I had not felt in a long time. It was quiet and lovely and I was engaged with something beyond myself. I was happy.

I did the best I could and eventually caught a little dace about three or four inches long, and didn't see any trout. It was dark by the time we went back to the van, and I had to grab Tom's arm a couple of times when I tripped over a log, or lost my balance. But I was less ashamed of my clumsiness already.

A long time ago someone said to me that humility was simply being teachable. I understood that was the most important lesson learned on my first fly fishing expedition.

Fall and Winter Pass

After the first expedition on the river, I felt both exhilarated and intimidated. There was so much to learn! It was hard to imagine I could ever reach a point of understanding it all, from the choices of rods, lines, leaders and tippets, to the dizzying array of flies (not houseflies), something called "matching the hatch," "reading the water," whether to cast upstream or downstream, and on and on. It was more than I had bargained for.

And yet... I kept coming back to the feeling it gave me, the grace of it. I could not escape the strong and simple desire to become a fly fisher.

I Quit Smoking

In May of last year, I woke up one morning and decided to quit smoking. The decision shocked and frightened me, as I have always enjoyed smoking. Days and then weeks passed and I still didn't smoke.

I decided to reward myself by buying a pair of waders and boots. I contacted Tom, received some more casting lessons from him, and we made a plan to go fishing on my birthday in July, two months to the day after I had quit.

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INDIE MAMA from page B1
within this response lies a framework of patterns and beliefs, none which can be wrestled into change by mere willpower. I've learned along the way, thanks to some work I'm now into that involves neuroscience and hypnotherapy, that the brain is plastic (as in, it is moldable) and we have the power to create new neural pathways. In this instance, what this has come to mean for me is that thanks to this work I now have the ability to reprogram how I am wired. How I respond, react, and how I vibrate.

In so many words: I've been pruning some old patterns and thought

beliefs within the realm of my subconscious, which is kinda cool because they say that we manifest our lives from the subconscious.

All of this, to say that one month into Spring I am once again feeling more yang energy move through me. I love it: the possibility to reset and, in some cases, start anew.

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 @indiemamadiaries.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE WENDELL POLICE LOG

Raccoons, Mud, Car Wreck, Brush Fire

Monday, 3/1

2:42 p.m. Caller from New Salem Road reporting a possible rabid raccoon standing in the roadway pacing in circles in front of her house. The tree warden is standing outside watching it. Attempted to locate the ACO, who was on another detail. Officer located the sick raccoon on the side of the road and dispatched it to end its suffering.

Saturday, 3/13

1:47 a.m. AAA subscriber stuck in the mud in the middle of New Salem Road, blocking the roadway. AAA unable to get a tow to accept the call, and inquired whether PD could dispatch one. Subscriber lives on New Salem Road near where the vehicle is stuck and, due to the cost of sending a tow company, would like an officer to pull him out. Call transferred to an officer in area.

11:35 a.m. Caller from Stone Cutoff Road reported an abandoned blue Ford pickup. In a follow-up, caller stated pickup has left. Male was walking in the woods and was unaware of No Trespassing signs. All set.

11:46 a.m. Report of disabled motor vehicle on Wendell Depot Road on a bad corner. Owner is making arrangements and expects help in 15 to 20 minutes.

Friday, 3/19

2:33 p.m. Possible rabid raccoon reported in New Salem Road area. Notified ACO.

Saturday, 3/20

1 a.m. Caller from Wendell Depot Road reported a car off Wendell Mountain Road with significant damage. Vehicle appears to have struck and damaged the pole on the other side of the road. Caller said the occupant left a note stating they would get the car towed, and not to call police. Officer on scene at 1:21 a.m.

6:28 a.m. Medical emergency call, Wendell Depot Road. State police responded.

3:23 p.m. Brush fire reported on Jennison Road. Called FD. New Salem responded with a brush truck and tanker, Shutesbury responded with a brush truck, and State 90 with a brush truck and a brush/tanker. Command reported under control at 4:41 p.m., but clean-up would take time. All units released at 6 p.m.

Monday, 3/22

5:08 p.m. Caller from New Salem Road would like to speak to an officer because a withdrawal from his bank account of over \$1,000 went to Western Union. His bank and Western Union will not stop payment or refund the money.

Thursday, 3/25

5:04 p.m. Medical emergency, Lockes Village Road.

8:06 p.m. Open 911 call from Bullard Pasture Road. Could hear faint voices. Called residence and spoke to an individual who said one of the children was playing with the phone. Confirmed accidental.

Friday, 3/26

10:35 a.m. Medical

emergency, Lockes Village Road.

3:33 p.m. Wendell PD informed that a DCF employee is dealing with a subject with warrants. Officer responded and at 3:39 p.m. advised subject was in custody and being transported for booking. Subject is in the back seat with a sharp object that they are attempting to take from him. Upon arrival at station, officers had subject handcuffed and shackled. He was arrested with felony warrants.

Monday, 3/29

5:23 a.m. 911 open call from Wendell Depot Road. Sounded as if someone was walking. Called back and spoke to a male party who confirmed no need for emergency services. He doesn't know how to deactivate the emergency call button on his phone.

6:51 a.m. Caller from Bullard Pasture Road reported that a female was knocked down by her dog and may have a broken leg.

4:58 p.m. Tree hanging over the power line on West Street, not making contact with lines. Power company notified.

5:39 p.m. Barriers and lights on Wendell Depot Road are malfunctioning. Pan Am advised. Pan Am made repairs; barriers functioning normally.

Tuesday, 3/30

5:50 p.m. Caller reporting they have a raccoon in a cat carrier that may have been struck by a vehicle; caller needs assistance. Message left for ACO.

WEST ALONG from page B1

the time became the northernmost settlement of the British Empire in North America.

More than 10 miles to the north, in land totally unknown to the English, the Abenaki Sokokik village of Sokwakik / Squakheag was heavily populated and farmed. These Indigenous peoples were closely allied to the French, given that the Abenaki homelands encompassed all that we now call northern New England, and the entire St. Lawrence River Valley where the French were settling. It is to be noted that we have no record of English presence in the Northfield area until 1673, when Pynchon and others negotiated more land transactions with the Abenaki.

So we have a period of time between 1660 and 1673 when no English person would have seen the celebrated Rock in the middle of the rapids just above the mouth of the *Paguag*, or Millers River.

So who, indeed, could have named the Rock for the French King before 1673?

Our attention is turned to two sources: one, a primary source called the *Jesuit Relations*, a sort of log book of Jesuit actions, voyages, and missions in New France and New England; and a secondary source published by the University of Massachusetts Press entitled *In Search of New England's Native Past*, a collection of essays by the celebrated authority Gordon M. Day on Abenaki ethnology, linguistics, and ethnohistory.

Day's most pertinent observations for us appear in his essay "The Identity of the Sokokis." He points us to what he calls "important French testimony" supplied by Jesuit Father Gabriel Druillettes, who visited New England in 1650 and 1651 on political missions for the

Council of Quebec. Druillettes specifically stated that the Connecticut was the "river of the Sokokis."

Druillettes is considered a key primary observer of the Sokokis, and likely visited their southernmost settlement in Northfield on one of his many New England missions. We also know that he had contacts with John Winslow, the Reverend John Eliot, and most likely the Pynchons of Springfield. His primary mission in 1650 was to negotiate with the Connecticut River tribes – the Sokokis, the Pocumtucks, and the Mahicans – to take up arms against the Iroquois.

To this point, contemporary Elnu Abenaki scholars support the hypothesis that Druillettes, in coming down the Connecticut from Québec, accompanied by Sokoki guides, likely stopped at the Sokoki village at Squakheag/Northfield on his way to negotiate with the Pocumtuck and possibly the Pynchons. He would have necessarily passed the impressive Rock, and quite possibly have named it for his king.

Strangely, no mention is made of the Rock in the *Jesuit Relations*. Likewise, Sheldon and Temple never mention the French King Rock in their heavily detailed *History of Northfield*.

However, in his *History of Gill*, Ralph Stoughton refers to the Rock as being named by a French officer on his way to raid Deerfield in 1674. This could not be accurate, since the French did not participate in King Philip's War of 1675-76 in which Deerfield was completely destroyed and abandoned. Of course, the French did participate and lead the attack on Deerfield in 1704, but they did not come down the river on the way.

Other sources have a French officer camping on the shores of what is

now known as Gill, not wanting to risk shooting the rapids surrounding the Rock. The same story, however, related that the officer went out onto the Rock and lit an "altar fire," claiming it for the King of France.

Again, we have no record of any French military mission down the Connecticut prior to the permanent English settlement of Northfield after King Philip's War. After that period of English settlement, it is highly unlikely that a French officer or explorer would have slipped past the Northfield settlement and claimed the Rock for Louis XIV right under the noses of the English. So we place brackets around the likely dates of 1640-1673, around the time of the first Northfield settlement.

We really are drawn to the likelihood that the Rock was named before the English controlled this section of the river, and well before the sixty years of what has come to be known as the French and Indian Wars, which ended in 1763.

Our conclusion at this date then is that in the 1650s, the Black Robe Jesuit Father Gabriel Druillettes, or someone like him, and prior to the founding of Northfield in 1673, named the Rock for the reigning French King.

Yet, there are conflicting legends and local histories that claim otherwise. What's more, if the Rock was named for the Sun King, why did our local English populations continue to call it French King Rock in the name of their most hated enemy? For some reason, the name given to this familiar landscape has been retained for centuries in a region dominated not by the French, but primarily by the descendants of the first English settlers.

Whatever the explanation, the name endures, as does the enigma.



CONCERT REVIEW

Samirah Evans on CouchMusic.Live

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – On March 26 a streaming service called CouchMusic.Live had a concert with Samirah Evans and a band with a bass player, a drummer, and a saxophone player. I have seen Samirah before at the Shea in Turners Falls, so I decided to check it out.

The song she sang first sounded like a jazz song. This performance, which took place at Hawks & Reed in Greenfield, was originally supposed to happen during Black History Month in February, but it didn't go as planned. The show was called "Music Speaks: Amplifying Black Voices." Evans said that the words to the first song, "Work Song," were written by Oscar Brown, who was a Black activist.

She also dedicated a song to Raphael Warnock, the first Black senator of Georgia. I believe it was Ray Charles's "Georgia On My Mind." That sounded like a jazz song too. This woman can do a good job with jazz songs and ballads.

Her voice sounded at times that it could have carried across the room, so people in the way back of the audience could have heard it.

Evans mentioned after doing one song that she didn't know that Billie Holiday had such a problem with wanting to sing the song "Strange Fruit," which

is about lynching. She spoke of how she admires Holiday for wanting to sing the song.

Despite this not airing in February, Evans still spoke of Black History and some of the impact that certain things had. She also mentioned that March was Women's History Month, and her thoughts in connection with that.

She sang a second Billie Holiday song, and introduced the people in her band during the performance. Their names were Ron Smith, Mary Ann McSweeney, Jacob Smith, and Greg Snedeker.

The other performance I saw at the Shea featured Evans with a band called Trailer Park. Many people in the audience danced to it at the time. Both the band and the sound of her voice worked well together – they sounded like they were doing rock n' roll and jazz music together.

As for the performance I saw on CouchMusic.Live, I felt she sounded particularly good with the saxophone player, and with the bass player as well. At one point, the bass player started a song and then Samirah began to sing.

I feel that people watching at home, or even in an audience, could easily dance to this as well. It sounded to me like she did all jazz songs, with a fair amount of ballads. Despite this show not airing when planned, Samirah Evans gave a great performance.

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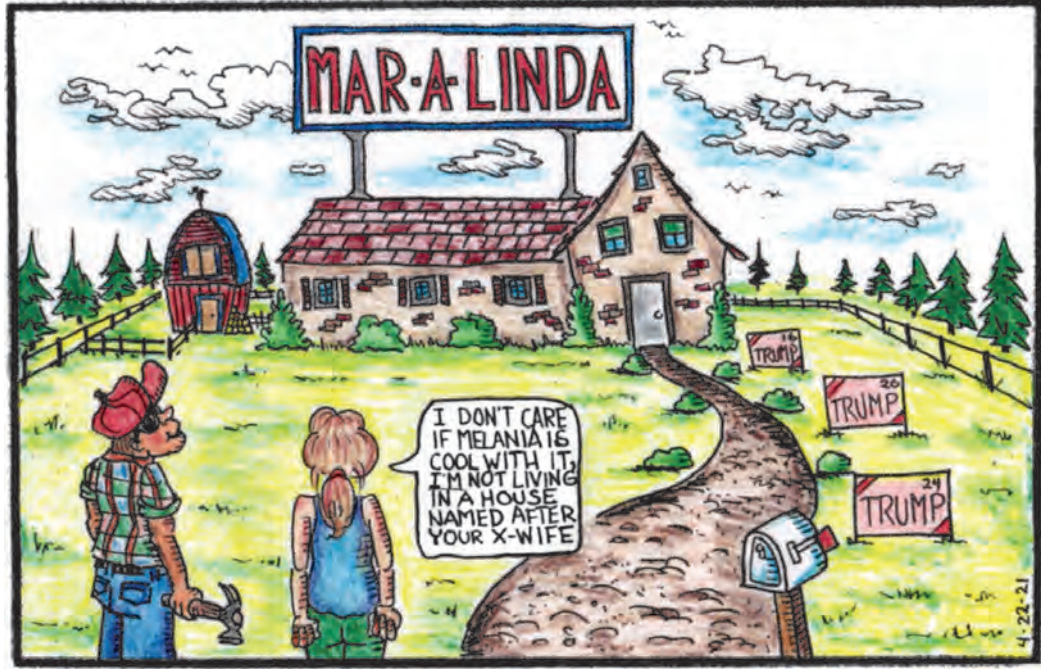
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COMICS and PUZZLE

JOEL PAXTON ILLUSTRATION

BORDEAUX WHINE

by denis bordeaux



OVER THE HILL

Carolyn Clark



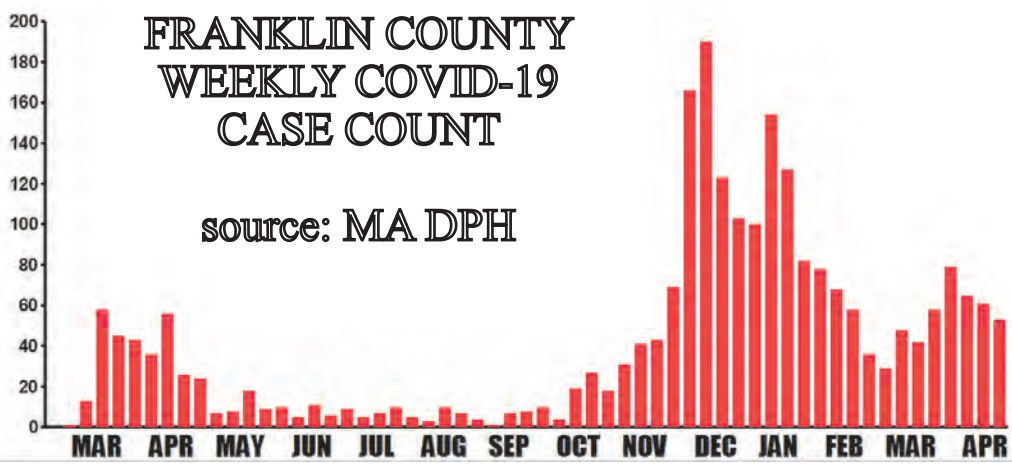
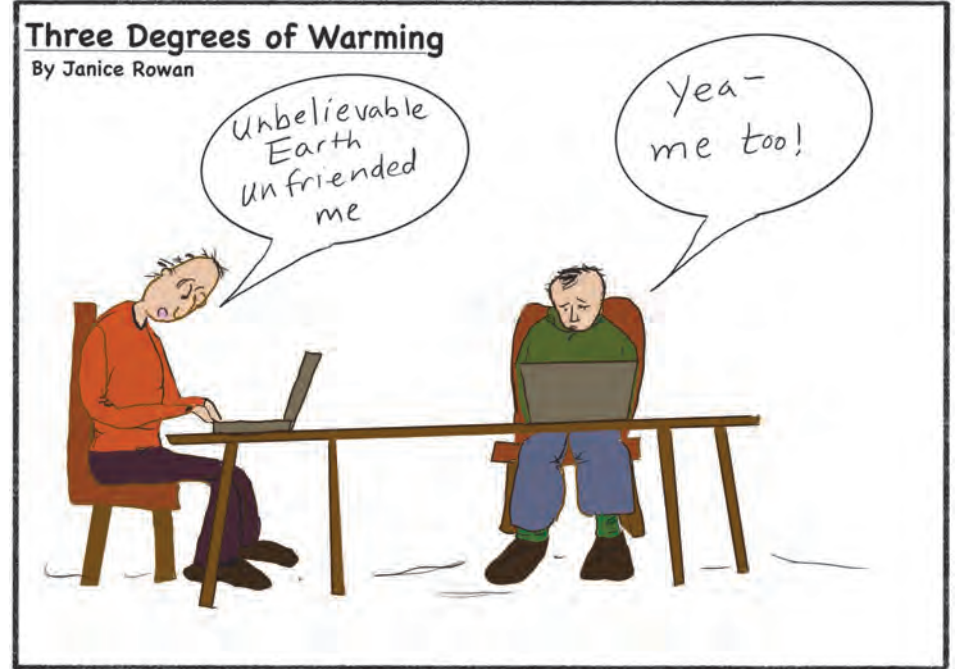
Cool Cats on the Ave

by Jim



Three Degrees of Warming

By Janice Rowan



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HEARTFELT from page B1 have regenerated new baby leaves and it's salad time once again.

It's hard to articulate the feeling of walking out to your own garden to pick food for your next meal. It becomes such a simple and natural act that I find shopping for vegetables a little odd: what do I know about where they came from, and how they were grown?

I do buy veggies from the grocery store on occasion, and I love when I can find locally grown items, but for the most part what we consume in our house has been grown by local hands and heroes.

We aren't big tomato consumers, and so many are available in the Valley once the season rolls around that I plant just one or two cherry tomato varieties, which I snack on when I'm in the garden.

Husk cherries, related to tomatillos, are popular with us and it's fun to grow and harvest these interesting plants. The plant spreads tentacle-like branches across the bed and in late summer offers up tiny yellow, tart, nutty little beauties. For several weeks I enjoy rooting amongst the branches for the papery-skinned "cherries" that drop off as they ripen.

Most years I buy one new and unusual vegetable to grow. One year it was sunchokes (I grew up in the west calling them "Jerusalem artichokes"), and that took over all three raised beds, but didn't produce a single edible root. Another year I grew Bruja Oregano, an enormous, fuzzy-leaved oregano

plant whose leaves I harvested, dried, and now keep in my kitchen for a different oregano flavor than what's generally available.

I also keep a small herb garden near the kitchen so that I can walk outside with my kitchen scissors to snip off some sprigs of rosemary for a beef roast, some zaatar for our favorite feta, tomato, and pepper bake, or some chives or dill to top a baked potato. There is nothing like fresh herbs to really jazz up your meals, and the herbs are super simple to grow in a tray or small pots, even on

a windowsill if you have no yard.

Anyone with a desire to grow herbs or vegetables can find a way. There are gardens planted in wooden pallets, both vertical and horizontal, upside-down planters, and even pre-planted tiny herb gardens requiring only sun and water.

Now our kitty, Mama Catt Elliott, reminds me not to forget to plant some catnip around the yard. She enjoys strolling up to a patch to munch and roll on the grass, but it's also good for her digestion. Humans, too, can benefit from catnip – as tea it's used for stomach ailments.

Gardening isn't for everyone. It's hard, dirty, backbreaking work, but it can be enormously satisfying and rewarding when you dig up your first potato or sample the sweetest tomato you've ever eaten. I do feel that anyone can garden – just do it! Dig a hole, plant a seed, cover it up, water, sun and voila, you've just grown something. Congratulations, now get thee to the kitchen!

Here is a simple herb vinaigrette you can make after you've harvested your homegrown herbs to use as salad dressing and/or marinade. Brush it on thinly sliced vegetables before grilling – it adds flavor and zest to foods.

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.



BALSAMIC VINAIGRETTE

Add together and whisk:

- 1 shallot, grated, about two tablespoons
- 2 crushed garlic cloves
- 1 t. Dijon mustard
- 1 to 1 1/2 T. honey, to taste
- 1/3 c. balsamic vinegar
- 1/3 c. extra virgin olive oil

Drizzle in oil while still whisking to emulsify (thicken). Add in herbs and seasonings. Feel free to experiment by adding or substituting your favorites!

- 1 1/2 T. fresh chopped basil
- 1/2 t. chopped rosemary
- 1/2 t. salt
- 6 cranks of fresh ground pepper, about 1/2 t.

MONTV / MUSIK / MOUNTAIN

Wes Buckley,
The Towering Sound
(2012, Half a Million Records)



MYSTRA REVIEWS #3

By JOSH B.

TURNERS FALLS – We first heard Wes Buckley over here in the early '00s, and wow...he blew our minds! He was doing a live set here at Mystery Train Records in Amherst with some cool Whitehaus characters, the great Arkm Foam and others, I think.

Picture a combination of early Jackson Browne (great songwriting), Danzig (singular style), and yes, Tim Buckley (amazing voice, and no relation, by the way). It's not often you hear someone combine great influences in unique ways while moving forward at the same time. And he was doing that so well. Like Sun Ra, he can be such a shining positive light beam in what seems like a BLACK HOLE WASTELAND that is thee (GWAR-like) USA / America-zone these days.

Since that show there have been lots of new Wes recordings, plus the unearthing of great early solo

stuff, some of which came out as a Mystra CD.

And now here we are: a whole LP of new Wes material, *The Towering Ground!* It brings us into a totally new Wes dimension... new sounds and songs that push *even further* into a great new future, and make us now think of Wes as kind of a one-man Grateful Dead. On this, Buckley's first LP, we are led on deeper voyages into all the great and different dimensions, and glad to have his light on these journeys, as many days lately feel like a endless Merzbow record.

So yes... *The Towering Ground* brings us to a new and better place altogether. Wes is dealing with all sorts of different subjects and his guitar playing is as great as ever, combining the vibrations of players like Hank Williams, Joe Satriani, and Bobb Trimble among others. He keeps moving into the future realms, while keeping things very singularly Wes Buckley... what a strangely long trip it's already been.

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