The Montague Reporter

YEAR 20 – NO. 13

also serving Erving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

FEBRUARY 10, 2022

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Town's ARPA Funds Heading Toward Sewage Infrastructure

By JEFF SINGLETON

The Montague selectboard took its shot Monday at proposals by FirstLight Power Resources for recreation improvements in its local project areas, and discussed the use for nearly \$2.4 million in COVID relief funds the town has received under the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

Town administrator Steve Ellis said the US Treasury Department had issued new rules that allow localities to avoid many of the restrictions in the original program by using the funds to replace "lost revenue" without having to document how much revenue had been lost. This would mean the town's ARPA grants could be spent "for any purpose allowable under normal circumstances." Ellis said the board would therefore have the flexibility to fund "any purchase or any position of any type," but added that "we don't need to make that decision today."

Ellis then proposed that the board reschedule the planned "public input conversation" on how the ARPA money should be spent for mid-March, He also noted, however, that some of the funds had already been allocated, and suggested that other eligible projects might be "accelerated" for the March 3 special town meeting (STM).

Selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz said he did not want to stray from see **MONTAGUE** page A7

ERVING SELECTBOARD

Officials Hope For Mixed-Use Proposals for Former IP Mill

By KEITH WATERS

At its meeting on Monday, the Erving selectboard discussed the redevelopment of the town-owned International Paper Mill complex. It is expected that the town's request for proposals (RFP) will be finalized at the next meeting, in time to be given to the public in early March. Developers will have about a month to submit proposals, and the board then has 120 days after that to choose one.

Thus far, the town has received only one response to its Request for Information (RFI) from a developer, which was for a housing-only project. The board discussed their preference for a mixed-use project, and member Scott Bastarache asked whether the wording could be changed to better favor mixed-use proposals.

Assistant planner Mariah Kurtz and town administrator Bryan Smith clarified that the criteria could not be changed retroactively, but that the choice will ultimately be the board's anyway.

Kurtz suggested advertising the project widely, perhaps as far as Albany, Hartford, Providence, and Boston, and also putting together a web page for the project. The web

see **ERVING** page A6

TRAVELOGUE

Sightseeing on the Deerfield



The east portal of the Hoosac Tunnel, the longest tunnel in North America when it was completed under the supervision of chief engineer Bernard N. Farren.

By MIKE JACKSON

FLORIDA, MA - It was COVID that had me looking for something new to do last weekend, but it was also COVID that got me looking at satellite maps of the Deerfield River. Entering town-by-town data on the virus every week got me wondering about Monroe. I knew it was small and out of the way, but as I highlighted fields on the Montague Reporter spreadsheet with the brand-new colors I had introduced for Omicron's skyrocketing caseloads, it began to really pop out: week after week, in one town, zero cases.

I double-checked, triple-checked: for seven weeks straight, as Franklin County racked up 4,909 confirmed positives, Monroe stuck to zero. As far as the biopoliticians out in Boston know, anyway. Good for them! I drilled into the testing data: out of our collective 36,578 PCR tests since Omicron hit, Monroe residents had taken a whopping total of *three*.

What was this place? The second-smallest town in the state, I learned, with 118 inhabitants – though that only partly explained the statistical aberration. The only town in northwestern Massachusetts to vote for majority-Trump last year, 31 to 28.

Well, I had COVID, and I was quarantining with a partner who'd

also tested positive; we were in desperate need of sunshine and distraction. A day trip in a warm car seemed appealing. But as I started to map out a route, it finally clicked: Monroe Bridge, the town's main hamlet, is nestled within a massive series of hydroelectric earthworks, across the river from a decommissioned nuke.

And all those dams, reservoirs, and power stations? Even more interesting to me than the COVID stuff

Driving west on Route 2, two miles past Charlemont, we turn right onto Zoar Road. The road begins to climb and wind, and the scenery is instantly breathtaking. We descend past the Zoar Picnic Area – a wild scene full of tubers and rafters in the summertime; empty and serene now in the snow – and cross the Deerfield into Florida, and into Berkshire County.

anyway. Good for them! I drilled into the testing data: out of our collective 36,578 PCR tests since Omicron hit, Monroe residents had taken a whopping total of *three*.

What was this place? The second-smallest town in the state, I learned, with 118 inhabitants –

It took them almost 25 years to drill a five-mile train tunnel through these mountains to North Adams, and 196 workers died on the job. Alvah Crocker, then the state superintendent of railroads, see **SIGHTSEEING** page A5

Farren Discussion Turns To Artifacts, Site Reuse Study

By SARAH ROBERTSON

MONTAGUE CITY - In a forum hosted by the Montague selectboard Monday night, officials explained the town's engagement so far with Trinity Health of New England, the owner of the Farren Care Center, and heard again from residents opposed to the historic hospital's demolition. The board directed town administrator Steve Ellis to ask Trinity for funds to study the prospects for the site's redevelopment if the building is demolished, and to inquire about preserving certain elements, such as bricks and the stained-glass window in the chapel.

"I think there are things that can

be done to preserve elements," town planner Walter Ramsey said. "Of course, the current owners and heirs would also have some rights to some of those historic elements..."

When Bernard Farren sold the property to the Farren Memorial Hospital in 1910 for \$1, he stipulated in the deed that in the event of it ever "being devoted to other uses than for such hospital purposes or as appurtenant thereto," ownership would revert to him – or to his heirs.

"The heirs of Bernard Farren are not an organized group, *per se*," Ellis said at Monday's forum. "I understand that there's at least 10.... It is my understanding that Trinity's

see **FARREN** page A8

High School Sports Week: Tech and Turners Clash!

By MATT ROBINSON

TURNERS FALLS –The Turners Falls Thunder and the Franklin Tech Eagles played four basketball games against each other this week. Tech swept the two JV contests, but the varsity teams split their games.

The varsity girls battled on Monday for the top spot in the Franklin South Conference. In that game, the Thunder Ladies pulled away in the second half to win decisively, 53-27. Unfortunately, two student

athletes were injured that night, and had to be helped off the court.

On Tuesday the Franklin Tech boys, riding a four-game skid, came to Turners High School to play against an upset-minded Thunder. That game came down to a foul shot with four seconds left in regulation.

Girls Basketball

TFHS 53 – FCTS 27 FCTS 36 – TFHS 22 (JV)

The top two girls' teams in the see **SPORTS** page A5



Turners Falls' Branden Truesdell (14) defends the net from FCTS's Gabe Mota.

Zoning Overlay for Housing Goes to Public Hearing

By JEFF SINGLETON

TURNERS FALLS – The Montague selectboard will hold an "initial public hearing" next Monday, February 14 at 7 p.m. to help advance a proposal from the town planning board to create a "Smart Growth Overlay District" in downtown Turners Falls. The goal of the overlay district, in fact two separate sub-districts, is to increase the amount of affordable housing in Montague alongside housing at market rates.

The proposed overlay district encompasses the recently cleared Railroad Salvage property, now rebranded as the "Griswold Mill" site after the cotton mill originally located there, and two combined parcels across First Street from town hall, one privately owned and the other owned by the town.

At the hearing, town planner Walter Ramsey will present a slide show similar to the one presented in mid-December, covered in our December 16 edition. (The Power-Point and supporting materials can be accessed on the town website under the "Latest News" sidebar.)

The hearing's purpose is to discuss the criteria and potential benefits of the overlay district, which

see **OVERLAY** page A8

Con Com Dishes Out Pond Permit Conditions

By SARAH ROBERTSON

LEVERETT – On Monday night the Leverett conservation commission discussed, and eventually approved, a list of conditions that will govern the Friends of Leverett Pond's (FLP) management of Leverett Pond for the next five years. Members voted 4-1 in favor of the plan, with outgoing chair Isaiah Robison casting the only nay vote.

"If we remove chemical application altogether, I would support an order of conditions," Robison said before the vote. "I'm totally fine with the Friends of Leverett Pond continuing to manage the pond, but I am not in favor at all of chemical use."

Under the order of conditions the FLP will be permitted to use herbicides, hand-raking, mechanical harvesting, and benthic barriers to combat the invasive species Eurasian milfoil. Each time any treatment method is deployed the FLP will have to first notify the concom, and post signage at a number of locations including the public boat launch, library, post office, and town hall.

Additional reporting requirements are also included in the new conditions. A year-end report outlining the work done and assessing the impact of the treatment will be due by December 15 each year, and

see **POND** page A6

Freezing At Night, Melting In The Day... Maple Syrup Time!

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The Montague Reporter

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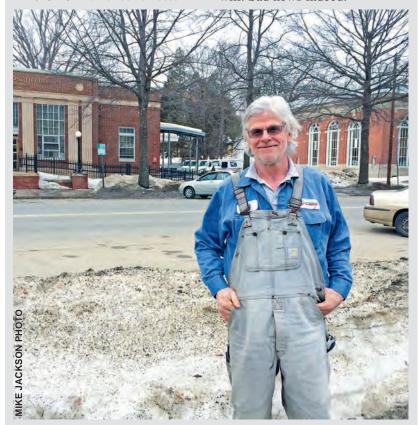
As this edition was being prepared for press Wednesday we were shocked to learn of the untimely death of Montague sculptor, painter, musician, poet, handyman, performance artist, and all-around scene fixture John Landino.

Check out his portfolio at landinoart.com or his Instagram page @ johnlandino. A browse through our archives finds him fomenting the Dadaist Invasion of Turners Falls, hosting open mics, sitting in with various makeshift bands in various makeshift venues; helping bring together artists, and helping bring art to a surprised public at large not to mention his notorious 2010 Soapbox Derby run.

Landino beat a very tough esophageal cancer diagnosis back in 2013-15 with cheerful determination, enduring radiation and chemotherapy and the removal of his esophagus, and when he was back on his feet he shared his ordeal both in public talks and within his extensive body of work.

Landino reportedly died of complications of surgery for bile duct cancer. He is survived by his wife Laura, who faces unexpected funeral expenses as well as the ongoing tribulations of capitalism. We urge our readers to contribute at www.gofund.me/ea393995 and help ease the burden.

Our hearts go out to Laura, and all of John's closer friends and collaborators. Even those of us more distantly acquainted knew him as sunny, sharp, full of mischief, and inspiring in his strong will. Sad news indeed.



Top: John Landino in a 2016 file photo. Bottom: Landino in 2015, taken for an interview with this paper celebrating his return to health and activity.



Shady Glen diner in Turners Falls on Wednesday morning. Owner Charles Garbiel looks on.



Hooked On Outdoor Columns

In August of 2020, in the early days of the pandemic, my friends Craig and Susan sold their house of several decades in Longmont, CO and bought a house in Montague, MA. Soon after moving to Montague, Craig started sending me copies of the second section of the MR because he wanted me to read "Valley View" by Gary Sanderson. He knows I am very much interested in folk arts, crafts, and writing from across the globe.

And indeed Mr. Sanderson's writing caught my attention. It reminded me of growing up in Milwaukee, WI in the late fifties and early sixties and reading "Notes from Little Lakes" by Mel Ellis in the Sunday Journal. These were a collection of writings centered on his fifteen acres of land he called "Little Lakes" in Big Bend, about twenty miles southwest of Milwaukee. Mr. Sanderson's articles took me back to that time when I just started leaving my footprints on the outdoors.

CORRECTION

In last week's Montague selectboard notes (page A1, School District Staff to Grow; Town Funds Family Program), we erroneously reported that child care will be offered for children under 14 during the Brick House's Strengthening Families program this spring and summer. "It's younger than 10, not 14," clarifies Stacey Langknecht, the organization's Parent and Family Program Director. Our mistake!

I asked Craig to send me more. It was then that I discovered "West Along the River" by David Brule. Again, I love the writing and the subject matter. But I was immediately amused by the play of Mr. Brule's name, the name of his article, and Wisconsin.

The Boise Brule River in northwestern Wisconsin is one of my state's beloved treasures. Upstream it is known for its excellent brook and brown trout fishing. The lower half of this river is known and well respected for challenging stretches of white water rapids and steelhead trout coming in from Lake Superior to spawn. The fishing can be very cold in late winter and early spring. And the steelhead are amazing. One may keep one, if that is one's goal, and it has to be at least twenty-six inches or bigger.

Four sitting presidents – G. Cleveland, T. Roosevelt, C. Coolidge, and D. D. Eisenhower – took time off from their presidential duties to come fish this river. Once, while on vacation, my family and I swam in the mouth of the Brule. It was funny how the coolness of the trout stream warmed us after being in the coldness of Lake Superior.

And then there is the saga of Ariel Jones learning to fly fish.

Back when Ike was still president, my older brother took me to one of the several "Silver Lakes" in southeastern Wisconsin. I caught perch on a cane pole and was hooked. But it wasn't until L.B.J. was in office and I bought a Shakespeare fiberglass fly rod and Martin reel that I started fly fishing.

In those old days, I used to lob worms and grasshoppers out to undercut banks and fallen trees to entice trout. In 1973 I bought a fourpiece Eddie Bauer backpacking rod that took a six-weight line. I bought an Orvis reel and my fly fishing career really took off.

Since then, I've added other fly rods to my arsenal: a seven-and-ahalf-foot, six-weight Fenwick for smaller trout stream in Wisconsin; a nine-foot, six-weight Fenwick for bigger rivers - smallies and out west; a nine-foot eight-weight rod for smallies and northern pike; and finally an eight-and-a-half-foot handmade that takes a four-weight line for finesse. I have caught all kinds of trout in my home, Wisconsin. I've taken trout, including cutthroat, in the Rockies from Colorado up into the Canadian Rockies of Alberta.

I am in my seventies now. Bad back, bad shoulder, and Parkinson's limit my activities. But on good days, I still get out. Long live fly fishing. Ms. Jones, I wish you the best of luck. When fishing with a personally tied fly, one is fishing with an art for an artful fish.

Originally, Craig signed me up for a subscription, and I want to renew before my current subscription runs out. I am also sending you a poem to demonstrate what trout and fly fishing has meant to me over the decades. I have had other trout fishing and duck and grouse hunting poems and non-fictional prose published in the Wisconsin Outdoor Journal, the Wisconsin Conservation magazine, the Ruffed Grouse Society magazine, and others. I have also had non-outdoor poetry published in other publications.

> Jymn Kellner Saukville, Wisconsin

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The Montague Reporter

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Compiled by NINA ROSSI

Although I signed up for the government-supplied rapid test kit giveaway a few weeks ago, I still haven't received any – have you?

The Town of Montague has posted on Facebook that at-home COVID-19 rapid test kits are still available for Montague residents at the town hall, the parks and rec office at Unity Park, the libraries, and the Gill-Montague senior center.

If you are a patient at the Community Health Center in Greenfield, you may pick up a kit at the front desk there at no charge, which is what I ended up doing last week.

The Brick House is offering the Nurturing Families program to parents and caregivers of children from birth up until school age. They write: "This highly respected program offers effective ways to balance the challenges of parenting young children, in a supportive space with other families."

This free program, run in collaboration with Montague Catholic Social Ministries, consists of 16 sessions from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Thursdays, beginning March 10; each session includes lunch. For more information, contact Sandra Ramos at sramos@brickhousecrc. org or (413) 800-2208.

Dining at the **Apprentice Restau**rant at Franklin County Technical **School** is back! On Wednesdays only, by appointment, you may dine at the restaurant with up to four of your friends. The food is cooked and served by the culinary students, and sold to the public at very affordable prices – under ten dollars an entrée.

Make your reservation by calling (413) 863-9561, ext. 182, to eat at the Turners Falls school between 11:15 a.m. and noon. Food is also available for pickup.

Sawmill River Arts Gallery has their annual Small Works show up during the month of February. show features wall art that is 10 inches or less in any direction. The gallery is open every day of the week except Tuesdays at the Book Mill complex in Montague Center.

Mount Grace Conservation Land Trust hosts a walk through Lawton Forest at 10 a.m. this Saturday, February 12. The Athol location was the first woodland certified as a Tree Farm in Massachusetts and is now owned by the DCR, which is trying to restore it to a more resilient native habitat.

On the walk you will learn about how the planned management will impact forest carbon, resilience, and biodiversity. Speakers Joelle Vautour (DCR's Midstate District forest manager) and William Van-Doren (a DCR biometrician) will address how the planned tree harvest will regenerate a native mixed hardwood forest. Registration is required at mountgrace.org.

Come make Valentines at Looky Here in Greenfield this Saturday, February 12. Pom-poms, glitter, rose petals, and other fun materials will be available for dropin crafters between noon and 3 p.m. for a modest \$10 fee per person.

Looky Here also hosts a weekly figure drawing group on Thursday evenings from 6 to 8 p.m. Please bring your own materials and a mask! Registration is \$15, and can be found on the Calendar page of *Lookyheregreenfield.com*.

The last session of this month, February 24, will be held at 10 Forward, and the registration fee will include a drink.

Check out "Who's Been Here? A Tracking Adventure" at the Discovery Center in Turners Falls this Saturday, February 12 at 1 p.m. Aimed at ages 3 to 8 with a parent or guardian, DCR staff will guide investigations into the signs that wildlife around the Center leave behind. The outdoor program This non-juried, community art also includes indoor habitat exhib-

its and crafts-to-go. Bundle up and meet inside the main entrance!

The Great Falls Discovery Center invites youngsters to stop by the welcome desk to pick up Valentine-making supplies to give cards to the ones they love, or to their favorite wildlife biologist! Learn more about a favorite animal and how to protect and honor it. Available on Sunday, February 13, from noon to 4 p.m.

The give-away is co-sponsored by CFCE Playgroup, "a free, fun, safe playgroup for Gill, Montague and surrounding area, promoting early literacy and school readiness."

On Tuesday, February 15, Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust is hosting a Virtual Nature Writing Workshop at 6 p.m. with instructors Sharon A. Harmon and bg Thurston. The workshop is free for Mount Grace members, \$10 for all others. Sign up at mountgrace.org.

Also on Tuesday, February 15, you may learn about how to trace your immigrant ancestors' roots in an online workshop with Al Fiacre. Learn how to find the records of people arriving in America at different times and locations. The Zoom starts at 6:30 p.m.; to sign up, call the Montague Libraries at (413) 863-3214.

Ready for a little toilet talk this winter? The Tilton Library in Deerfield is hosting a lecture by UMass librarian Sharon Domieron on The Culture of Japanese Toilets next Tuesday, February 15 at 6:30 p.m. on Zoom. Learn about what makes Japanese toilets special, and take a swipe at the history behind them! tiltonlibrary@cwmars.org Email to register.

Greenfield Community College is offering a series of artist talks at noon on Wednesdays in February and March. Speakers are announced online, and you may register and attend the Zoom presentation through a link on the events calendar at the college's website, gcc.mass.edu.

Vick Quezada presents his work on February 16, and Spandita Malek on the 23rd. March brings Jeff Kasper and Young Min Moon to the series.

The Mass College of Liberal Arts is offering a virtual author talk with Armando Alleyne next Thursday, February 17 at 7 p.m.

Alleyne, a Brooklyn-based artist, will walk participants through his recently published monograph, A Few of My Favorites, and speak on the contexts and (hi)stories that urged him to develop and create his painted and collaged renditions of jazz musicians, Afro-Latin singers, boxers, family members, and friends. "Alleyne's lifetime of painting tells a story of how we are subject to our city and how in it we can search for the tools to heal," reads the press release. To register, visit lnk.mcla.edu/talk.

Coming up on February 19 through 27, Brattleboro is having a winter festival with plenty of outdoor activities. This includes the second annual Artful Ice Shanty exhibit. We covered the first one last February in the ArtBeat column, and all the creative structures submitted to the exhibit were quite amazing. This year, the show has 18 entries on display.

Head up to the Retreat Farm in West Brattleboro and enjoy the show along with hot drinks, snowshoeing, an ice fishing derby, art activities, and a host of other activities. Some workshops and events require registration or a small fee before attending, so check out the programming at www.brattleboromuseum.org.

A rarely screened silent film, The Last Command, is coming to Epsilon Spires in Brattleboro, with live pipe organ musical accompaniment, next Saturday, February 19 at 8 p.m. The 1928 movie earned Emil Jannings an award for Best Actor at the first-ever Academy Awards. He portrays a Czarist general who flees to America during the Bolshevik revolution. He lives in poverty and finds work as a Hollywood extra. When he is cast to play himself in a film about the Revolution, he experiences traumatic flashbacks.

This psychological thriller is said to have a stunning climax, and music by Jeff Rapsis on Epsilon Spires's large Estey pipe organ is sure to add much dramatic effect. Get tickets and information at www.epsilonspires.org.

Mass Cultural Council announces that specific arts and culture pandemic recovery grants are now available for Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI). This one-year program offers a total of \$970,000 to help uplift AAPI arts and culture organizations impacted by the pandemic. The deadline for applications is March 23; apply online at massculturalcouncil.org.

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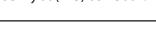
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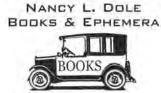
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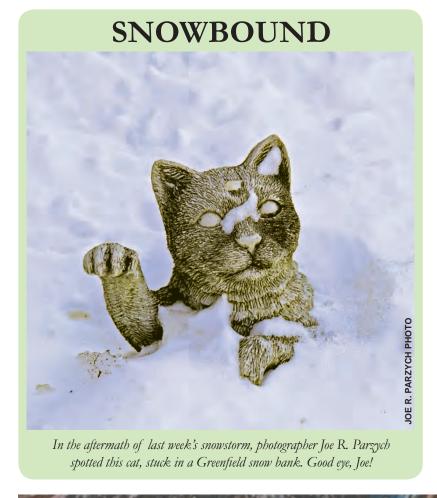
Looking for a dedicated and reliable professional caregiver up to 20 hours per week for my elderly father. Duties to include: making meals, support personal hygiene, light housekeeping, providing company and overall support. References and proof of COVID vaccinations and booster required and willing to follow COVID safety precautions. Hours can vary. Hourly rate plus bonuses. Please call or text Jenny at (413) 687-5667.





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NOTES FROM THE MONTAGUE TOWN CLERK

Turners Falls Fire District Nomination Papers Available

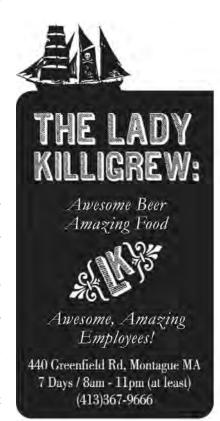
TURNERS FALLS – Nomination papers for the Annual Turners Falls Fire District Election are now available to all district residents from the District Office located at 226 Millers Falls Road until Monday, March 7. Papers must be returned no later than Wednesday, March 9. The District Office is open Mondays through Fridays, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

All potential candidates need to obtain 30 signatures from registered voters of the Turners Falls Fire District.

Offices are as follows:

- Prudential Committee, for a three-year term;
- Water Commissioner, for a three-year term.

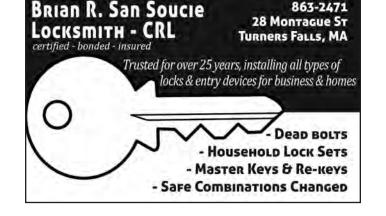
The Annual District Election will be held on Tuesday, April 26. The polls will open noon to 7 p.m. District residents wishing to register to vote may do so at www.Registerto-VoteMA.com or at the Town Clerk's office located in Town Hall, 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls. For more information, call the District Office at 863-4542.



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OP ED

On Leverett Pond: Three Reader Responses

In response to the critique that the Friends of Leverett Pond (FLP) has been established to protect the waterfronts of property owners, and hence their property values, the following evidence is provided of how the FLP has overseen the transformation of the pond from a semi-private waterbody to one fully open to the public. Some of the highlights are listed below.

- 1. Concern started with identification of invasive milfoil in 1993.
- 2. FLP was formed in 1994 (26 years ago) to address this problem.
- 3. FLP joined the Mass. Congress of Lakes and Ponds (COLAP) to gain experience from other ponds and explore alternative management methods.
- 4. Under UMass Water Watch's testing program at various sites we measured monthly dissolved oxygen, pH, water temperature and clarity, and aquatic plant diversity.
- 5. FLP, working with the Town of Leverett, registered Leverett Pond as a "Great Pond." This is a formal category of Commonwealth ownership in order to apply for State funding through the Mass. Clean Lakes Act program and other sources. This also made the pond a public waterbody.
- 6. A former FLP President donated land at the pond's south end, facilitating public access, a boat launch ramp, and the popular Friendship Trail.
- 7. A channel was created from the boat launch to reach open water, as well as other channels permitting boat access through the south-end weeds and to facilitate better water circulation.
- 8. The failing dam was rebuilt. This entailed buying the dam site, building an entry road, obtaining countless permits, and raising funds - \$360,000 with FLP fund raising from more than 150 people, the Leverett Community Preserva-

tion Act, and the Commonwealth. Proceeds from the coffee shed at the dump also helped. Hours, days, and months of volunteer effort were spent on this project: this was heroic.

- 9. A picnic and camping area were cleared on one of the islands.
- 10. The FLP set up a free kayak and canoe loan at the boat launch area.
- 11. The group donated a shallow water pump for the Fire Department to fill up trucks at the public access. Weeds have choked the former hydrant.
- 12. FLP hired a wetlands professional to assess the health of the pond. Adverse effects of herbicides

In summary, volunteer work by the FLP for over two decades has striven to create public access to Leverett Pond and maintain its ecological and recreational value, while trying to check invasive plants, especially milfoil, from choking off areas of open water and degrading habitats for fish and native flora and fauna.

If not for the FLP, who would have done this? The town was not interested in getting involved because of liability, and the state, even though they owned the pond and initially helped, was out of funds. Once again, who would have done all of this for the public's good?

We regret the actions by a small anti-herbicide group to villainize our sincere, long-term, and sometimes expensive efforts. They seem to have little knowledge of the pond's history, have inflamed rhetoric about the FLP's intentions, distorted facts about the pond's ecology, and seem to disregard what the open water pond means to so many users. It is one of the town's favorite resources.

> **Brooke Thomas** Leverett

It occurred to me after watching last night's meeting, that the Leverett Conservation Commission operates too much like a committee, and less like a commission. This is an important point.

A commission is based around a series of laws, and has those laws as solid bases. Conservation Commissions are there to protect, as Mark Stinson of MassDEP so aptly put it, "laws, not policies."

A committee is more a bunch of people, through conversation, coming together to solve problems without those restrictions.

It's a fine point, but it's really why often, too often, things don't get done quickly.

An example was the Dudleyville Road Shipping Container: The chairman was looking for a solution that would be satisfactory to all involved. The small town, "talk to your neighbor" approach works occasionally, but it wasn't working here.

The reality, from the position of a *commission*, is that the person who put the container too close to the river had broken the law. The result should have been: He broke the law, he has to remove it, or he will be fined. (In Amherst they had a similar situation, which was resolved quickly.)

It's good to bend laws sometimes, but not to ignore them. In Leverett, the Container issue dragged on through four meetings. I felt sorry for the guy, so I went up, knocked on his door, and told him, after listening to his side, that,

regardless of agenda, he broke the law. As a talking about the general merits of drawdowns friend. He removed it a week later.

I kept this to myself, but at the next meeting a Con Com member gave a sigh of relief that the LCC "didn't have to bring him to court." The person removed the container back to where it came from, apparently for another \$400.

So what happened last Monday was again, a commission acting like a committee, which leads to the "oatmeal-mush solution" that's coming. In reality the FLP, a pond side landowners group wanted to present evidence that the fisheries were in *current* danger. That is what all this was about, for many months: removing vegetation, regardless of native or invasive, to increase the pond's water quality for the fish. I saw the "20-foot wide" fish highways they wanted to create... leading between their property docks through Waterlily beds to open water, hundreds of feet away.

As a Commission, with laws as their base, the LCC should have seen the FLP had failed to make their case for the NOI. Their plea was based on eutrophication and "fishery" health; the data pointed out that the fishery was healthy.

What happened was "committee." One LCC member started talking about invasives; another started making weird comments about pond size pre-1938 and equating a summer drought with a winter drawdown; and other members started

and herbicides. None of this had anything to do with the data and "evidence" presented by the FLP. It was just a discussion to move this ahead to solve a problem, by literally rewriting the evidence. This allowed the FLP to move forward to another group discussion that was a hodge-podge of "maybe the conditions will be met that will make this work, even though we are not sure what will work." After all these months....

That is why what happened last meeting was wrong: the Commission is acting like a Committee. That is why it often gets mired, as it were, in the mud. How something as simple as a tree getting cut down too close to the pond's edge took a year to resolve.

No one is acting like a commission, defending the Wetlands Protection Act laws... Period.

While I am staying out of this fight, I thought I might bring out this salient point. I had applied for one of the vacant positions available on the LCC and was denied, ignored, met by silence. And maybe they are right, in that I would not have made a good Committee member; because I would have, however, made a good Commission member. I think that's pretty funny, actually.

> Macaylla Silver Leverett

those opposing the spraying of Board of Health. pesticides/ herbicides into Leverett Pond as a plan to manage "waterweeds" have been aggressively attacked by those who support the spraying of such toxic chemicals. It could be compared to how pioneer environmentalist Rachel Carson was verbally attacked by the chemical company Monsanto, who made an attempt to defame her for her stance as an advocate for All Life on Earth in her eye-opening book, Silent Spring, that was so groundbreaking for the times...

It is most unfortunate and upsetting that the Leverett Conservation Commission would not follow the written resolution in the Board of Health's Code of Leverett, which states in "Chapter 208: Herbicides" that "the use of herbicides is prohibited... within the town's borders." Before any chemical herbicide is sprayed, other than for "agricultural or domestic" purposes, specifically in large quantities, anywhere within the town, there would need to be a vote about it in Town Meeting, as this is an exist-

This resolution outlines the previously agreed upon ideal for the town, and the town's intent to protect its residents and its environment: its wildlife, its watersheds, and ecosystems. It also implies that the town rejects the risk of these chemicals as being unsafe for use anywhere "within the town's borders," thus the need for the written resolution.

It is strange that no fewer than three out of the five members of Conservation Commission were concerned, and in an article covering the meeting where the vote to approve the Friends of Leverett Pond's "Notice of Intent" (to spray toxic chemicals) was passed, were quoted as speaking against the passing of this NOI: "There's a town bylaw disallowing herbicides," etc. This is a resolution that should not be ignored, so why did the FLP's Notice of Intent pass?

The conflicts of interest and cronyism that exist between the Con Com and the FLP, a small waterfront landowner group desiring to keep the waterways in front of their

It is ironic and disturbing that ing resolution (since 1983) of the properties open and clear of "water-"killing chemicals" in the sad afweeds" (i.e. milfoil), for the purpose termath of that era. of water sports and property values, have not been acknowledged as influences in this vote against the town's own resolution. There has not been adequate effort to address these conflicts of interest and cronyism due to the power structures that are involved and are in play.

The FLP is a small, self-appointed entity that has taken it upon themselves to "manage" Leverett Pond, for their own benefit, and they do not represent a wider, unbiased interest. Nor do they, or the water management company that stands to profit from selling and spraying these chemical herbicides, present unbiased science information.

It is certain that the chemical company Monsanto claimed that they had all the "science" when they tried to discredit Rachel Carson's insightful environmental revelations. Remember how DDT was considered to be "safe" by the "science," and was widely sprayed in populated areas and neighborhoods? People should have learned to step back from the use of these

It is also relevant to note that some of the chemical herbicides that have been used in Leverett Pond have been banned in Europe as toxic and dangerous. The Board of Health's resolution was written to protect the town.

It is unfortunate that the Leverett Con Com is reluctant to stand up against the Friends of Leverett Pond's proposal, or Notice of Intent to destroy the ecosystem of Leverett Pond, and put wildlife and water supplies at risk, as such get toxic chemicals into both the food chains and watersheds with lasting impact. It is also a betrayal of trust of the town's residents, who can now have no confidence that their town's bylaws will be respected and followed by those in charge of running the town.

With an existing written resolution already in place, this proposal should have been put to a democratic vote within a Town Meeting.

> Sarah Greenleaf Leverett/Wendell

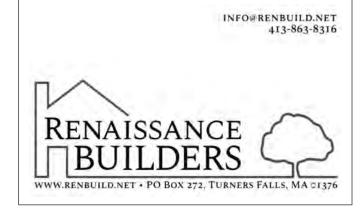
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SIGHTSEEING from page A1

spearheaded the project, creating the village of Turners Falls in his spare time.

Reading our namesake paper, the Turners Falls Reporter, in its first two years, one gets the impression that the villagers here were jealous of the Tunnel project for stealing away the attention of papa Crocker - despite the nearly weekly columns announcing grisly deaths on the job.

Crocker's close associate Bernard Farren (of Farren Memorial Hospital fame) was the chief engineer to finally finish the tunnel, taking over in November 1874; Crocker himself died the day after Christmas, and the first train rolled through February 9.

The portal is creepy, lined last Saturday with dripping ice. The Tucson Trains and Leisure Club has generously provided a bench where you can sit and wonder if a train will hurtle out of the black hole. There's a trailhead here, and little dribs of trash and graffiti. A nice spot to hang out, but it's not why we came this way.

Back on the road, we soon come across the first big hydropower monstrosity: a dam on the river creating the lower reservoir of Bear Swamp, a 600-megawatt pumped-storage station built in the early 1970s. (Yes, right when they were building the Northfield Mountain project; yes, both batteries were just downstream from nuke plants.... And all these things have to go through relicensing with the FERC for the use of the river, just like our projects on the Connecticut.)

The upper reservoir is out of sight on a mountain, but we spot the powerhouse and lots of big high-tension lines. The sheer scale of the landscape-machine we're in



Sherman Dam, stretching from Monroe to Rowe. The two miles of the Deerfield to the left form a reservoir for a hydro station here; in the distance is what's left of Yankee Rowe.

is so daunting that we barely notice when we drive past the 14-MW Deerfield No. 5 station on our left, first built in 1913 to supply the Hoosac Tunnel with power.

The road around here feels weird, too – for the next three miles, it is braided with canals and tunnels funneling water to the No. 5 station from the Deerfield and the adjacent Dunbar Brook. Owner Great River Hydro has made a Dunbar Brook picnic area for our recreation fun, doubtless as a condition of its FERC license.

We drive down to the parking lot, then worry whether the hill will be too icy to drive back up. We gun it on the way back up - the picnic area on the Deerfield will be explored in warmer months - and we're back on the strange, industrial stretch of River Road.

Finally we weave into Monroe Bridge. It's a neat little town. The town office and library appear to be shared with Great River Hydro's local headquarters, the wastewater plant driveway is named "Ecology Drive," and a big sign on the village's one tavern indicates that bikers are welcome.

Google Maps has told us that we can drive the next leg on the eastern

side of the river, so we cross the No. 5 Dam. A sign reads "Danger: Sudden Release of Water When Horn Sounds and Light Flashes." The light is flashing. It's all very exciting, but there are also No Parking signs everywhere, and we are eager to check out the Yankee Rowe Nuclear Power Plant, decommissioned thirty years ago.

Google Maps was wrong - a number of new signs dissuade us from even approaching the gate. We meekly motor back down through Monroe Bridge and bang a right toward Vermont.

The nuke, naturally, was built on

the edge of yet another impoundment of the Deerfield, created by the Sherman Dam. Sherman Station was built in 1927, and its 6-MW generator is also part of Great River Hydro's portfolio. This time we do pull over to take a photo: at the far end of the dam, across the 217-acre reservoir, we can just make out the rows of storage casks containing Yankee's spent nuclear fuel, patiently waiting the federal government to come take them somewhere safer.

We cross the Vermont border. Weirder things await.

Next week: Part II!



SPORTS from page A1

Franklin South Conference went head to head on Monday. Franklin Tech came into the game a half game ahead of Turners, but had lost to them in their previous meeting. Turners, for their part, had lost a road game against Pioneer, setting up the bottleneck atop the FSC.

The gym was packed to the rafters. Throughout the game students from Tech were raising the roof with their chants and cheers, while kids from Turners waved "Make Noise" and "Go Thunder" signs. The Turners cheerleaders contributed their own unison chants, cutting through the din.

The first quarter was a defensive battle riddled with blocks, jumps, steals, traveling calls, and several fouls. The score was still only 9-7, with only a few seconds left in the quarter, when Tech's Kaitlin Trudeau was fouled. She sank two from the foul line to tie it up 9-9 after one complete.

Turners began to pull away in the second. At the end of the quarter, with Turners up 22-14, Tech's Kendra Campbell suffered a leg injury. Trudeau stood in for Campbell at the line and hit two freebees to narrow the gap to 22-16 at the break.

The noise didn't let up at halftime. The Cheer squad did their routines, the Tech kids continued their verbal barrage, and Turners kids took turns running in front of the bleachers with their "Make Noise" signs. And the crowd responded.

In the third, as the game was growing out of reach, Franklin coach Joe Gamache began liberally substituting from his bench, sending in four and then five players at a time. This led the Lady Birds' supporters to revise their chants to "Go JV! Go JV!"

Although Tech's JV players are good, they couldn't keep pace either, and after three quarters Turners was up decidedly, 43-20.

During the final intermission, Turners Falls cheerleader Chloie Sumner tumbled from an up-stretched palm to the wooden



Franklin Tech's Cordelia Guerin shoots as Madison Liimatainen (22) and Morgan Dobias (33) defend for Turners Falls during Monday's game.

floor. The crowd held their collective breath as they waited for the ambulance to arrive. As she was carted off on a stretcher, Sumner gave the thumbs-up sign to a spontaneous standing ovation.

Cheerleading, after all, can be a very dangerous sport.

Turners outscored tech 10-6 in the final stanza to take the game and to claim the top spot in the Franklin South Conference. Turners' big three, Lily Spera (16), Taylor Greene (16) and Emily Young (10), led the Thunder with help from Madison Liimatainen (4), Steph Peterson, Holly Myers, and Morgan Dobias (2), and Abby Holloway (1).

Tech waged a more even attack with Trudeau (6), Hannah Gilbert (5), Campbell and Haleigh Benoit (4), and Lea Chapman, Emily Ryan, Cordelia Guerin, and Lilli Inman (2) all contributing.

Boys Basketball

FCTS 40 – TFHS 39 FCTS 42 - TFHS 36 (JV)

The very next day the Tech Boys crossed Millers Falls Road to play the winless Boys'

Many of the same characters were in the house: Kendra Campbell was there on crutches, and Chloie Sumner was dressed in her uniform but didn't take part in the flipping and throwing. The crowd noise in the gym was a little different than the previous night; the Tech kids weren't as loud, but adults from both sides made their comments known.

In the opening period both teams played aggressively, but shot cold; and after a quarter, the score was a modest 10-9 Tech.

The second quarter was more of the same as multiple shots bounced harmlessly off the rim only to be pulled down by the wrong team.

Going into the break, Turners was up 16-14.

The last time these teams played, the Eagles scored 15 points in the third quarter to Thunder's 2 to put the game away, but in this game Tech wasn't able to shake the Turners. The Birds edged their way back to a slim lead, 28-27, after the third.

Tech came out hot in the fourth, outscoring Turners 4-1 widening their lead, but Brandon Truesdale hit a three-pointer in response to narrow the gap back to a point. This was a little concerning for Franklin, as both David Klempner-Siano and Robert Murphy were just one foul away from ejection.

Turners wrestled back the lead 33-32 at 5:13, and then Klempner-Siano fouled out and Truesdale hit a foul shot to make it 34-32. The rock was returned on a travel and Turners broke through their trapping press and went up 36-32 with less than three minutes to play. Murphy was fouled on his way to the hoop; his shot was good, but he couldn't convert the one-pointer, keeping the score 36-34. Then he, too, fouled out.

The score seesawed back and forth in the game's final two minutes. Tech tied it at 36, Turners went up by a point, Tech took back the lead, Turners tied it again at 38, and then went up 39-38.

Then, with 4.2 seconds left on the clock, Tech's Ty Sadoski got fouled. His first shot tied it, and his second put the Eagles ahead, 40-39. With zero seconds left on the clock, a full-court hail Mary shot narrowly missed, and Franklin held on to win by a single point.

Sadoski (13) and Murphy (12) were Tech's two high scorers, with Klempner-Siano (6), Vincent Renaud (4), Gabe Tomasi (3), and Noah Ausikaitis (2) helping out.

Five players scored for Turners: Levin Prondecki (15), Truesdale (14), Cam Burnett (5), JJ Charles (3), and Alex Quezada (2).

The win halted the Eagles' losing streak, while the upset-minded Thunder will have to wait another day to earn their first win of the season.



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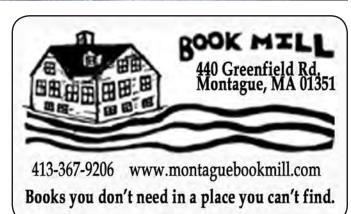


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TOWN OF LEVERETT

Notice of Hearing on Licensed Premises Alteration

The Select Board will hold a hearing at the request of the Village Cooperative Corporation (Village Co-op) for addition of a patio to its licensed (Wine and beer) café on Tuesday March 1st 2022 at 7 p.m. at the Leverett Town Hall. All interested parties may question or give testimony at that time. Written comments will be received by the select board at PO Box 300, Leverett, MA 01054 until Feb 28th 2022 at 5 p.m. and will be opened, publicly read, and incorporated into the minutes of the hearing.

POND from page A1

a report on the FLP's plans for the coming season each year by February 15 – excluding this year, when the group will have until March 15.

Data for these assessments will be gathered by a "third party mutually agreed upon" by the con com and the FLP, and will include detailed maps of the affected areas and photographs before and after treatment.

"If we're really concerned about invasive species management, we need to do an annual survey of where the species is located," said con com member Ralph Tiner.

The FLP had requested permission to apply the same techniques to manage "nuisance" vegetation, plants that are not considered invasive species. "Some people have been calling watershield a nuisance. It's not an invasive species," Tiner said. "The 'nuisance' aquatic vegetation opens up a can of worms – it could be anything."

At Tiner's recommendation, the commission added language allowing for the treatment of "nuisance" vegetation only if it is clogging either the dry hydrant or the channel leading from the public-access boat launch on Depot Road to the rest of the pond.

The commission used a draft order of conditions provided by the FLP's hired consultant SWCA Environmental as the basis of its deliberations. Members made substantial changes to some of the language provided, including a sentence that originally said the con com concludes that the project "will not have a significant or cumulative adverse effect upon the interests of the Wetlands Protection Act."

"I don't feel comfortable with that statement," said member Gail Berrigan, citing some of her fellow member Jono Neiger's reservations.

The commission agreed to replace the phrase with saying the con com finds the project "is intended to improve the capacity of the resource areas at the project site."

Neiger, who had cast the sole vote not to approve the FLP's plan the previous week, called in at the beginning of Monday's virtual meeting but did not stay for the final vote.

"I should bow out of negotiations for these conditions, because the idea that this activity is not having an adverse impact is, I think, off base," he said. "We're allowing some significant herbicide spraying activity, and it definitely doesn't meet the conditions of an ecological restoration project. There's no showing of the fisheries having any sort of challenge - the fisheries are healthy, and there's no evidence being shown that this activity will improve the fishery."

Neiger argued that the length of the permit should be shorter than five years to give members of the community more opportunities to weigh in on the permitting process. However, the commis-

Preparation is underway for

a possible Turnpike Road Ener-

gy Park, an industrial park which

includes solar power generation.

Montague wants to know how resi-

dents think the puzzle pieces might

all fit together on the 183-acre par-

plots, roads with utilities, solar ar-

rays, stormwater runoff, and possi-

bly a new DPW facility - and over-

come obstacles which include a

former burn dump, capped landfill,

gravel pit, steep slopes, trails, per-

concerns, and, then there are the

bobcats and coyotes and bears and

turtles and turkeys and deer and

owls and moose that either make

the land their home or use it as

their highway or feeding ground.

The neighborhood has traffic

manent and intermittent streams?

How might one fit industrial

cel of town-owned land.

sion decided to keep the five-year term.



ERVING from page A1

page would be intended to make it easier for developers who would have to travel some distance to get a better idea of the project without having to take a whole day or more to drive to the site to see it.

Kurtz also suggested documenting the current state of the IP mill for posterity. This could be done using still photography and aerial drone videography.

Budget Requests

The selectboard was joined by the finance committee for a discussion of the FY'23 budget.

The funding requests from Erving Elementary School stayed about the same as pre-pandemic, and enrollment has returned to pre-pandemic levels. Money from the current year's budget would be earmarked to upgrade the building's carpeting, HVAC, telephone system, and water fountains.

The town's secondary school budget is up 15%. Enrollment is up, as is the cost of special education-related transportation.

Franklin County Technical School superintendent Richard Martin and business manager Russ Kaubris attended the meeting to discuss the vocational school's FY'23 budget. Their apparently snazzy budget presentation was not visible to the remote viewing audience.

The district's request from the town was up, but only slightly. Martin and Kaubris noted that enrollment is up, and that for the first time in a long time the school has had to turn down applicants because of how many applications it is getting. Erving currently has 28 students in the school.

The representatives also noted that their building is one of the oldest among the state's technical schools, and they are hoping to soon be approved to build a new one.

Jean Daley has been serving as the interim library director while the town looks for a permanent one. Daley pointed out that current staffing levels are too low, and the town has had to hire substitute librarians more often than is ideal; she suggested adding another library assistant position to remedy this.

Selectboard chair Jacob Smith seemed skeptical for Monday, February 28.

about that, but thanked Daley heartily for taking on the interim director position.

The selectboard, library staff, and fin com all agreed that the solar electric grid the town had been sold for the library was not performing as advertised. They recalled being told it would reduce the library's electric bill by 75% or more, but no substantial savings have been seen.

Other Business

The town received a response from FirstLight Power about the draft recreational settlement currently under discussion, but the selectboard did not spend much time talking about it or reveal any of its content to the public, except to note that the issue of parking at the proposed Rose Ledges climbing area had not yet been resolved.

The board continued its discussion of moving the town's voting location. They agreed with town clerk Richard Newton that upstairs at the town hall would be a reasonable place to try. It will be used for the town election in the spring as a test run for the fall's elections, which have larger expected turnouts.

An elevator is available at the town hall for those who cannot use the stairs.

The financing of the Arch Street sewer main project was agreed on. Erving will take out a 20-year loan from an outside entity. It was noted that borrowing the money from the town's future revenue would save the town money in financing, but the selectboard and fin com agreed that with a number of large expenditures forecast, it would be more advantageous for the town to have more money on hand.

Other large upcoming projects include two bridge repairs, one estimated at a cost of \$2 million, and a new fire truck, estimated at \$750,000. The town still also owes about \$500,000 on the library.

The board granted a business license to Johnson Auto and Marine Service on Mountain Road.

The upcoming special town meeting has been scheduled for Saturday, March 5 at 10 a.m. at the elementary school.

The next selectboard meeting is scheduled



NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Federal Aid, Well Camera, Town Meeting

By JOSH HEINEMANN

In spite of Groundhog Day celebrations the Wendell selectboard met, by Zoom, on schedule February 2, and decided to resume alternate-week meetings. They postponed a public hearing on the personnel policy to allow a slower process and a committee that includes treasurer Carolyn Manley, and avoids creating unintended consequences.

Personnel Policy

The idea of changing the personnel policy was brought up when the highway department hired a worker who had 10 years of experience Federal Aid with the Wendell road crew, took a year away, and then was rehired. Highway commission chair Phil Delorey asked at prior meetings that this worker's probation period not include a lower pay rate, and that his health insurance begin his first day on the job. The worker and family members caught COVID during the probation period, and their hospital bills grew.

Before the February 2 meeting the board got approval from Hampshire Group to start the employee's insurance from day one. Town coordinator Glenn Johnson-Mussad said he thought ARPA might cover the additional town expense, as it was unanticipated and COVID-related.

Town Meeting

Board members discussed warrant articles for a special town meeting, and a need to hold one in March or even April, when an outside meeting is conceivable, or, better still, when COVID numbers have dropped to low enough levels to allow an indoor meeting. Articles would include transfer of MLP

money and free cash and spending building rehab money on the library and painting the town hall, or some other capital project.

Before setting a date, board members wanted an opinion about timing from the board of health.

\$60,000 in rehab money was slated to be used for energy savings. Selectboard member Laurie DiDonato, as a member of the energy committee, said she would bring up redirecting that money at the February energy committee meeting. She also said transfer of MLP money is not time-sensitive.

Town accountant Erin Degnan Zoomed in to help clarify Wendell's situation with CARES Act and ARPA money, COVID relief money from the federal government that includes restrictions and regulations.

CARES Act money had to be committed by December 31, and payments were made by the town and then reimbursed. Finance committee chair Doug Tanner has been trying to figure out what has been reimbursed, and what still needs to be reimbursed.

ARPA money arrived in two payments, \$45,000 and \$85,000, comprising half of Wendell's total allotment. Of that, \$40,000 is earmarked for a solution to high PFAS levels in Swift River School's water, and \$75,000 for capping Wendell's old landfill. "We need a plan before we start spending [all the money]," selectboard chair Dan Keller said.

ARPA funds can be used for computer upgrades, which are needed in the office and at the library. Tanner and Johnson-Mussad plan to work together to make a list of town needs.

Other Business

New Salem has taken the lead in dealing with Swift River School PFAS, and hired engineer Chris Stoddard to oversee the project. Stoddard recommended lowering a camera into the well to look for potential sources of surface water infiltration.

Keller said he appreciated that approach, but that lowering a camera into the well is no small project.

DiDonato said her request on the town listserv for citizens to volunteer on the public safety succession committee brought no responses, but one person was interested the police oversight committee.

DiDonato will be the selectboard member on the public safety committee, and Keller will be the selectboard member of the joint, with Leverett, policing oversight committee.

At their February 1 meeting the Leverett selectboard signed both the policing agreement for sharing police services with Wendell and the lease agreement for Leverett to use Wendell's old police station as a substation. Building inspector Delorey has been overseeing the overhaul of that building, and he said it should be ready in spring.

Selectboard member Gillian Budine reporting on the February 3 meeting for getting instructions to use the town's CodeRED emergency notification system, choosing who should use it, when, and for what situations. Options for making calls include emergencies, road closures, town meeting notices, and changes of WRATS hours.

Fire chief Joe Cuneo cautioned against using the system too often. Another meeting is planned for the coming week.

LOOKING BACK:

10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here's the way it was on structures favor the reduction of February 2, 2012: News from the fossil fuels and greenhouse gases. Montague Reporter's archive.

Possible Tenant at Strathmore

The Strathmore Mill, a 244,000-square-foot, 140-year-old complex that fell into town hands for unpaid taxes in 2010, may have found a first, if small-scale, tenant. Montague town administrator Frank Abbondanzio fielded an inquiry from Ron MacLeod of Nautilus LLC, a manufacturer of ultra-low-head stainless steel hydro turbines. MacLeod said he is the only manufacturer in America specializing in producing power using streams with very low head.

About six or eight feet of drop is sufficient to produce enough power for a home or small village, said MacLeod. He has been marketing these turbines in past years to the Third World, or to wealthy individuals in Europe, where government tariffs and utility pricing











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MONTAGUE from page A1

the "things we have been talking about, like infrastructure" in the expenditure of ARPA funds. Member Matt Lord agreed, but said it was important to explore how to "broaden" the town's options under the new rules.

The board then reviewed three projects being considered for town appropriations that could be funded with ARPA money without town meeting approval.

The first was an engineering study for sewers in Turners Falls and Millers Falls that totals \$250,000. After a general discussion of the town sewer system, the board voted to allocate \$250,000 in ARPA funding for the study, \$150,000 of which it is hoped will be reimbursed by a state grant.

The second potential expenditure was a new or reconditioned vactor truck for cleaning catch basins and tanks at the water pollution control facility (WPCF). After another complex discussion of various options, the board voted to lease the truck at a projected annual cost of \$108,000. The item will be placed on the March 3 STM warrant, but with the option of a full "buyout" using ARPA funds in the near future.

The third discussion focused on replacing the screw pumps at the WPCF, which Ellis portrayed as in "failing" condition. The potential price tag of \$730,000 would have used up a significant portion of the first tranche of ARPA money; the capital improvements committee (CIC) had not yet endorsed the purchase amid uncertainty about what metal should be used to manufacture the pumps.

The board decided to "put a hold" on a final decision about the screw pumps until the CIC weighs in. They will probably not appear on the upcoming STM agenda.

The board also rescinded a previous town meeting appropriation to cover projected cost overruns on the Fifth Street pedestrian bridge project, replacing it with \$491,493 in ARPA funds, expected to be reimbursed through a state grant.

River Recreation

The board discussed proposals by FirstLight Power Resources for recreation improvements in its project areas primarily along the Connecticut River, that could become part the company's long-term license from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

Town officials focused on projects in Montague only, which range from a boat ramp and improved parking on the river near Unity Park, a "gatehouse fish viewing platform" adjacent to the Turners Falls dam, improved access for whitewater rafting at several points below the dam, and a new "chute" at the steep river access point on Poplar Street in Montague City.

Ellis highlighted the improved access for rafting by noting that "we understand there is an agreement with whitewater interests for releases [from the dam] on weekends between July 1 and August 31." He said the town is "continuing to have conversations with First-Light" about parking upgrades in the Poplar Street area.

The town did not get everything it initially proposed, including more extensive improvements along the river in a new "Canal District" below the dam. With regard to Cabot Camp, a group of cabins on FirstLight property on the Millers River, Ellis said the town had "expressed an interest in seeing the buildings repaired and restored," but FirstLight sought to "decommission" the structures, perhaps a euphemism for demolition.

The proposed agreement says FirstLight would in "restoring and maintaining" the property. "Coming out of the Farren," Ellis said, "we would have this in writing in our agreement with FERC."

Administrative assistant Wendy Bogusz read an email from Jeri Moran of Montague Center, who wrote that FirstLight should consider installing a "pulley system" at the Poplar Street access point so a

"tired and perhaps aging boater could pull their kayak or canoe up the embankment."

"This is not everything we asked for," said town planner Walter Ramsey, "but this is going to have a dramatic effect with the community's relationship with the river."

"This is, by and large, the license," Ellis said, "and we are not in a position to make changes to it." There will be further discussion of the recreation proposals at the March 14 selectboard meeting.

Special Town Meeting

The board reviewed a draft warrant for the March 3 meeting, which had included 14 articles but had just been altered to replace the appropriation for the sewer collection study, now slated for ARPA spending, with lease for the vactor truck, which could be funded from the capital stabilization account.

Other articles included repairs at two town cemeteries, new software for the assessors' office, tuition for a local student going to Smith Vocational Technical School, and asbestos remediation at the Hillcrest Elementary School.

The board balked at a proposal from the parks and recreation commission to fund security cameras at Unity Park, pending a broader discussion of town policy, but did not vote to withdraw the article. The board will discuss the cameras again next week after consultation with the recreation commission.

On the other hand, a proposed bylaw change to regulate solar batteries appeared to be headed instead to the annual town meeting in the spring, with the board's approval. The board will vote to endorse individual STM articles at its meeting on February 14.

Ellis reviewed the "logistics and schedule" for the STM, which will be held remotely. Dates for training town meeting members on the virtual software will be held at 6 p.m. on February 24 and March 1. Ellis said a computer room will be set up at the town hall annex for those who "lack the ability to participate... at home."

The board voted to approve a formal request from town moderator Chris Collins to hold the meeting virtually rather than in person. Collins will not be able to attend the meeting, so Michael Nelson will be handed the gavel.

Other Business

The meeting began with a brief report on the town's latest COVID-19 case counts. Ellis said the case count has been declining rapidly since mid-January, but is still high by the standards of previous spikes. He also reviewed the status of rapid test kits, which the town is distributing to the "general public" at the senior center, the Carnegie Library, and the town hall.

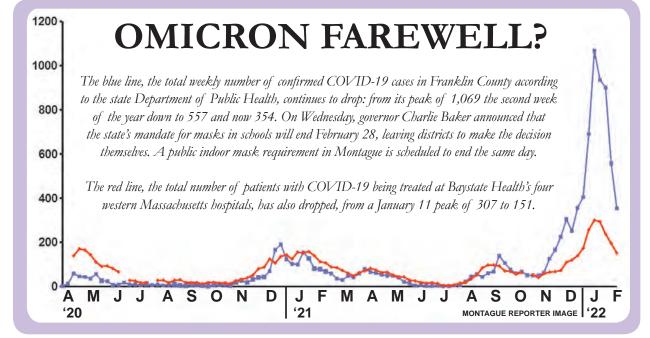
At Ramsey's request, the board approved an addendum to an agreement with the engineering firm GZA Environmental for design services to remedy flaws in the original burn dump capping on Sandy Lane. The "corrective action" is required by the state Department of Environmental Protection for final approval of the project.

The board also authorized Ramsey to apply for federal assistance to implement a Phase 2 environmental assessment of the former Railroad Savage site on Power Street.

At the end of the meeting, Ellis announced that funding for three Montague bridge projects was included in a new bond bill proposed by Governor Bak-"work with the town" to find an organization interested er. These include a new bridge to the Patch over the power canal at Sixth Street, probably replacing two existing bridges, as well as the reconstruction of the South Street Bridge in Montague Center and the North Leverett bridge over the Sawmill River, both of which are currently closed to two-way traffic.

The next selectboard meeting will be held February 14.





SCHOOL COMMITTEE VACANCY: MONTAGUE

Any Montague resident interested in being appointed to fill the vacancy on the Gill-Montague Regional School Committee should send a letter of interest to the Superintendent's office - 35 Crocker Ave., Turners Falls - by Monday, February 14, 2022. An appointment will be made at the February 15, 2022 School Committee meeting.

If there are no letters of interest received by February 14, 2022, we will extend the date for receipt of letters of interest until March 7, 2022. An appointment will then be made at the March 8, 2022 School Committee meeting.

The Town of Erving

is looking for artists to submit proposals for a permanent sculpture to be installed at Riverfront Park. Proposals should incorporate found or reclaimed materials and address themes of climate change, resilience, and appreciation of natural beauty.

More information at www.erving-ma.gov/bids

LIBRARY DIRECTOR



New Salem Public Library is looking for a Library Director who enjoys creating engaging programs for all ages; has strong managerial, people and technical skills; and would like a rewarding 19-hour a week position in a small rural town with a supportive community. For more info about the position and a complete job description, go to www.newsalempubliclibrary.org

To apply by February 28 deadline: Submit a cover letter and resume to mackay.selectman@gmail.com or New Salem Public Library, Attn: Sue Dunbar, 23 South Main Street, New Salem, MA 01355.

NOTES FROM THE GMRSD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Getting the Word Out

By MIKE JACKSON

GILL-MONTAGUE - The Gill-Montague school committee held an official public hearing Tuesday on next year's proposed budget. Business manager Joanne Blier pointed out that the \$26,432,465 working budget was higher than the preliminary one approved last month, due to increased projected revenue from the state. A final vote is scheduled for March 8.

Several requested positions are not budgeted for, including a dean of students at Sheffield Elementary and a second special ed teacher at Gill Elementary. Blier emphasized changes were still under consideration.

First-year Montague memb Seth Licata and Jennifer Waryas asked why lines for textbooks, library books, and art and music supplies were being reduced. Blier said the previous number for textbooks was unnecessarily high, and the cuts were recommended by school principals, but she would check in with the administrative team about them.

Capital requests to the towns are \$10,000 for a new heating system computer at Gill Elementary and \$315,000 to remove or cover asbestos flooring at Hillcrest Elementary.

Blier shared a chart showing Hillcrest and Sheffield now require nearly \$1.4 million in maintenance and repairs each year, and calculations indicating that if the state covers 76% of the cost of a new building, it would cost Montague \$825,000 a year for 20 years. "When we look at the size of these numbers, it brings the question - do we need a new building?" she asked.

The sole public comment at the hearing was provided by Montague finance committee chair Jen Audley, who said she was speaking in a per-

sonal capacity. She warned that the "goodwill that was built up" through the 2010 affordable assessment compact "maybe has eroded a bit."

"Every year at town meeting, I hear the same two questions," Audley said. "What are we getting from this money that we can feel good about, and why are so many people who live in Montague choosing to send their children to other public schools?" She urged the district to "step up its engagement with the community," and consider the impact of recent costs to Montague on top of the affordable assessment, including the school police officer and a substance abuse counselor position paid for with cannabis impact fees.

Waryas asked superintendent Brian Beck what steps are being taken to address the enrollment decline at Turners Falls High School. Beck pointed to the Innovation Pathways programs in health and human services and advanced manufacturing, cooperating with other schools on shared sports teams, and steps to "promote opportunities" to students.

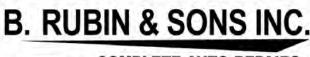
"The high school has had five different principals over the last decade, and five different assistant principals," he added. "Instability of leadership creates challenges for the district." Beck said high school principal Christopher Barnes is committed "not only to continue to diversify what we're doing but also, and perhaps more importantly, to get the word out there about the things that we do well."

The press was urged to call attention to the Montague seat on the committee left vacant by the recent death of Mike Langknecht, in the hopes that a volunteer might step forward to fill it. (Details are available in an ad on this page.)

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FARREN from page A1

legal team has been engaged with that group of people."

"We are certainly in communication with the family," Trinity Health spokesperson Christine Looby confirmed to the Reporter, "and we want to see the best thing done both for the property and community – in terms of historic preservation, but more importantly safety."

"They wanted to make certain that in the end the town came out OK on this, and that Trinity was responsible," Ellis said of Farren's heirs. "I do believe that if they had found that the building was worth several million dollars, the conversation could have been different."

Trinity has said that based on an internal assessment, over \$27 million would be needed to bring the building to proper habitable condition. A new roof, floors, and windows are necessary, according to a summary the company shared with the town last month, as well as major upgrades to the building's electricity, plumbing, and heating systems.

Peter Hudyma, a former employee at the Farren who worked in the maintenance department around 25 years ago, said during the hearing that he thinks the building should be torn down.

"Even then it was in really rough shape, a really second-class place to work and to live," Hudyma said. "The older building is really decrepit. I don't think Trinity is exaggerating the amount of money those buildings require to be livable."

The Farren's owners negotiated for years with the state for a higher Medicaid reimbursement rate for its long-term care residents, citing the former hospital's maintenance needs. Despite a \$30 million earmark in a 2018 state bond bill intended for improvements to the building, the money was never appropriated. The facility closed last year, and most of its residents were moved to a Holyoke nursing home.

"There was apparently very little support in the [state] executive suite," Ellis said at Monday night's meeting. "This is one of those things that was placed in a bond bill, but never acted upon or appropriated. To my knowledge there was never any serious commitment to funding, which is regrettable, because that's something the town advocated for."

In August 2020, town officials estimated a redevelopment study for the overall property would cost \$110,000, and shared that figure with Trinity. Until last month, Ellis said he expected Trinity would fund such a study, but the conversation "changed markedly" in November; the company has declined to share any details of its "proprietary" assessments of the building's condition.

"We've got preliminary figures that make it very clear that demolition is a more viable route, a less expensive route, than the reuse of the property in its condition," Looby told the *Reporter* this week. "We are not going to be sharing the property, hazardous materials, and mechanicals assessment.... It's regular practice with real estate."

"It's very difficult to know what the possibilities are for the Farren, particularly the old building, without having a real evaluation done," Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno, who has worked with the town as a consultant on several building preservation projects, said at Monday's hearing. "I would strongly urge the selectboard to continue to push Trinity to provide the entire evaluation."

"I don't think that the historic part of the Farren would necessarily have to be redeveloped as housing, or assisted living, or a nursing home," said Montague City Improvement Association member Lilith Wolinsky. "There are many other ways that this facility could be reused."

A quorum of Montague's historical commission attended the forum. Chair David Brule said the commission is working to have the Farren listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Over 600 historic buildings are registered in Montague, according to Ramsey, but the Farren is not among them.

"We've got the research in hand establishing the historic importance of... Bernard Farren, and all the projects in town that he'd been involved with," Brule said. "We have really felt it important to continue to encourage the town officials to have Trinity share their findings concerning either demolition or reuse."

Brule said that Sawyer-Lauçanno has provided an architectural analysis of the building, and is looking into the possibility of the town passing a bylaw allowing it to delay demolitions of historic buildings.

"I feel that we're going to end up with a pig in a poke," said selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz, citing other redevelopment projects in town that have fallen through. "I would like to have seen a developer step forward... Until I see that, I'm going to continue to think Trinity is trying to do the responsible thing by clearing the lot."

Kuklewicz said he would like to see market-rate housing built on the 12-acre parcel.

Montague's state representative Natalie Blais and senator Jo Comerford also attended the hearing. "Senator Comerford and I... will be following up with a letter to Trinity detailing our concerns, and requesting that they honor the town's requests," Blais told the *Reporter*. "Ultimately, the future of the Farren site is a local decision, and we remain committed to working with town officials on behalf of the wider community."

Looby, the Trinity Health spokesperson, said that the company's priority is "to keep people's safety and wellbeing at the fore."

"[We] want to make sure that if anything, if we were to leave the building intact, that it would be a safe proposition for the community," she said. "I mean it when I say the future of the building is still under consideration - there is no path, at this point in time, that has been identified as the one



OVERLAY from page A1

is allowed by the state under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40R. Ramsey's presentation emphasizes that development under Ch. 40R would significantly increase the percentage of affordable housing in Montague by requiring projects to be 20% affordable; any market-rate housing within these projects would also count toward the town's "subsidized housing index" under 40R.

According to Ramsey, Montague's current index indicates the town would need to create 30 more units of affordable housing to reach its quota under state law, Chapter 40B.

Other benefits of the project could include promoting "market rate housing" within mixed developments, "controlling the quality of design," and encouraging the "revitalization of historically developed properties." The town will receive an "up-front payment" of \$75,000 from the state if it adopts the bylaw, as well as "\$3,000 per unit that is actually developed."

Ramsey's presentation warns that under existing zoning, a developer could build 100% affordable housing with no design guidelines or input from the town. Still, Ramsey confirmed to this reporter that existing zoning would remain in effect as an option despite the overlay district, so the above scenario could



The second part of the proposed district is this unbuilt stretch of First Street, partly owned by the town and partly privately owned.



One of the two sections of the proposed zoning overlay is the former Railroad Salvage property, which the town is attempting to take under tax title.

in theory still take place. He pointed out that both the Griswold Mill site and the public portion of the First Street site should be town property thus can be auctioned with restrictions imposed by the town.

The state's definition of affordable might raise a few eyebrows, since it is calculated on a rental percentage of 80% of the area median income. For a single individual, this could mean a rent of \$1,176 for a one-bedroom unit in Turners Falls would count as "affordable."

The next steps in the process, according to Ramsey, include selectboard endorsement and sending the proposal to the state for a "determination of eligibility." If approved, the proposed district would come back to the planning board for a public hearing and then on to town meeting, perhaps this May.

Asked by this reporter why the town is encouraging affordable housing in Turners Falls, which probably has more affordable units than any other section of Montague, Ramsey responded that the language of 40R encourages such overlay districts "in areas of concentrated development such as existing city and town centers, and in other highly suitable locations," but that the role of other villages in the affordable housing pic-

ture is "a conversation we need to have."



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path we will be taking."



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Above: The sun sets over a field on Northfield's Pine Meadow Road last Saturday.

EXHIBIT PREVIEW

Scratching Beneath the Surface

By K. CAMARA

GREENFIELD – Opening this Friday, February 11, at the Hawks & Reed Pushkin Gallery in Greenfield, is *Unpleasantly Beautiful*, a solo art exhibit by Annaleah Gregoire, a Greenfield resident and a recent remote graduate of California College of the Arts. The show will span the week of the 11th through 19th, and serves as a foundation for a number of events at the same location. Other local artists will be featured in presentations that include three musical events, a two-day craft fair, and a jewelry making workshop. The opening reception will be from 5 to 8 p.m. on Friday, February 11 and the exhibit finishes with a closing reception on Saturday, February 19 from 5 to 8 p.m.

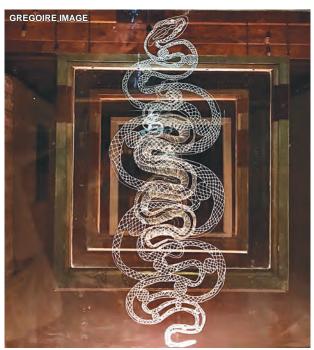
A week prior to her second Greenfield show – her 2019 show *Soul Food* was in the ballroom at Hawks & Reed – I find Gregoire juggling the many details of what is not only this time a solo show, but in fact an event that has taken months of planning. In speaking with her, I learn that public relations and promotional details are in the hands of the exhibitor, or in this case, the light footsteps of the artist as she moves from task to task. She assures me that the event planning aspect has been a learning curve for her, and not the only one, as she approaches the actual installation date and is wondering just how this show will be mounted.

In spite of these concerns that press in on her now, there is a sparkle of excitement brewing over the upcoming finale to the months of preparation.

degree in the first place.

After moving with her south coast of Massachus

Learning curves and resilience go hand in hand with Gregoire, and have featured prominently in her life and her art. They have been essential to her forward navigation since being stopped in her tracks in early spring of 2020 in the glass sculpture studio at CCA. So, too, has her supportive home community in western Mass,

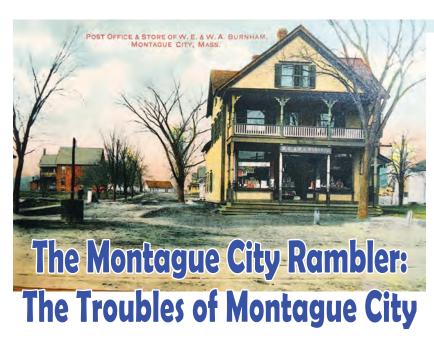


"Shed Your Skin," one of the layered glass etchings in Annaleah Gregoire's Unpleasantly Beautiful exhibit at the Pushkin Gallery.

where she returned that fall. She credits this community with inspiring and encouraging her to pursue an art degree in the first place

After moving with her family to Greenfield from the south coast of Massachusetts at the age of 11, Gregoire attended the Four Rivers Charter School, and in high school found support at the Art Garden in Shelburne Falls. "Jane Wegscheider at the Art Garden was one of the many who inspired me to pursue an art education," she tells me. "She and her co-teacher at the time,

see **BENEATH** page B5



By LILITH WOLINSKY

MONTAGUE CITY – I remember the day I stopped going into the office, in March of 2020. I was sitting by the window, with a nice fire in my cadet-blue insert, and had developed a rough-hewn cough, one of the preeminent signs of COVID. Still, I was astonished when I called my doctor and was told to stay home for the next two weeks. I had never experienced such a mandate before, although wish as I might, I am no stranger to illness.

That mandate turned into a much longer, almost country-wide closure. I spent the next few months reclaiming my home (having said goodbye a few months earlier to an ex whose belongings were still interspersed throughout), and steeping myself in the village where I spent all of my hours. I took furtive walks – before masking was commonplace, and when every interaction was tinged with fear – had groceries delivered, and spent hours digging in my gardens.

When it seemed safe to do so, I

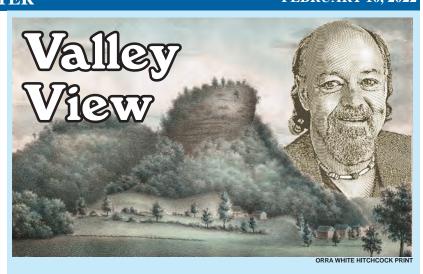
began to walk with friends, and eat BBQ picnics along the banks of the Connecticut. Come fall and then winter, as temperatures dropped, and the gray of the sky deepened and lowered, picnics were no longer viable, and I began writing this column as one way to expand into, and cope with, the numerous and lengthened restrictions affecting my life.

Living in, researching, and writing about this village, I realize that I have a different perspective than those who might base their knowledge on transitory or superficial experience, and who reach the conclusion that there is little of value or interest here, and almost nothing worth preserving. And, while it is a sad statement, I have heard it said that Montague City has long been known as "the armpit" of the Montague villages.

While it's true the village has been allowed to decline for decades, and within that same period has been home to – or in near proximity of – some of Montague's least desirable industries, to me it is a special place.

Just south of the village, the Deerfield and Connecticut rivers converge, lending a wide and

see **RAMBLER** page B3



By GARY SANDERSON

GREENFIELD – With daybreak near, the tall clock will soon strike six in accompaniment to freezing rain drumming on the kitchen roof. I just returned from there with a cup of black, unsweetened coffee in hand, now steaming on a desktop coaster to my left.

To me, early morning is the best time for introspection and creative thought, the perfect setting from which to set the imaginative wheels awhirl, be it on a secluded forest stand or at the desk where I now sit.

I awoke not long ago from a whimsical little dream, about which I remember little, except that it was me and a boyhood pal we called Count fishing a posted North Sunderland trout pond called Whitmore's before the spring-morning fog had lifted. About all I can recall is him struggling in thick gray light to tie a blood-knot and asking me for help. I completed the chore for my appreciative friend and I opened my eyes for the new day, wishing I could ride it out a little longer. No such luck. Too late. The dream was over.

As daring teens, the Count and I infrequently snuck into that for-bidden pond along the Connecticut River in the extreme northwest corner of Sunderland. Our goal was to be on the water's edge before the birds sang, and home with a few big, beautiful, tasty Eastern brook trout before our South Deerfield neighbors had risen for breakfast.

Passersby know Whitmore's Pond by its picturesque waterfall, which slips through a slim ledge gap and tumbles some 15 feet before underflowing Falls Road into the Connecticut below the old Whitmore Tavern. Long ago drained, this tidy impoundment had an east-west orientation with a swampy neck at the rear, curling south toward the feeder stream. We liked to fish at the point protruding from the inner elbow, casting into an open, C-shaped spring hole bordered by cattails on three sides. The cold-water outflow surging to the surface and attracting trout was only about 15 yards from shore, easily within range of our soft, snappy roll-casts.

Though it was not the type of sparkling water where you'd expect

to find trout, we learned they were there to feed by hearing, then seeing, them rise for aquatic insects. When we first gave it a try with the treble-hooked Thomas buoyant lures that worked well on open water, they got snagged in submerged vegetation on every retrieve, telegraphing our presence. We thus opted for plan two – dry-fly fishing with the Count's late father's fly rods and flies – the flies contained and organized in fancy silver-colored boxes taken from his fishing vest hanging in the garage.

Like catching fish from a 10-foot-diameter barrel, its wide mouth inviting us in, we recognized this as an ideal training ground for a couple of veteran spincasters seeking to perfect their fly-fishing skills. It worked to perfection.

Count was proud to say that his dad swore by the tiniest midges in his flybox for such endeavors, advice we found helpful despite simultaneously discovering that old standards like White Wulffs, Royal Coachmen, and Light Cahills and Hendricksons worked as well. We'd focus on the insects coming off the water and try to find flies duplicating their size and color in a process known as "matching the hatch," which brings rewards.

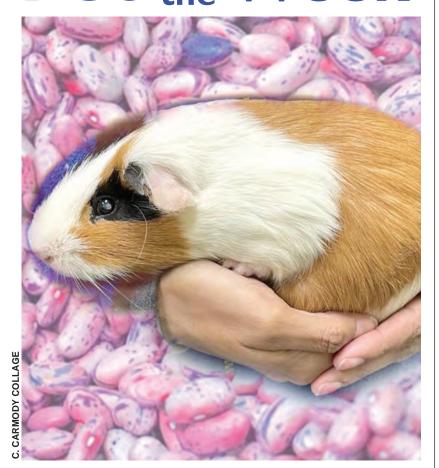
To keep the delicate dry flies afloat we'd dress them in silicon, or whatever that floatation salve in his dad's vest was, and we'd catch beautiful trout hand over fist. In the process, we perfected our casting, presentation and hook-setting skills, all of which were transferable to the stream fishing we both preferred.

It was great fun for impish teens willing to roll the dice on posted waters, and capable of daring escape when caught in the act.

Not long after we stopped fishing the place due to fear of the consequences, the dam broke, and now the pond has been drained for decades. I can't say what the basin looks like today because I haven't viewed it. Most likely all that remains is a thin springstream, slicing through a grassy basin-turned-meadow toward the waterfall.

I'm sure the impetus for my dream was a recent round of deed research that brought me back to see **VALLEY VIEW** page B2

Pet of the Week



"MILKWEED"

Milkweed is a darling guinea pig who has a lot to say! If you've ever heard a guinea pig "wheet wheet" you know there's nothing cuter that a chatty piggy! He is social, playful, and likes piggy pets. Milkweed also has a shy side and can be a shy piggy.

Milkweed uses his litter box, and you can even clip his nails and bathe him. This is a guinea pig who likes to look his best! He is accustomed to living with an adult, and has never lived with children. His favorite foods are pellets, vegetables, fruit, and timothy hay.

Sadly, his guardian passed away, so he's here with his siblings, looking to bring joy to someone who can appreciate his cuteness.

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

VALLEY VIEW from page B1

Whitmore's Pond and its early 18th-century beginnings. But there was also a symbolic aging theme involved, harkening back to the good old days of youth, when I walked without a limp, ran fast, hit the ball hard and could, using the thinnest tippets, tie all the difficult fishermen's knots in the dimmest light without the aid of glasses.

Even though I long ago accepted that those days are far in my rearview, it does no harm to reminisce. No need for envy or a sense of depressing loss. Joie de vivre doesn't end with youth.

As a teenaged Whitmore's poacher on high alert for neighborhood enforcers, I knew nothing of its history as a millpond, or the place's history as a mill village with a busy ferry between Deerfield and Sunderland. I only knew that the pond held some of the nicest "squaretails" in the valley. The bold, black posters only added to the allure for boys who had grown up reading about rascals like Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn. Plus, the squaretails were worth the risk, comparable in every way to those chased far and wide by gentlemen of high status and haughty sporting tastes. Can it get any better and tastier than Eastern brookies and ruffed grouse? Not in my world.

What I have learned in adulthood is that the North Sunderland neighborhood surrounding the pond had acquired its own placename by 1800. On the North Sunderland site stood a cluster of fancy dwellings, a busy river tavern and associated ferry, and industry as well, with Slatestone or Mill Brook over time supporting two gristmills, a sawmill, and a fulling mill.

The first sawmill there was "erected (by Manoah Bodman, Daniel Russell and Nathaniel Gunn) and in operation in 1726," according to John Montague Smith's History of Sunderland, which credits brothers Joseph and Jonathan Field for building the first gristmill 12 years later.

John Oaks came to Sunderland from Petersham before 1750, buying and likely making improvements to the mills before dying in 1767 and leaving his properties to son Jonathan, who retained a one-third interest in the sawmill when he sold it to Elijah Billings of Montague a year later.

Billings moved to Conway, and in 1773 sold it to Daniel Whitmore from Middletown, Connecticut, retaining half-interest in the mills. Whitmore heirs still own the 50-acre parcel and the colonial dwelling,

once a tavern, nestled up to the falls along the east side of the road.

The Oaks connection is what led me to my old Sunderland fishing haunt. Researching the mills at what would become "Mill Village at Stebbins Meadow" in Deerfield's South Meadows, I found the 1770 sale of the mill site by Nathan Oaks of Deerfield to Capt. Jonas Locke of Shutesbury. The purchase price was 150 pounds, more than 10 times what Oaks had paid for it three years earlier. Hmmmm?

I knew of Locke, a millwright and housewright who in about 1790 built the old Fuller Homestead, now occupied by widowed Fuller descendant Mary Marsh. Known today as the Bars Farm, it's abutted north by Melnik's Barway Farm.

So, who was this dude, Nathan Oaks?

Well, as it turns out, Nathan was the younger brother of Sunderland miller Jonathan Oaks. Both men were carpenters, perhaps millwrights as well, and both were members of master-builder Locke's Deerfield carpentry crew that built The Manse, the Joseph Stebbins house, and the church steeple in Deerfield before the Revolution. Short-lived Deerfield residents, the Oaks brothers likely had a hand in a lot of the building that took place in town between 1765 and 1775.

From a distinguished Lexington/Woburn family, Locke built the gristmill at Locke's Pond (now Lake Wyola) in 1754, and probably contributed to other structures in the surrounding Locke's Village on the Wendell/Shutesbury line. By 1770, he had been in Deerfield for about six years and was running the gristmill at Stebbins Meadow, likely also tuning up the buildings and apparatuses that provided the burgeoning community with meal and flour for the larder.

Locke's crowning achievement, around 1790, was building the distinctive, Federal, hip-roofed Bars dwelling he called home, known today on the National Register of Historic Places as the "Locke-Fuller House."

Who knows? Perhaps Locke the millwright helped old John Oaks and his boys bring their North Sunderland mills up to snuff. Back then - before Roadtown became Shutesbury in 1761, and before Leverett separated from Sunderland in 1774 - Oaks' Mills would have been a short piece from the Roadtown-Sunderland line.

Something else you can take to the bank is the fact that beautiful brook trout were there for the taking from the millpond that became Whitmore's.



Senior Center Activities FEBRUARY 14 THROUGH 18

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. Senior Health Rides are now available. Contact Jonathan von Ranson at (978) 544-3758 to set up a ride.

ERVING

Erving Senior Center is open 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Mondays through Fridays. Open for cards, coffee, and snacks daily. Exercise classes will be limited to 15 people per class.

No lunch will be served. We will continue with Brown Bag the first Thursday of each month. For any questions or concerns, please call Paula at (413) 423-3649.

Monday 2/14

9 a.m. Re-Store & Re-Emerge 10 a.m. New class coming soon 1 p.m. Card Making Tuesday 2/15 9 a.m. Good for YOU 10 a.m. Line Dancing Wednesday 2/16 9 a.m. Strength & Conditioning 10 a.m. New Chair Yoga

12:30 p.m. Bingo Thursday 2/17 9 a.m. Re-Store & Re-Emerge 10 a.m. Stretch & Balance Friday 2/18

9 a.m. Open Sew Quilting

GILL and MONTAGUE

The Gill Montague Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Mondays through Fridays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. for drop in visitors.

Council on Aging Director is Roberta Potter. For more information call 863-9357. Messages can be left on our machine when the center is not open.

Monday 2/14 10:15 a.m. Aerobics

11 a.m. Chair Exercise

1 p.m. Knitting & Needlecrafts Circle Tuesday 2/15 12 p.m. Tuesday Morning Knitters 1 p.m. Chair Yoga 3 p.m. Tai Chi Wednesday 2/16 10:15 a.m. Aerobics 11 a.m. Chair Exercise 1 p.m. Bingo 1:30 p.m. Parking Lot Pantry Thursday 2/17 1 p.m. Cards & Games Friday 2/18

LEVERETT

10:15 a.m. Aerobics

11 a.m. Chair Exercise

Chair Yoga classes are held on Zoom on Wednesdays. For more information, contact the Leverett COA at (413) 548-1022 x 5, or coa@leverett.ma.us.

Part 18: My War Sweater Says 'Legacy' **AMHERST** – My war sweater says "I will not give up." My war sweater says "legacy is my battle."

Many days I still feel like I have side effects to my medications that are meant to help the side effects of my cancer drugs. I am currently on no fewer than four medications to reduce the risk that my cancer will come back, and the side effects are scary. Severe dehydration is a possibility. Hospitalization from severe inflammation of my vital organs is also a possibility. Blood clots, stroke, liver failure are all on the table.

Last week I asked my oncologist if I could reduce my medications to three, not four. I felt a sense of defeat and fear as I admitted that quality of life, not quantity of life, was my priority. I kept questioning if I was doing the right thing.

Well, today I am sure I did the right thing. The hell that I endured from just the reduced medication list was surprising. I became severely dehydrated, I could feel my liver screaming from yet another hit, and I looked at myself in the mirror and thought about what it meant if I couldn't get myself back.

But. There is a but. I already come from a legacy of strength and triumph. I can feel both my grandfa-

at my side now leading the charge. Those of us who do good in the community, those of us who give back and make a noticeable difference, we wear a war sweater against our battle that is different. It scares me to think of what this world would be if we lost people who push back against fear, and triumph over defeat.

Surviving Breast Cancer
By Julie Cunningham

There is no retreat against cancer. There is no way back, and no way out. It holds us captive forever. It's a legacy we can't choose but we can change. We can tell our children we were warriors, we didn't give up. Or we can tell them goodbye. It's that simple.

I do wish now, with all our technology, we had better cancer-fighting drugs that didn't drain the body of its normal functions. It feels like once I get done with one drug, there's an equally nasty one waiting for me around the corner.

In Greek mythology the Nosoi were the personified spirits of plague, sickness, and disease. Asclepius was the god of medicine who claimed to heal disease through prayers and sacrifice. The Nosoi escaped Pandora's box when she became irresistibly curious and opened it, despite the instructions not to. I feel that sense of irresistible curiosity when I think about

thers, who both served in real wars, how it would be if I wasn't on all these medications. How good would it feel to be completely normal – but how long would it last? How would it be if I said, enough is enough?

Each person who fights a battle against a deadly disease wears their own war sweater. Each person is a hero and a warrior and incredibly brave. We use all the tools we can to make sure we stay healthy, and we fight through every moment to make sure we live valuable lives that give back to the communities we cherish. The fight is a risk. Can my body handle this? What happens if it can't?

Love is the enemy of disease. Love is what we live for, what we strive for, what makes us feel whole and human again. Love keeps the heart beating, the mind thinking, and the body gasping for air. Love is what brings us into the world and what defines us. A life without family is a life without happiness.

My war sweater is made of love and kindness and hope. It's made of all the dreams yet to come true, friends I have and friends I have yet to meet. My war sweater is made of a legacy of not giving up. Thank you, Grandpa Barry and Grandpa Cunningham, for showing me how not to give up. Even in the darkest days, I will never give up.

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RAMBLER from page B1

anchoring calm to the habitation here. Montague City is cradled by water, and thus home to the diversity of life in need of that resource. If one stands quietly – easier now with the bridge closed, and the hurtling semis stilled – one can feel that they are indeed on a cliff, and buffeted by the winds, watery smells, and seasonal bird and frog sounds coming two ways.

On any walk, however brief, one comes into near-constant contact with the historic homes that line the streets, and if one knows where to look, the observable presence of the former barge canal, which cut through the village over 200 years ago, an example of the most-advanced technology of its era. Stand quieter still and you may see coyote, fox, owls, the occasional beaver or porcupine, deer aplenty, and an abundance of smaller winged creatures flitting about.

Recently, people are newly interested in Montague City, mostly related to the fate of the Farren. While I welcome the "second look," I have heard talk about the great benefit of seven flat acres of land, minus the Farren, "to all of Montague." Although I may be called uncharitable, I can't help but wonder: where was all of Montague when one Montague City institution after another – first the Rod Shop, then the school house, the library, the gas station and tiny cafe, later the post office, at some point the ballpark, and finally the Farren - were shuttered? This nearly obliterated the distinction of the village, which was unable to independently defend it-

self against post-industrial travails, and received little to no tangible support, much less a vision for the future, from "all of Montague."

If help is to come now, it would be most welcome, but perhaps that help should consider what makes the village visually distinct – its relationship to the water, and the Wilson Eyre-designed historic Farren - and assist it in avoiding the yawning blandness of new construction everywhere by prioritizing, if at all possible, the preservation of the historic structure. That building could then, and should still, be used to meet the immediate needs of this village, which have long been denied. There is no community meeting space here, not a single store, no public art or community gardens, nothing that serves our many elderly, nor the homeless who live along the canal, and nothing which commemorates the rich Indigenous and industrial histories that came before us.

The Farren and Montague City deserve better than decisions made on the fly by multi-billion-dollar corporations, and by over-burdened town representatives who have not spent time in Montague City, nor done their homework about the importance of this structure, both as a stand-alone building and as an integral part of the identity of this village.

I hope you will join me in requesting of town leaders that the Farren - the most visually distinct part of Montague City's identity - be given a fair hearing before all that she has been to this village is per-

manently removed from the landscape.



Montague Community Television News

More Live Sets to Watch

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

TURNERS FALLS - The full performance by "Los Cumpleanos" from the summer music festival in Montague Center, Barbès in the Woods, is now available to view on MCTV Vimeo page! We also have the most recent recording of the Montague selectboard Zoom meeting online.

All MCTV videos are available on our Vimeo page, which can be found linked to the website, montaguetv.org, under the tab "Videos." All community members are wel- @gmail.com.

come to submit their videos to be aired on Channel 17, as well as featured on the Vimeo page.

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.

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 infomontaguety

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Helicopter Annoys; Kid Flees Chores; Freezing; Flooding; Alcohol Seems To Make Various Bad Situations Worse

Monday, 1/31

7:20 a.m. Assisting with removal of vehicles from Third Street public lot for snow removal.

8 a.m. Caller states that a spare tire fell off of a truck that was driving in front of her near the cemetery on Millers Falls Road and she almost struck it. Tire is still in road. Owner of truck notified; he is headed back to retrieve the tire. Officer located tire and moved it to the side of the road.

1:10 p.m. 911 callers reporting a car has crashed into a pole at the intersection of Avenue A and Seventh Street. Driver is injured; pole is damaged. Officer requesting DPW to deal with traffic light and Rau's for the tow. Driver transported to BFMC by TFFD. Summons issued for operating a vehicle with a license suspended/ revoked for OUI; failure to use care in starting, stopping, turning, or backing; operating to endanger; and operating under the influence of liquor or .08%, second offense.

1:13 p.m. Business owner would like it on record that they are receiving multiple calls from a male party claiming that somebody from the Bookmill is sending him threatening emails. Caller states party is getting increasingly aggressive. Officer advised caller of options; also spoke with Amherst PD, who is going to send an officer out to speak with the involved male.

3:30 p.m. Caller from Fourth Street states that there is a white vehicle parked outside; vehicle has been parking there for the last six months; caller suspects drug activity. All

officers tied up on calls. 3:34 p.m. Caller states that a female party at his

argument. He wants officers to respond to help deescalate the situation. Officer requesting to see if the detox center has a bed for the female party for the night until she can get a ride to Springfield in the morning. PBT conducted on female party, who was taken into protective custody.

7:41 p.m. Caller from Millers Falls Road inquiring about a helicopter that flies over his house regularly and shines a light in his yard. Advised to contact airport.

10:26 p.m. Caller from Highland School Apartments wants it on record that a male party is making loud noises in the hallway outside of his apartment door, and he has an active harassment prevention order against him. Caller does not need an officer to respond at this time.

Tuesday, 2/1

9:42 a.m. Shelburne Control advising they received a call about a white Honda CR-V cutting off other vehicles on I-91 northbound; driver was hitting himself and sticking his middle finger up. Officer checking Grove Street; unable to locate vehicle at home address or in the area.

6:54 p.m. Caller states that a male party came into Millers Pub extremely intoxicated. She refused to serve him, and he fell over. He is currently sitting in a chair; she does not want to send him out for his safety. Courtesy transport provided. TFFD responding to check on head injury, Party removed to hospital. Wednesday, 2/2

10:23 a.m. School resource officer requesting assistance with a student at Franklin County Technical School.

1:32 p.m. 911 caller reports that a flatbed tow over two signs (the Yield port manager contacted; sign and the North Street stated there are workers sign) on the median near there now cutting brush. the Montague Public Li- Thursday, 2/3 Officer will notify DPW. that her son ran from the no sounds heard at all. house at 12:33 p.m.; states and he will most likely return home soon. Call-

3:14 p.m. DPW radioed ing description in area. Vehicle 1 home.

found; will remain in area

for a while.

3:27 p.m. 911 caller re- Friday, 2/4 porting minor accident at 5:38 a.m. Caller from Dell Scotty's; stated it was a Street states that her house fender bender, no injuries. is almost flooding due to Referred to an officer.

5:06 p.m. Caller from 5:48 a.m. Walk-in party road. Officer advises one area. under, Mirandized in car. 8:40 a.m. Caller from A 35-year-old Shelburne Wentworth Avenue states Falls woman was arrested that the sewer drain is on a straight warrant.

brary on Center Street 2:41 a.m. Caller from and kept going. Officer Third Street states that spoke with operator of there is intentional stomptruck. He was unaware ing and banging of pots that he had bent the signs. and pans in the apartment above his; ongoing issue. 1:45 p.m. Caller reports Officer stood in hallway;

7:01 p.m. Caller requesting that he left because he did that an officer patrol the not want to do his chores area of the Patch; a male party who rents out a garage in the area has been er subsequently reported driving around erratically. that her son was spotted Caller states that he drives walking up Turners Falls a white pickup truck. Call-Road in Greenfield and er also states that he came then on Park Street. Offi- to her door to talk to her cer checked area; nothing about something and he smelled like alcohol. Officer advises no vehicles match-

dispatch to advise of a 8:43 p.m. Caller from J two-vehicle accident on Street reporting a distur-Unity Street near Ma- bance at her neighbor's ple Street. One occupant apartment; he and a female out of vehicle; other still party are yelling at each inside vehicle. TFFD re- other. Officer advises quiet sponding. Both vehicles upon arrival; female party drivable; officer followed has left and will be arranging for a ride home.

a catch basin that is fro-3:46 p.m. Caller from zen and not draining. She Fourth Street states that has tried contacting DPW vehicles are still going to with no answer; she and this location throughout her husband have been trythe day and she suspects ing to unfreeze it with no drug activity. Referred to luck. DPW contacted; will send someone out.

Twelfth Street reports advising that the area of that a suspicious vehicle Montague City Road near has been in the area two the golf course is flooding or three times in the last like it usually does; party month. Operator has a then walked out; no other camera and binoculars. Ve- information given. Officer hicle is currently parked on requesting DPW check

clogged and now the end 5:36 p.m. Caller reporting of the road and residential two vehicles parked on the driveways are underwater. house has been drinking truck with a white Jeep hill by the airport runway DPW supervisor notified. and they are having an Wrangler on the back ran with their lights on. Air- 11:12 a.m. Caller states that Stevens Street is flooded. DPW notified.

> 4:54 p.m. Caller from East Main Street requesting to speak with an officer about ongoing issues with his upstairs neighbor; states people go up and down all day and night. Caller states he has complained about this before, but it is still going on. Referred to an officer.

Saturday, 2/5

1:07 p.m. Caller states that he crashed his vehicle into a locked parking gate at Silvio O. Conte Anadromous Fish Research Center. Property manager notified about damaged gate. 6:52 p.m. Officer reporting a large pothole on Turners Falls Road. DPW will be heading out to fill.

Sunday, 2/6

4:04 p.m. Caller reporting that the alleyway off Second Street is glare ice. DPW advised.

EVENT ANNOUNCEMENT

Poetry, Art, & Nature the Focus of Writing Festival

NORTHFIELD – The third annual Authors and Artists Festival: Writing the Land will be held online on February 26 and 27. The festival celebrates the intersection of poetry, art, and Nature.

The headline speakers are all BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color): Ross Gay, John Francis, Dina Gilio-Whitaker, Jillian Hishaw, Rahawa Haile, and Latria Graham.

Poets from the Writing the Land project and from Human Error Publishing will read their work, including JuPong Lin, David Crews, Rachelle Parker, Angela Vasquez, Alice B. Fogel, Paul Richmond, and many others. The Writing the Land project pairs poets with land trust-protected locations, and produces an anthology of their work which is sold in support of land protection (www.writingtheland.org).

"The festival morphs every year, and in 2022 we're especially grateful to be featuring all BI-POC headline speakers who address some of the inequities in human relationships with land," says Lis McLoughlin, one of the festival organizers. "The history of systemic racism, genocide, and the disproportionate environmental burdens of BIPOC communities continues to affect human relationships with the rest of Nature, and this year we're focusing on why that is, and how to ameliorate it. The festival is focused on the hope of repair and restoration of humans in balance with the rest of Nature's web."

Jillian Hishaw, an attorney and advocate for black farmers, will open the festival on February 26 speaking about her book, Systemic Land Theft. Based partly on research conducted during her tenure at the USDA, and on her work in the Black farming community, she addresses the systemic racism that continues to affect Black-owned farms, 30,000 acres of which are lost every year.

Next, Dina Gilio-Whitaker, co-author with Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz of All the Real Indians Died Off and 20 Other Myths About Native Americans, speaks about her book As Long As Grass Grows, detailing the history of Indigenous ecological activism from when colonists first landed, through Standing Rock.

Dr. John Francis, founder and director of Planetwalk, an environmental activist, educator, and former UN Goodwill Ambassador, will speak on kindness and gratitude in the context of the environment. Dr. Francis took a vow of silence for 17 years and walked across North America and parts of South America. Planetwalk's mission is to develop and coordinate a global network of Planetwalkers (planetwalk.org).

On February 27, poet Ross Gay will read from his Book of Delights, and authors, activists, and outdoorswomen Rahawa Haile and Latria Graham will be in conversation about imperiled land, from foodways to sense-of-place and hopes for the future.

An online art show accompanies the festival, and poets from the Writing the Land project, Human Error Publishing, and an associated online poets' retreat will read their work throughout both days. Each day concludes with a separate, informal opportunity to visit with the authors and artists.

Thanks to a combination of grants and sponsors, entrance to the festival is free. Details and registration at www.nature-culture.net/authorsartists-festival.

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MONTY / MUSIK / MOUNTAIN



XLIV: Wendy Eisenberg

TURNERS FALLS – If you are reading this, you may have heard of Wendy Eisenberg, as they have played in the Valley a lot, and even lived here for a while. If you haven't, check them out ASAP! They are a guitarist and singer-songwriter with albums out on a number of different labels. In just the last two years they have released four full-length solo records (*Auto, Dehiscence, Bent Ring,* and *Bloodletting*), trio and quintet recordings, as well as *Tell Me I'm Bad* with their heavier rock group Editrix.

There was an extensive interview with Wendy in this paper a few years ago, so we tried to cover more left-field topics that maybe weren't asked last time. Thanks to Troy for helping again with this column.

MMM: Hi Wendy! Do you hear music in your dreams?

WE: When I do, I don't often remember it, which I like. I'm fond of the notion that "music escapes." If we try to force it to adhere to critical theory, or any sort of rule, or identity, we aren't fully sensing it and it dances away from us, laughing at our desire to control it. Flight, escape.

MMM: Are you into astrology, or ESP? (Also the music label ESP?)

WE: I am into astrology. I enjoy the dinner party pseudo-functionality of it, and how it pretends, with a wink, to be an excuse for certain behaviors; I also enjoy the serious study of it, though I am a distracted novice. I have a lot of Sagittarius in my chart; this pleases me. I have trouble with certain signs, I try not to write the people born in those signs off, and mostly succeed.

I am lucky to have met many a brilliant astrologer, and to learn from their insights the different systems at different parts of the world. For example, in Jyotisha astrology I have a completely different moon and rising – Gemini rising/Aries moon, vs. the Cancer/Taurus I am in the Western whole sign system – one set prioritizes argument, perhaps, the other velvet; both are true. I love this, because I love multiplicity, and faith.

ESP: I believe in it, and I love the label – all those incredible, life-changing records. ([Albert Ayler's] *Spiritual Unity* as the second record on that label ever? Come

on!) Not to out myself, but I have visions. I think anyone can, and most people do. The trouble happens when people identify with their visions, or as a vision-haver; the rest, the actual sensed thing and process of sensing, is insight, or creativity. Calling the phenomenon ESP is useful if it is, but I like understanding it (ESP and /or visions) as just a further limit of the sensual that is available to anyone.

MMM: What are your favorite kinds of shows, audiences, venues?

WE: I prefer musical environments to anti-musical environments; I like small shows where my jokes land and I can sense that everybody is listening to feel something, rather than listening to measure something or listening to buy something, including an identity. I like any venue not owned by Live Nation, especially if it pays its workers well, and even better if the sound is good.

MMM: Do you have any favorite contemporary artists/music folks? How about the '80s and '90s? I remember you like the Thinking Fellers Union...

WE: I really love Ben LaMar Gay's record from November of last year, and L'Rain's *Fatigue* is just unreal. Youbet is my favorite pop band; driving around to *Compare and Despair* saved my life in summer 2020. KeiyaA's *Forever, Ya Girl* is a perfect album.

My pal Grace Ward is just a perfect, crafty songwriter and an understated guitar genius. (Her other band, Houndsteeth, is great too.) Éliane Radigue, too. Caroline Polachek's voice.

Last few years have seen the demos for Walter Becker's 11 Tracks of Whack ambiently in my car, besting silence. Jane Siberry's The Walking, too. Hissing of Summer Lawns which makes me feel things; file under "music that feels like reading," next to Joanna Newsom and Roy Harper (HQ was a big deal this past October to December).

Clark showed me a rare Roches EP, *No Trespassing*, which reminded me through some other passages about Fripp, which took me further back through Daryl Hall's inimitable *Sacred Songs*. And for the search for a hilarious and true male voice I

got into the Weird Rundgren zone, *A Wizard, A True Star* arcing through my heart, plus the first Utopia record, plus *The Ever Popular Tortured Artist Effect.* ("Influenza"!)

Robert Wyatt's '80s records are my favorite music of all time: *Old Rottenhat* (shout out to Shane Kerr telling me to hear it), *Mid-Eighties*, *Nothing Can Stop Us*, and also his singing on Nick Mason's *Fictitious Sports*. Song men! Song men crafting perfect, snide songs. I disidentify.

MMM: What do you like best about the western Mass music com-

WE: I like how the western Mass music community cares as much about songcraft as it does about noise/sonic quality. I also like that there are so many western Mass music communities, and how they sometimes interact.

I miss a lot of the songwriting style from Mass, now that I'm in the city, because it trusts the audience it writes for. The pride the scene has in itself up there is not always overwhelming, which I guess appeals to the puritanical or just modest sensibility Mass inculcated in me over the six years I lived there. I like the way we down here in New York push ourselves.

MMM: Any early western Mass shows or artists that had an impact on you?

WE: Playing a show with Hot Dirt was the first time I took something that could be called "math rock" seriously, and enjoyed it. They were my favorite rock band for a while.

I liked a lot of the jazzy northern songwriters. I like Jesus Vio's spir-

it; a beautiful thing. Before I moved out there, I played a solo songs show really early at Red Cross, and also one at Black Sheep in Amherst; both shows were shambling beauties, very appealing.

MMM: Are you interested in dance? Butoh, or other forms of creative dance? I ask because I can imagine different forms of dance when I listen to your music.

WE: Thank you Troy. I love dance. I love Butoh, that early postmodern crew of Simone Forti, Yvonne Rainer, Trisha Brown (that beautiful Sciarrino opera!)...

The very classy Otis Wheeler once lent me a book by/about Elizabeth Streb, *How To Become An Extreme Action Hero*, that I really saw myself in. Flight and extremes, pushing the body. I once heard a great cellist/theorist refer to his playing as "tiny finger dancing."

Also, although I cannot perceive each step, every single time I make music and know it is good, I know it is good because it is making something move. That's why working with my friend Cora, a brilliant Brazilian dancer, on my latest music video was such a treat – she can inhabit the dream song.

MMM: Do you have a favorite poet you are reading or are influenced by, and if so, do they influence your music at the present time when you play or record?

WE: I'm always reading James Tate and Alice Notley. Alice lets me explore the look of feeling, and James lets me kid around, crying.

John Berryman and James Merrill – the middle point between those two is how I want my songs to be understood. Jamie Hood's *How To Be A Good Girl* changed me and my songwriting; vulnerable, timely and specific.

I'm not always sure the influence is direct, but reading Simone White's *Dear Angel of Death* really helped me question my relationship to Black music, improvised music, the legacy of Black male music critics, and the popular.

MMM: What do you think of the whole vinyl vs. streaming debate?

WE: I don't like that streaming posits that music is only as valuable as it is able to be listened to infinitely, because I like and value the practice of listening to something just once, and believe that the person who made the thing you heard just once still deserves to be able to afford an arepa dinner.

I do like being able to hear something before I buy it, though; that's a nice streaming thing. I use Napster's streaming service, hilariously, because I believe it still provides artists with the highest payout per listen, though I prefer buying music.

I don't like that vinyl is difficult to move and to produce. I do like that people can buy it at shows, and you'll be halfway to a motel room or have some extra ducats after springing for an arepa dinner. I like how vinyl sounds, and I like the little ritual of placing it on my roommate Jeremy's incredible turntable, part of his incredible sound system. I like CDs and tapes, and .zip files, and voice memo demos from pals.

This is my weigh in on the debate. The music industry, like all industries, seems bloated with trust issues and rotting on the beach of something; but of course, and what matters, is the music escapes. As long as I can hear it.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Local History Project Launches Website

GREENFIELD – Exploring and Creating Histories Ourselves (ECHO) Greenfield, a local history project produced by The LAVA Center and funded by Mass Humanities, has officially launched its website, *echogreenfield.org.* ECHO is a digital repository of training materials, presentations, resources, activities, and contributions from community historians. The focus is on the local region, with a particular interest in exploring lesser-known histories.

ECHO Greenfield has offered a wide range of workshops and presentations over the past summer and fall, including: David Brule and Joe Graveline of the Nolumbeka Project sharing about the ancient and enduring indigenous presence in the Connecticut River Valley; Dr. Margo Shea of Salem State University sharing oral history techniques; Greenfield Historical Society board member Carol Aleman sharing her research into African American presence in historic Greenfield; author and retired reporter Richie Davis sharing stories he has gathered from across our region; and librarian Lisa Prolman, sharing tips on how to use Greenfield Public Library to do historical research.

Interspersed with these presentations were handson discussions and activities in creating timelines, life-history maps, and primary and secondary sources based in one's own life. The training sessions concluded with looking at how historical knowledge can be expressed creatively as well as critically using vi-

NORTHAMPTON
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sual and written art forms.

ECHO Greenfield audiences also enjoyed presentations by Joan Featherman about the Underground Railroad in Greenfield. Sandy Thomas presented information about the history and development of Energy Park, and Philippe Simon talked about his documentaries drawn from his coverage of community events for GCTV.

Now, the full series is available on the website, along with a "Community Historians" section, where anyone with a relationship to the Greenfield and the Connecticut River Valley area can share their research into their own family's stories, or into our region's history.

On the eve of the official launch of *echogreen-field.org* as a community resource, Michael Kline, folklorist, oral historian, and cultural worker, offered this review: "All in all, this community-based endeavor is an impressive and encouraging example of local involvement in history gathering, run by a pool of staff and volunteers well-versed in not only collecting but collaborating to make public art from history.

"Congratulations to the staff and volunteers of ECHO Greenfield and the Center where ECHO projects and programs flourish. Both are increasingly essential resources to the entire region."

For more information, contact ECHO Greenfield project manager Lindy Whiton at *lindy@echogreenfield.org*.

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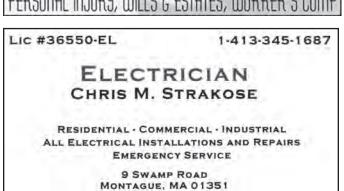
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BENEATH from page B1

Phyllis Labanowski, gave me the creative community space that I craved in high school, which allowed me to set aside time specifically for 'making' and gave me confidence to start showing my work."

When I ask how long she has valued the support of her mentor, artist Peter Ruhf of Shelburne Falls, I hear, "Since high school. It started when I did an oil painting internship with him when I was about 16." Her mother, grandparents, and now her California-transplant partner, Cameron, have also surrounded her with love and encouragement.

This pursuit of an art degree took Gregoire first to MassArt in Boston for her early college, and then to the CAA campuses in Oakland and San Francisco. There she was able to branch out from a focus on illustration and oil painting to an array of sculpture studios, where she had opportunities to sample and work in a variety of materials.

At the time of lockdown, Gregoire was focusing on working in a "cold" glass studio, as opposed to a "hot" glass one, where an artist might practice blowing, shaping, and forming. Fortunately, after returning to Massachusetts for remote learning, she received support and guidance from her instructors at CCA to set up a home studio.

It is cold glass work that Gregoire presents in this show, with six sculptural pieces featuring layers of etched glass surfaces lit from within. When I meet her at her studio on a very cold and very beautiful sunny Sunday morning, she reviews with me the procedure she follows to create each sculptural etching.

Thanks to the pandemic remodeling fever which took hold for many local housebound homeowners in the spring and summer of 2020, Annaleah was able to locate and recycle used windows as the raw material for her pieces. She uses a three-step process, first creating the images on her iPad, then sending them off to be printed on an acetate sheet, which is then used as a template to trace the image onto the glass surface with a type of dremel tool. This is the hottest and the messiest part of the process, releasing glass dust into the air.

Each window pane is an illustration unique to itself, yet when sandwiched together, they create a multilayered sculptural glass image of essentially the same subject. Gregoire's an-

atomical images reveal what would otherwise be hidden beneath the surface of a two-dimensional representation, not unlike an X-ray which reveals the hidden bones to us.

Indeed, this focus on what is beneath the surface of things is a part of much of Annaleah's work to date. It is there in her oil paintings, and is suggested in the title of one of her pieces in the current show, "Shed Your Skin." The title of her show, Unpleasantly Beautiful, also hints at this, referring to the not-necessarily-beautiful that is beneath the surface in instances of trauma. Beautiful in its potential to lead to and into transformation, and through it to healing.

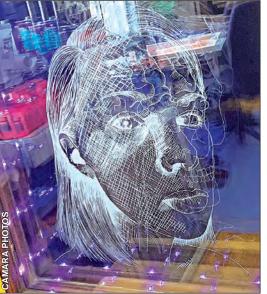
In May 2021, You + Me Gallery in Greenfield allowed Gregoire to mount Unpleasantly Beautiful as her CCA graduation show for photographic rather than exhibition purposes. She writes in the foreword for the degree exhibit: "Through dissection and amputation I have built a visual language with art and science revolving around the visible and invisible wounds of trauma... by exposing spots of trauma layer by layer Unpleasantly Beautiful illuminates the uncomfortable and honest pain of healing."

Since graduating last year, Gregoire has been working as a freelance artist, offering private art lessons both on Zoom and in person, as well as hosting Facebook groups. As evidenced in her widening the scope of her show to include opportunities for other local artists to be seen – and heard – she values collaboration, and is exploring ways to remain connected and give back through inspiring others within her community. She enjoys working with children and intends to pursue graduate-level learning, perhaps with a focus on teaching.

Gregoire also has a merchandise line screen-printed images of her work. She tells me she has just overcome another technical hurdle in the hand printing of her own hoodies. All of these are available throughout the exhibit week. Her work will also be featured at the UMass Design Building Gallery from March 21 through April 16.

Events at the Pushkin Gallery begin this Friday, February 11 with an opening reception from 5 to 8 p.m., including refreshments and a performance by the artist's mother, is a fee to participate; register by emailing Marcy Gregoire, on piano.







Top: "Internalized Circuit Panel," one of the layered glass etchings in the exhibit Unpleasantly Beautiful at the Pushkin Gallery. Bottom left: Annaleah Gregoire's self-portrait, showing the layers of etched window glass that make up the image. Bottom right: Annaleah Gregoire with one of her hoodies hand printed with her original design.

The exhibit is open on Saturday, Februthat includes T-shirts and hoodies with ary 12 from 5 to 8 p.m. with live music from James Bird, a multi-instrumentalist pulling the beauty out of the seeming ordinary. There will be a craft fair with 14 vendors from 1 to 6 p.m. on Sunday, continuing Monday, Valentine's Day, from 3 to 7 p.m.

An art exhibition with six artists takes place Thursday, February 17 from 5 to 8 p.m., and next Friday, February 18, Marcy Gregoire will give a workshop on cold-forge-process jewelry making from 6:30 to 8 p.m. (There annaleah.moon.studios@gmail.com.)

The closing reception from 5 to 8 p.m. is on Saturday the 19th, with music by singer and songwriter Olivia Nied, whose solo shows often feature multiple looping instruments.

Annaleah Gregoire's work is online at annaleahmoonstudios.com. View the event lineup for the Pushkin at www.facebook.com/ annaleahmoonstudios. For all events, Hawks and Reed requires either proof of COVID-19 vaccination, or negative test results from within the last 72 hours; masks are required to be worn except while eating or drinking.









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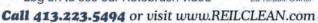
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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10

Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: Manneguin Pussy, Weakened Friends, Melatonin. \$. 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 11

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Della Mae. \$. 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12

The Brewery at Four Star Farms, Northfield: The Wildcat O'Halloran Band. 6:30 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: Peter Mulvey, Dylan Patrick Ward. \$. 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: Tides, Bag Lady, Hollow Teeth, *Unagi.* \$. 9:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13

The Brewery at Four Star Farms, Northfield: Big Yellow Taxi Trio. 3 p.m.

Bishop's Lounge, Northampton: Owsley's Owls. \$. 9:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Psychedelic Thurs with DJ MentalDrift, 6 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: Dead Night feat. Shred Is Dead. \$. 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: The Pangeans. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Storypalooza 3: Danger! \$. 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19

Mount Toby Friends Meetinghouse, Leverett: Sara Thomsen. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: Guy Ferrari, Lucy, Fake Sisters, The Musical Chairs. \$8 p.m.

Bombyx Center, Florence: Angel Bat Dawid & The Brothahood. \$. 8 p.m.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: Movie with live soundtrack, The Last Command (1928) with pipe organ by Jeff Rapsis. \$. 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: Rubblebucket, Carinae. \$. 9 p.m.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25

Palladium, Worcester: Cannibal Corpse, Whitechapel, Revocation, more. \$. 6:30 p.m.

Tree House Brewing, South Deerfield: Iron & Wine. \$. 7 p.m. Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: Rubblebucket, Home Body. \$. 9 p.m.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: Zydeco Connection, The Bourbon Street Blasters. \$. 7 p.m.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: Movie with live soundtrack, Peter Pan (1924) with harp score by Leslie McMichael. \$. 7 p.m.

Academy of Music, Northampton: Bruce Cockburn. \$. 8 p.m. Shutesbury Athletic Club: The Diamondstones. 8 p.m.

ARTS & ENTERTAINME

TUESDAY, MARCH 1

Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: Lucy Dacus. \$. 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 3

DCU Center, Worcester: Tyler the Creator, Kali Uchis, Vince Staples. \$. 7 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: Corsano/Baldwin/Gelineau Trio, Clear Falls, more TBA. \$. 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 4

Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: Superchunk, Torres. \$. 8 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: Corsano/Flaherty Duo, Stella Silbert, Wednesday Knudsen, Jake Meginsky. \$. 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, MARCH 5

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Michael Musillami Trio. \$. 7:30 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: Babehoven, Melatonin, EIEIEIO. \$. 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: Lich King, Stone Cutters, Toxic Ruin. \$. 8:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, MARCH 6

Academy of Music, Northampton: Rickie Lee Jones. \$, 7 p.m.

TUESDAY, MARCH 8

Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: Stephen Marley. \$. 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 10

Palladium, Worcester: Dark Star Orchestra. \$. 7 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: James Brandon Lewis Trio. \$. 7:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 11

Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: Iceage, Sloppy Jane \$. 8 p.m.

MASS MoCA, North Adams: Animal Collective, L'Rain. \$. 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, MARCH 12

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: Movie with live soundtrack, The Arrival (1983) with music by The Empyreans. \$. 8 p.m.

Daily Operation, Easthampton: Armand Hammer. \$. 8:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, MARCH 13

Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: Son Volt, Jesse Farrar. \$. 8 p.m.

Symphony Hall, Springfield: Boyz II Men. \$. 8 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16

Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: Sheer Mag, Landowner, Topsy. \$. 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 18

Nova Arts, Keene: Vapors of Morphine, Jordan Holtz. \$. 7 p.m.

SATURDAY, MARCH 19

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Mud Season, festival feat. Young and Old, Dave Bulley Band, Love Crumbs, Cloudbelly, Eric Lee, more. \$. 11:30 a.m. Academy of Music, Northamp-

Three Degrees of Warming

ton: Henry Rollins. \$. 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 24

Stone Church, Brattleboro: David Bromberg Quintet. \$. 8 p.m.

B7

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Adam Ezra Group. \$. 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 25

MASS MoCA, North Adams: Car Seat Headrest, Bartees Strange. \$. 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, MARCH 26

Hutghi's at the Nook, Westfield: One Master, Ritual Clearing, Subterranean Rites. \$. 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: The Wailers, Roots of Creation. \$. 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, APRIL 1

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Amy Helm. \$. 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 2

Northampton Center for the Arts: mssv (feat. Mike Watt), Gloyd. \$. 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: Hubby Jenkins. \$. 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, APRIL 3

Academy of Music, Northampton: Bela Fleck's My Bluegrass Heart. \$. 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, APRIL 7

Calvin Theater, Northampton: The Magnetic Fields. \$. 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: Guerilla Toss, Zebu! \$. 8:30 p.m.





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PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Free Mental Health, Trauma Training

GREENFIELD – Residents in rural areas often face challenges when seeking care for their mental health afflictions due to limited resources, lack of transportation, and low levels of health literacy, among other factors. Here in western Mass, Clinical & Support Options (CSO) hopes to improve outcomes in rural areas through a new, cost-free training program that aims to improve awareness among community organizations, schools, private businesses, and even the general public.

Nonprofit community behavioral health agency CSO is launching what it's calling the Rural Awareness and Access Project (RAAP). The project aims to raise the level of awareness and response capabilities of the broad northwestern Mass region by providing free, expert-led training hosted by CSO clinicians. The project will be conducted over five years with the goal of training at least 1,800 individuals.

Training audiences may include primary care and pediatric practices; hospitals (ED personnel and direct care staff); veterans' organizations; schools and early learning agencies; law enforcement offices, first responders, courts, etc.; victim assistance providers and advocates; and other grass-roots community-based organizations and businesses.

"This is one of those 'it takes a village' projects," explains CSO president and CEO Karin Jeffers. "By strengthening the capacity of local individuals, groups and institutions to be agents of change, RAAP will help ensure that proactive, trauma-informed responses are part of the culture throughout rural western Mass."

Those responses, Jeffers is careful to point out, could follow serious crises and trauma, or they could follow everyday-type challenges. "Sometimes when we think of 'trauma,' we overestimate the criteria of what qualifies as a 'trauma'," she explains. "In fact, these evidence-based trainings will help reduce stigmas associated with mental health and provide tools for responding to a wide range of circumstances."

RAAP will be overseen by Chase Giroux, the agen-

cy's director of community education. They are eager to work with local shareholders because, as they put it, "raising our collective ability to respond to a wide range of traumas is something we can only do together."

"I'm already reaching out to organizations, groups, and leaders who we think might be interested or could benefit from some professional, well-developed training," Giroux explains. "This is training that often costs too much for nonprofits or schools to offer staff. So, we're hoping our community partners and citizen groups see the value in having free access to it."

While customized trainings are available (and even encouraged), basic RAAP trainings will include:

- Mental Health First Aid (adults and/or youth): Basic-level competency for responding to crises or providing interventions.
- Safety and Nonviolent Crisis Intervention: Using a trauma-informed lens to understand crisis development and emphasize de-escalation and safety.
- · Autism Spectrum Disorders: Basics of ASD, including evidence-based approaches.
- Positive Behavioral Supports: Understanding and managing behavior supportive of children.
- Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness: Develop a nonjudgmental, accepting, and curious attitude.
- Building a Trauma-Informed Community: Supporting organizations in understanding the effects of trauma, and ways of addressing it.

Interested organizations (schools, nonprofits, government institutions, private businesses, etc.) who think their staff or constituency could benefit from behavioral health trainings relating to wide-ranging trauma response or crisis intervention should contact Chase Giroux, LMHC (they/them), by email at CGiroux@ csoinc.org.

To learn more about CSO's urgent-access mental health services in western Mass., visit CSOInc.org/ help. To find your nearest CSO location and contact information, see CSOInc.org/locations.

ARTIST PROFILE

David Russo

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – David Russo was among the artists who showed up as part of an event called Jingle Fest that happened in Greenfield in December. He told me that it was the first time he had done the event, and that he sold a lot of his art at the event.

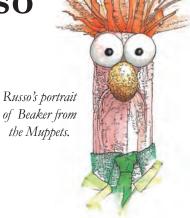
"I've been drawing my whole life," Russo said. He has been doing it professionally since 2018. He was a professional musician, but switched to drawing. This man is from Ashfield, Massachusetts and has an art degree from Montserrat College in Beverly.

Russo draws Muppet characters and things from Star Wars, as well as landscapes and concert posters. The Muppet characters and Star Wars stuff are very good and realistic-looking images.

"I draw them in my own style," he told me. "I like them. I draw things I know." I learned that the Muppet and Star Wars stuff is popular, "but the most popular is the music stuff."

As far as Muppet characters, Russo has drawn images of Kermit and Fozzie, and one of his images from Star Wars of what is called an All-Terrain Armored Transport (AT-AT). It looks like some kind of creature instead of a machine. I call them "realistic" because they really do look like those characters and machines I have seen from the Muppets and Star Wars.

As for the music stuff I mentioned, Russo said his favorite piece of his art is his portrait of Louis Armstrong, a famous jazz musician who played the trumpet. He told me his art has been seen at art fairs and music festivals "all over the east coast," one being the



Russo said his Louis Armstrong portrait is his personal favorite.



Lake Eden Arts Festival (LEAF) in North Carolina. The musicians he likes to draw include Jerry Garcia, Frank Zappa, Bootsy Collins, and Nina Simone.

His landscapes are of places in Ashfield, and have a slightly surreal quality to them that makes the images interesting to look at. That slightly surreal quality also works well for the image of Louis Armstrong he said was his favorite. The same goes for his image of Stevie Wonder.

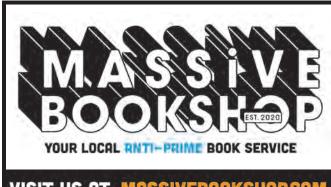
Russo told me he thinks people like the style of his art because of his process, which consists of doing the color first, then the outline. I think that is probably at least part of why it's as good as I think it is.

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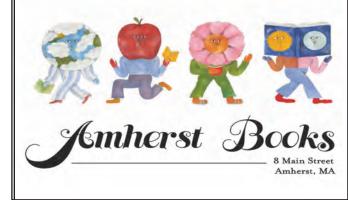
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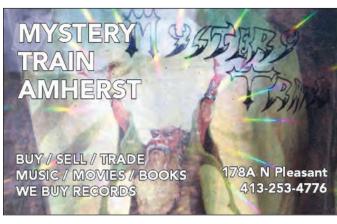
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