

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 20 – NO. 14

also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

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EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

FEBRUARY 17, 2022

TRAVELOGUE

Deerfield Sightseeing: Part II



JACKSON PHOTO

The powerhouse and tower at Harriman Station, where water rejoins the river.

By MIKE JACKSON

READSBORO, VT – Sherman Reservoir, as this leg of the Deerfield River is known, is serene, hemmed in by little mountains. Its 218 acres are home to pickerel, perch, and bullhead, as well as two stocked species of trout. When Readsboro Road crosses the state line into Readsboro, it becomes Tunnel Road: at one point, this was the way Vermonters would have come south to the Hoosac Tunnel.

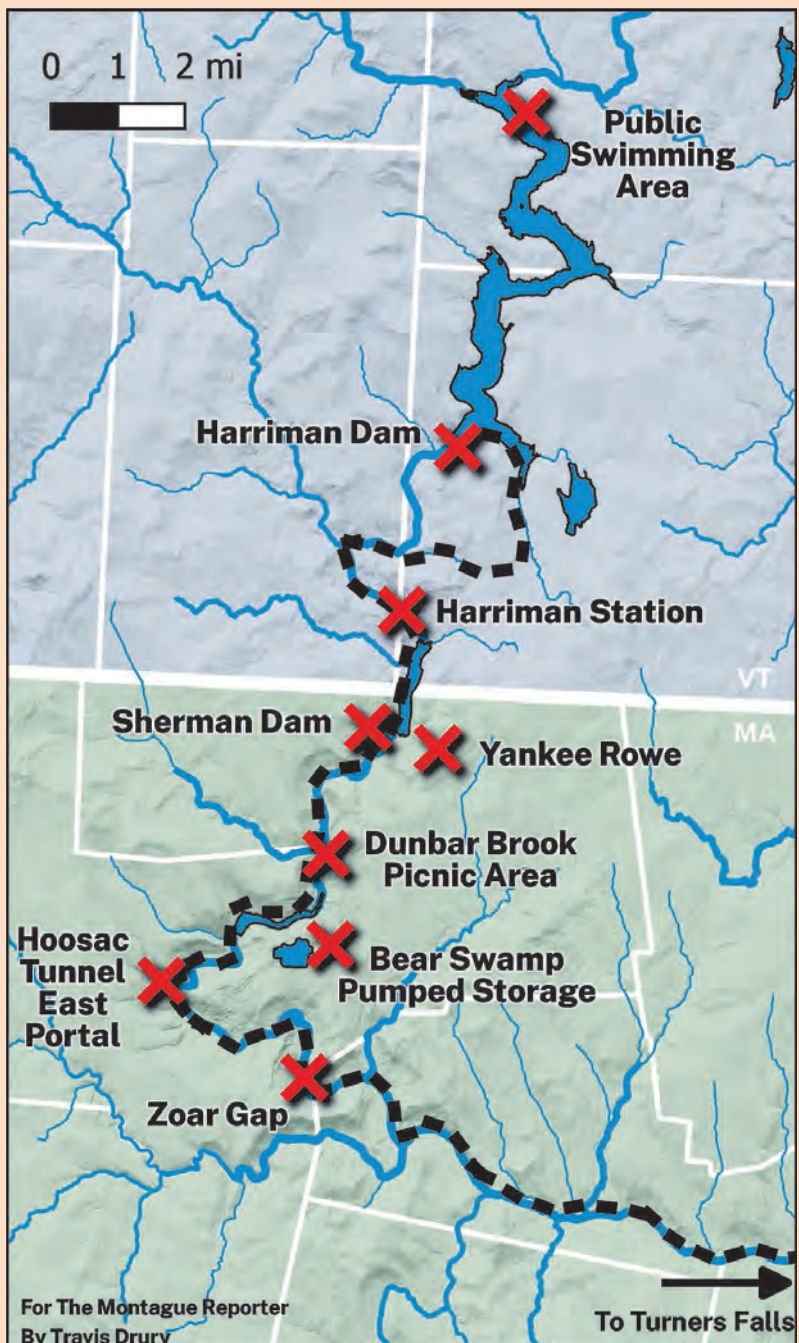
There's a driveway with a boat launch here, provided of course by the hydro company; the Massachusetts Paddler website provides helpful advice about how far you can paddle in either direction. Upstream becomes impassable, for reasons we'll get into in a bit, and downstream is the Sherman Dam.

The site lists the "Terrain type" here as "Wooded, Power Dams, Spent Nuclear Fuel."

Yankee Rowe doesn't look like much now, but it was the country's first commercial nuclear generator, a pressurized-water reactor. And it makes so much sense they would have plopped it right next to an existing hydro plant, next to a paper town.

I try to picture the giant spherical containment vessel sitting on the far bank, and then I try to picture it being new. A gleaming pearl perched in the valley, holding the future at its heart.

The nuke was built in 1961, and between 1963 to 1965 two million gallons of tritium-tainted water leaked from its spent fuel pool into the local watershed. Ah well, trial and error. The plant also see **SIGHTSEEING** page A5



For The Montague Reporter By Travis Drury

GILL SELECTBOARD

For Recreation, Town Hashes Out Impact Fee, River Agreement

By JERRI HIGGINS

The Gill selectboard discussed the host community agreement the town is negotiating with cannabis retailer Leaf Joy, LLC at their Monday night meeting. Leaf Joy has purchased the former Green River Powersports premises on the corner of Route 2 and Main Road for its shop.

Under the proposed agreement, Leaf Joy would pay a community impact fee amounting to 3% of its gross sales. Town administrator Ray Purington told the board that "the real crux" of the discussion over the proposed agreement concerned a section which would have the company give "an annual charitable donation totaling \$10,000 to a maximum of three charities, and then separately, an annual donation of not less than \$5,000 to the Gill-Montague Regional School District for providing substance misuse, prevention, treatment, education programs, or health and wellness programs."

Purington asked whether there was value in keeping the charitable donation clauses in the agreement, or if the references should be removed, letting the selectboard determine

see **GILL** page A6

LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Officials Touch Base With Beacon Hill Counterparts

By GEORGE BRACE

State senator Joanne Comerford and state representative Natalie Blais participated remotely in Leverett's selectboard meeting on Tuesday, providing updates on their work and answering questions on topics ranging from voting procedures to dirt roads and mosquito control. The board also held budget hearings for several town departments and heard an update on regional school budget talks.

Both Comerford and Blais praised the work of town clerks and constituents in the passage of a state bill in 2021 which expanded access to voting. The bill built on temporary provisions adopted in response to the COVID-19 epidemic, such as early registration and mail-in voting, in an effort to increase participation.

Blais said town clerks went "above and beyond to support the integrity of elections," and expressed gratitude to the 90 clerks who provided feedback on election procedures, which she said was used in drafting the bill. Blais acknowledged that additional burdens had been placed on election workers by the pandemic and new voting procedures,

see **LEVERETT** page A8

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Board Talks Zoning, FirstLight, Surveillance Cameras for Park

By JEFF SINGLETON

The February 14 Montague selectboard meeting, scheduled for a half hour before the usual starting time for a discussion of FirstLight Power's new federal license, began on a sad note. Selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz announced the passing of Montague town meeting moderator Chris Collins the previous weekend.

"There's numerous ways he touched many people," said Kuklewicz, noting his career in broadcasting, including news and sports, as well as his role as a columnist for the *Greenfield Recorder*. "He was willing to share his opinions and thoughts on many topics, which

sparked controversy and conversation, and that was good."

Later town clerk Deb Bourbeau came before the board to request that the town moderator position be placed on the ballot of the annual town election in May, which the board reluctantly approved.

The discussion of the town's "Agreement in Principle" with FirstLight on the recreation components of its next federal license covered much of the same territory discussed the previous week. Town administrator Steve Ellis's presentation highlighted improved access to the Connecticut River, both upstream and downstream from the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge,

see **MONTAGUE** page A7

MEMORIAL

Chris Collins (1967-2022)

By JEFF SINGLETON

FRANKLIN COUNTY – The death of Montague town moderator Chris Collins, who passed away on Sunday, has been noted widely, with friends and colleagues from many walks of life offering tribute to his memory. A radio personality, journalist, sports broadcaster, news director, opinion columnist, and manager of a local access television station, Collins seemed to define the term "Renaissance man."

After retiring from the *Greenfield Recorder*, Collins picked up the gavel as a town moderator. One does not simply roll out of bed and moderate a town meeting effectively – particularly in the wake of former Turners Falls fire chief Ray Godin, who had held the position skillfully for years. There was certainly a learning curve, and some bumpy spots in the first



Chris Collins, moderating his first town meeting in 2019.

year, but Collins quickly mastered the job, and will be missed.

Navigating learning curves may actually have been how Collins became a Renaissance personality. Born in 1967, he grew up in Greenfield and, according to his longtime friend radio announcer Bobby Campbell (a.k.a. Bobby C.), attended

see **COLLINS** page A4

High School Sports Week

By MATT ROBINSON

TURNERS FALLS – This week the Turners girls' basketball team clinched the Franklin South title, the Cheerleaders earned a trophy, and the regular season wrapped up for area basketball teams. Also this week, four senior student athletes were lauded by their teammates, families, and friends.

Although the basketball teams from Franklin and Turners have played their final regular season games, none are sitting out the post-

season. The two Tech teams will play in the upcoming Vocational Tournament and the MIAA tournaments.

Turners' two teams are on the opposite ends of the playoff spectrum: the boys, who finished 0-17 this season, have been invited to the non-qualifying postseason tourney, while the girls, who earned another banner for the gym, wait for the Western Mass Tournament seeding.

The fifth team still competing is the Turners/Tech cheer squad. They've been doing double duty of

see **SPORTS** page A6

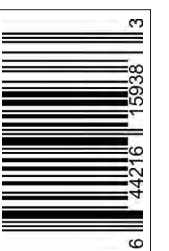


The Turners Falls-Franklin Tech cheer squad won third place in Sunday's competition.

Cabin Fever Symptoms And Coping Skills

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Harnessing Streams Everywhere

Negotiations have been in progress some time between H.I. Harriman of Boston and his associates and the Lamson & Goodnow manufacturing company of Shelburne Falls for the development of the water powers owned by the company to produce electricity.

Engineers are now at work to find out how much power can be developed at Shelburne Falls, at the North River, where the cutlery has a dam, and at Scott's bridge, where a fine power can be developed...

The power station will probably be located at the head of the Gardner Falls reservoir of the Greenfield electric light and power company. If the plans are carried out the cutlery will be supplied with electric power by the purchasing company.

The concrete dam the Lamson & Goodnow company had planned to build this season, to take the place of the old wooden dam that is out of repair, will of course be built by Mr. Harriman's company.

With the development of the various water-powers now controlled by the Lamson & Goodnow manufacturing company a good deal of power will become available for use at Shelburne Falls or for transmission elsewhere.

Mr. Harriman and his associates developed the power at Vernon, Vt. When harnessed and fully conserved the power of the Deerfield river at the Scott bridge, at North river and Shelburne Falls will develop a vast amount of energy, which will play an important part in the future.

— Turners Falls Reporter
 May 12, 1909

An estate valued at "\$100,000 and upward" is disposed of by the will of Bernard N. Farren, of 1807 Spring Garden street, formerly of Montague City, Mass., which was admitted to probate yesterday, in Philadelphia.

Several codicils are attached to the will, and one refers to the fact that in October, 1901, Mr. Farren gave a tract of land and buildings located in Montague City, Franklin county, Mass., to be known as the Farren Memorial hospital. The codicil provides that in the event of this property being used for other than hospital purposes it is to revert to the county authorities in trust for a public hospital. In the event of the county authorities not accepting this gift, for this purpose, or if it was accepted and afterward used for other than hospital purposes, the land and buildings are to revert to such relatives or persons as might be entitled to the property as though Mr. Farren had died intestate.

The value of this property is not given. The whole estate will not go beyond \$1,000,000 in value, it is believed. The will admitted to probate, letters of administration were granted to Mary Josephine Farren, the widow....The will was executed in September, 1903, and gives the widow the entire estate in trust, the same to revert to their children upon her death. This does not apply to the stocks and bonds left by Mr. Farren, which are placed in trust and the income to the extent of \$10,000 to be paid to the widow and the balance to the children.

— Turners Falls Reporter
 January 31, 1912



Brandon Turner works in the service department at Tim's RV in Erving. Behind him is a Sol Horizon, a popular travel trailer. There's an RV show at the Big E in Springfield this weekend, and Tim's will be there with 13 different models.

Letter to the Editors

A Man Named John Landino

There have been many sad passages in the past few months, but the news of your death last week hit me particularly hard.

You saved my life not quite 50 years ago, down in New Haven, Connecticut, where our paths first crossed. But our ways parted.

Thirty-six years passed before Lisa Davol mentioned she had booked a man named John Landino for a Dada art experience at the Hallmark Gallery on Avenue A.

Could you be the same man?

As I watched you perform that night, on trombone, while rebel bookseller Andy Laties sat on the tiled floor feeding an un-scrolled copy of Kurt Schwitters' sound poem *Ursonate* through a paper shredder it slowly dawned on me: You had gone insane, but yes, you were indeed the same man. And you were living here in Montague.

I sidled over and reminded you of our days in the psych ward on Cedar Street, the year Philippe Petit danced on the high wire between the Twin Towers, the year Nixon resigned.

"We taught you everything you know," I whispered.

Soon you were hosting open mic nights at the Rendezvous, where you preached death to all rehearsal, and closed out one memorable evening chanting "Electricity" over and over in a cloud of blue static until the public address system shorted out.

How many aimless nights did we spend playing the freest jazz, held together only by your wildly unspooling

verbal improvs, while Jim Morrison looked down on us from the New Haven police mug shot file, hanging on your garage wall like some lion-headed lizard king?

You took me out on the river in your canoe, how many times, on the Horse Race, gliding on the water as the sun set?

Who else but you would put pianos up in trees?

I followed you from your driveway between the fallen oak and the Earth First sign down to Montague Center one cold night in December, hoping you might stop so I could say hello, one last time, before the old year discarded its mask and died.

You did stop, for a bottle of wine at the Mini Mart, before heading off to some art opening in Northampton. You looked pale, not bad for a man who had been peeled like a navel orange when they cut out your esophagus seven years earlier.

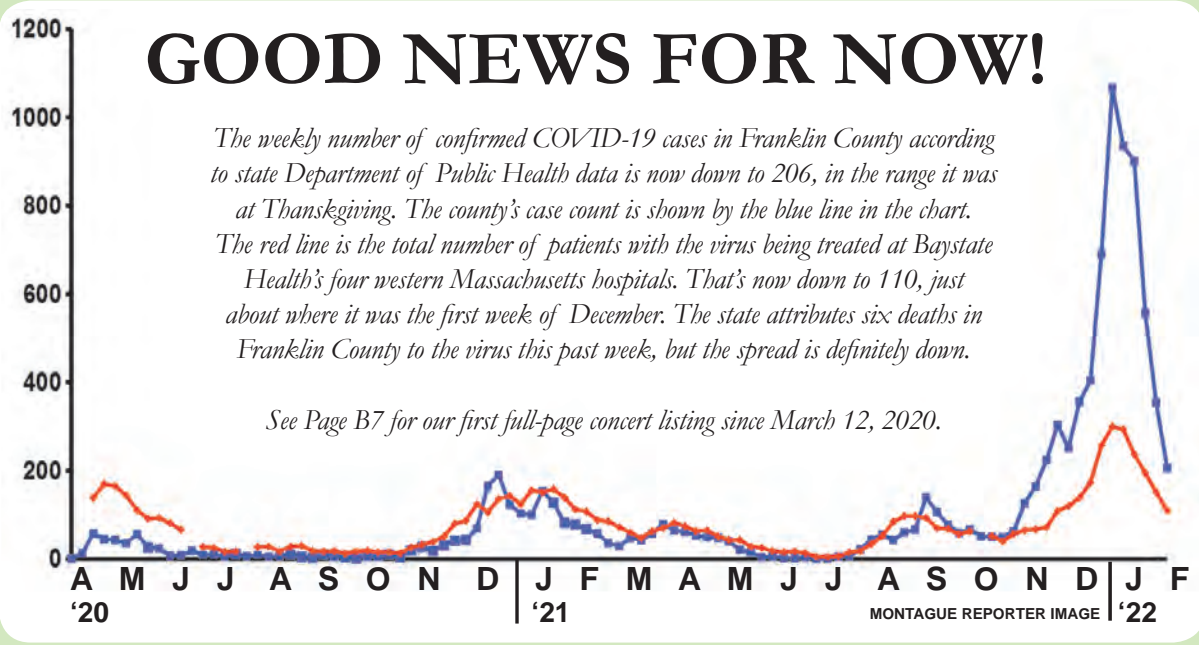
A brief reprieve. I told you I loved you. You always went before us.

Are you really gone? Rinnzekete bee bee nnz krr müü?

Will I not find you, some night in spring, chalking up your cue at the Millers Pub? Wiring up your muffler for one more trip to Wendell auto parts heaven?

Will the wind ever remember all the names it has called in the past? It will surely remember yours. Farewell John Landino – recreation director, dada poet, experimental human, dear friend.

David Detmold
 Great Falls



CORRECTIONS:

Wendell Good Neighbors director Nancy Graton reached out about a few inaccuracies in our February 3 article on the nonprofit food pantry.

She clarified that food Good Neighbors receives from the Food Bank of Western Mass, "for which they charge 19 cents a pound" according to the article, "is all free of charge. We do, however, pay a shared maintenance fee of \$.19/lb for some foods to help cover costs for transporting and safely storing the food."

The article also juxtaposed foods stores gave in the late 1980s, "before they went into the dumpsters," with a discussion of grocers that currently donate. "[F]or at least the last 15

years, they give us food on the last day of sale, which we refrigerate and/or freeze until the pantry opens," Graton told us. "Our current food donors were not the markets that gave us the old produce 34 years ago."

Additionally, our article quoted a source saying that state senator Jo Comerford brought boxes of fresh produce to the pantry last summer. Graton says this was Wendell's state representative, Susannah Whipps.

We are grateful for the opportunity to set the record straight, and apologize to our readers and to Good Neighbors' many dedicated volunteers for these or any other errors that may have appeared in our article.

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Compiled by NINA ROSSI

Storypalooza 3 is coming to the Shea Theater this Friday, February 18 at 8 p.m. Storyteller, poet, and risk-taker David Bulley hosts the program, with the theme of "Danger!" He presents Dan Foley, juggler and comic; Susanne Schmidt, comedic storyteller; Tone Nunes, a technologist bent on embarrassing himself; and Jenny Powers, who shares personal stories with universal appeal. Get tickets online or at the door: sheatheater.org.

On Saturday, February 19, quilt artist Ed Johnetta Miller invites people to **share their favorite quilt** by bringing it to the show-room where her own quilts are on display at Art for the Soul Gallery, 1500 Main Street in Springfield. The renowned quilter will share quilts from her own private collection as well. Free, from 1 to 3 p.m. Snow date is February 26. www.artforthesoulgallery.com.

There's a **free concert by the Stephen Page Quartet** at Amherst College on Saturday, February 19 at 7 p.m. It will feature Avery Sharpe on bass; Charles Langford, saxophone; royal hartigan, percussion; and Stephen Page on piano.

There is general seating for this show in the Buckley Recital Hall at the Arms Music Center, and proof of vaccination is required. For more information, contact apearson@amherst.edu.

Julia Shirar hosts a **Drawing Intensive series** of workshops at Looky Here, a community arts space on Chapman Street in Greenfield, starting this Sunday, February 20. Five classes are in each series: the Kids Intensive runs Sundays from noon to 3 p.m., and Adults run from 3 to 6 p.m. Register and find out about fees for these classes at www.lookyhere.com.

Share your **memories of the Northfield Chateau** this Sunday, February 20, from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls. A history display is on view about the former landmark, as well as a large ceramic model of the Chateau created by local artist Jack Nelson.

Join Mount Grace for a **family-friendly hike at Fern Glenn in Winchendon** next Thursday, February 24 from 1 to 2:30 p.m. Learn about nature with a hands-on scavenger hunt guided by youth education coordinator Amanda Carotenuto.

The hike will feature the brand-new Adventure Nature Backpacks, available for checkout through the Beals Memorial Library, which contain binoculars, a compass, field guides, and more. They will be available for families to use at the event. The hike is recommended for students in third grade and up, and is free and open to the public. To register, contact carotenuto@mountgrace.org.

Silverthorne Theater announces their new **Theater Thursdays play reading series** for 2022, starting on Thursday, February 24 at 7:30 p.m. The first reading presents *Guilty* by playwright Ellen Wittlinger of Haydenville, directed by Keith Langsdale. The plot involves two couples who have been friends since college who begin to question what has held them together all these years, and whether they even like each other.

This free event is at the LAVA Center, 324 Main Street, Greenfield. There will be a discussion afterwards. Attendees must show proof of vaccination and wear masks. Register to attend at silverthornetheater.org.

Learn how to **identify trees in winter** on FirstLight's Barton Cove trails on Saturday, February 26 from 1 until 2:30 p.m. Explore the three B's – branching, buds, and bark – as well as other clues including shape and habitat to identify common and not-so-common trees at Barton Cove.

Kim Noyes, Northfield Mountain's Education Coordinator, leads

this leisurely winter hike. Participants must be 18 years or older and comfortable hiking over moderate terrain. Masks needed for group gathering. Pre-registration is required at www.bookeo.com/northfield as group size is strictly limited for this free, outdoor program.

Salmon Falls Gallery hosts a **Birch Quilt demonstration** on February 26 at 1 p.m. See how Polly French creates a Birch Quilt, her newest mixed-media series. She will explain about the materials she uses, and then create one. French has shown at the gallery since it opened in 1985 with her painted portraits of birds, flowers, and landscapes. Call the gallery to sign up for the demonstration, as space is limited (413) 625-9833.

The Deerfield Valley Art Association is **looking for artists for an exhibit, "From Fields to Table II,"** to be held at Fiddleheads Gallery, 105 Main Street in Northfield. The show is open to all media, and acceptable images include farmers, farm structures, equipment, animals, produce, and end products such as pickles, cheese, wine, salsa, etc. Artwork must not have been shown previously at DVAA/Fiddleheads Gallery.

Those who express interest to margedvaa@gmail.com by February 20 will be sent details and an appointment schedule for drop-off, from March 6 to 9. The exhibit will run from March 11 to April 25.

Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

NOTES FROM THE GMRSD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Demasking Decision Delayed 'Til After Vacation

By MIKE JACKSON

GILL-MONTAGUE – The regional school committee met for the second week in a row Tuesday, with a scant quorum of five members joining over Zoom.

Superintendent Brian Beck announced the "sad news and good news" that Sheffield Elementary principal Melissa Pitrat was leaving to serve as principal at Hatfield Elementary. Joanne Giguere, who recently retired as principal of Buckland-Shelburne Elementary, has been appointed interim principal for the remainder of the year.

Beck also reported that the Turners Falls High School Extravaganza, an event designed to highlight the school's academic and extra-curricular offerings, has been postponed to Wednesday, March 2 at 5 p.m.

Syna Katsoulis, the district's student representative, reported excitedly on the ongoing Spirit Week at the high school, a "really, really awesome week" doubling as a fundraiser for next fall's student trip to Italy. This Wednesday was scheduled to be Pajama Day, Thursday Monochrome Day, and Friday Formal Friday.

Beck said the region was lagging behind the "precipitous decline" in COVID-19 cases seen statewide. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has rescinded the statewide school mandate as of February 28, but the legislature has extended until the summer the authorization for bodies such as school committees to meet remotely.

Beck and nurse leader Melissa Bednarski said that, in light of the upcoming school vacation week, they would not recommend changing the district's current mask policy until at least after March 8. "Every time we've come back from a lengthy break, we've had a spike in cases in school," Beck explained.

Bednarski said that if the mask protocol were to change, the district would continue with social distancing, sanitization, pool testing and at-home testing. 350 district families have opted in

to receive biweekly at-home tests. "I would like to see those numbers get up," Bednarski said.

She added that students will be able to continue wearing masks if they want to, giving the example of students at higher risk for COVID-19. Unvaccinated students, which includes all students under 5, would continue masking, and Bednarski said that school transportation is regulated by federal, rather than state, law so masks may continue to be required on the bus.

Gill member Bill Tomb said he had observed male athletes did not wear masks over their noses, but female ones did. Bednarski said no spike in cases has been seen among male student athletes.

Business manager Joanne Blier reported that a 4% to 7% rate increase is expected from the state Group Insurance Commission, which covers district employees' health insurance.

Blier also noted a few ongoing adjustments to the FY'23 budget, including the addition of a part-time tutor at Gill Elementary to assist with learning interventions. At Sheffield, a dean of students would be added. In response to suggestions from the committee the previous week, some money was added back for field trips, library books, and textbooks.

Another suggestion, art and music supplies, were not increased. "We didn't cut those lines, those were the [requested] budgets," Blier explained, acknowledging: "They don't feel like they're a big dollar amount."

Director of teaching and learning Jeanne Powers returned with mid-year data collected by the schools' iReady assessment software. Most grades have shown improvement since the fall in both math and reading, though the assessment data set is still small at the secondary level.

Powers said the schools planned to compare the assessment data with "other data factors such as attendance, tardies, and grades" in order to more specifically target learning interventions to individual students. In response to a question, Powers said she was not sure how the fall-to-winter improvement compared with normal years.

Recently appointed member Nick Licata asked whether the committee could receive its meeting materials packet as a group of files on different topics, rather than one large compiled PDF. "When you're trying to scroll through 146 pages, the odds are you aren't going to land in the right spot," he said.

Beck said this request would have to be weighed against the "additional burden in a time crunch" it would pose to executive assistant Sabrina Blanchard's workload, but that it would be considered. The Massachusetts Association of School Committees has advised that any change would require a discussion by the whole committee.

Montague member Heather Katsoulis suggested sharing the files in a Google Drive folder.

The final 25 pages of this week's packet were comprised of a report on community engagement by the Six-Town Regionalization Planning Board. 276 people, including 82 residents of Gill and Montague, completed a survey. "Compared to the number of people who either attend schools or live in the districts, there were relatively low rates of participation and response," Beck observed.

Sixty percent of respondents said "their districts were doing well or very well providing a high-quality, comprehensive education," though none of the results were broken down by town or district. That number dropped to 50% for whether the districts offer "a range of extracurricular opportunities," and 36% for "other educational opportunities." Only 25% said they thought their elementary schools were in excellent shape.

Participants pointed to academics, sports, and clubs as the biggest possible benefits of a six-town merger; the most widely cited challenges were transportation and "culture." The survey noted that some respondents were concerned a merger would lead to overcrowded classes, and that many were unaware of the planning board's cost/benefit analysis of a merged region.

The committee's next meetings are March 8, when it will approve the final budget, and March 22.

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COLLINS from page A1

Eaglebrook middle school in Deerfield. In ninth grade Collins and Campbell worked together at a radio station at Deerfield Academy and, as his former colleague Anita Fritz wrote on *Franklin County Now*, “never looked back.”

By the late 1980s Collins was working at several radio stations in the region, and began covering news for the *Recorder*. He studied communications at Emerson College in Boston. More recently he worked at WHMP in Northampton, Bear County in Greenfield, and served as general manager of Frontier Community Access Television, to list only a portion of his media resume.

But it was Collins’s Friday column on the editorial page of the *Greenfield Recorder* that made him a magnet for political junkies in Franklin County. The column, which ran for twenty years until Collins’s health began to fail in 2020, was a well-researched but gossipy narrative of local political issues and personalities.

“He understood the intricacies of local politics,” said former Greenfield city councilor Isaac Mass. “Yes, he covered the personalities and conflicts, but he wanted to make municipal government sexy so people would pay attention.”

Franklin County sheriff and former state representative Chris Donelan said he was a virtual unknown

when he decided to run for the state house in 2002. Collins “caught wind of it” and mentioned it in a column. “That really was the kickoff of my campaign,” Donelan said.

After Donelan and his primary opponent Peter Ruggeri avoided personal and political attacks during a primary debate, though, Collins complained that “this has got to be the most boring campaign in history.”

Collins’s weekly column was called “In the Arena,” but it might also have been called “Stirring the Pot” and some activists, particularly on the progressive end of the spectrum, thought he went over the line “chumming the waters” to instigate debate, according to one local observer we spoke with this week.

“That’s what I liked about him,” said Penny Ricketts, another ideologically unpredictable and sometimes controversial political figure who serves on the Greenfield city council. Ricketts said she would wake up every Friday morning to read Collins’s *Recorder* column.

“One week he would say glowing things about me, and the next he wouldn’t like anything I said,” Ricketts told the *Reporter*. “But it’s better than having someone in your pocket all the time.”

Collins certainly enjoyed poking liberals and progressives around issues like big box stores and education funding, which sometimes

sharply divide towns like Greenfield and Montague. But WRSI radio host Chris “Monte” Belmonte, a progressive who considers himself a friend of Collins, said he believes Collins was “a lot more middle of the road than some people perceived him to be – when he was not on a platform, he was much more middle of the road and totally reasonable.”

“He did not make assumptions about people based on their political ideology, or who they were friends with,” said Mass.

Belmonte remembered first hearing about Collins, then news director at rival Northampton station WHMP, in 2003 from then-WRSI morning show host Rachel Maddow. “She was like, ‘the guy who does news across the street is really good!’” Belmonte said. The next year, WHMP owner Saga Communications acquired WRSI, and the two became longtime coworkers at the stations’ merged offices.

Collins moved to Turners Falls in 2011. Campbell remembered him becoming immersed in Montague politics in that period, covering the selectboard for his column but also recording clips to play on news radio the next day. “I’d be working at night, and he’d be talking to Frank what’s-his-name,” Campbell said, referring to late town administrator Frank Abbondanzio. “He was getting all their stories.”

“He would call up just to check

in with you,” said Ricketts, recalling Collins’s ongoing relationships with his sources.

“He was such a diligent and dedicated craftsman when it came to making radio,” Belmonte told the *Reporter*. “He had the lay of the land politically, and he wasn’t afraid to tackle some of the heavier issues with some of the more beloved elected officials.... And he was very fair. He would know when to put on the opinion cap, and when to take it off.”

In later years, Collins’s online network became known as one of the only places Franklin County’s liberals and conservatives would encounter each other in debate over local issues – debate that Collins encouraged.

“I think as polarized as we’ve become politically, because of the Trump effect, you could see him really standing up against that effect on his own social media platforms throughout the duration of the Trump presidency,” Belmonte said, adding that Collins’s Facebook page was “all politically controversial posts, trying to get a rise out of people; pictures of his wife, saying how much he loved her; and dogs and cats. He loved animals so damn much....”

“A lot of it was bravado, and it was because he loved getting a rise out of people, but he was a teddy bear at heart.”

OP ED

More Leverett Pond: Controlling Invasives

By BROOKE THOMAS

LEVERETT – It is with considerable reluctance that I enter into the “Pond Debate,” where an adamant no-herbicide stance counters one of managing the spread of invasive “weeds” through the limited use of herbicides. My better angels are warning it best to stay out of such heartfelt controversies since the resulting ruffled feathers can lead to long term animosities and uncomfortable labeling; something we should avoid in this small town.

Personally, engaging in this issue is complex – not black or white – since I am sympathetic to both sides. As most Leverett residents, our collective gut reaction is that using a chemical application to suppress invasive weed growth is problematic. After all, we have been saturated by stories of Monsanto and Cargill’s abuses. Conversely, idea of an invasive plant clogging the shorelines, out-competing native vegetation, and compromising recreational use of the pond is equally daunting.

The Friends of Leverett Pond (FLP) has been criticized for not considering alternative methods of control, and urged to consult with other ponds in the area for their advice. Below we hope to show that, indeed, we have tried most of these methods, and have sought the advice of other pond groups. Due to the extent of the pond’s area we have concluded that an approved and targeted herbicide would be the most feasible and effective means of control. We are, however, hoping with the restored dam that a seasonal drawdown of the pond level could replace this method of control. I suspect that most FLP members would like to get away from the use of herbicides in checking the spread of milfoil and other invasives.

But let’s drop back 26 years, and review the saga of how we have come to this point.

In 1993 a pond resident noted a rapidly spreading aquatic plant and sent it to a State botanist. It was identified as the dreaded milfoil, and subsequent testing revealed several variants. The prognosis of what to do was not good as we learned it had taken over – engulfed – several ponds in the region.

With the realization of the devastation this invasive could have on the pond’s ecology and recreational value we joined the Massachusetts Coalition of Lakes and Ponds (COLAP), and worked

with UMass WaterWatch in testing for dissolved oxygen, pH, and water clarity, and sampling plant species composition in sections of the pond. While the pond seemed healthy, weed-infested shallows had high temperatures and dissolved oxygen at levels too low to support most fish.

These organizations provided us with advice on an array of methods available, but given the size of the pond (102 acres), a State-approved herbicide solution was recommended as the only broad scale means to control weed spread into critical areas of the pond.

Nevertheless, the alternative methods were tried, with the following results:

Hand picking. Here it is necessary to pick the whole plant, down to the roots, in order to prevent fragmentation that would allow milfoil to float to other areas and colonize them. The mucky bottom on most of the shores makes this very difficult, however, and once picking begins the water turns so cloudy that it is impossible to view and accurately pick more milfoil. Given the length of the shoreline, this technique would be futile.

Scuba divers. For reasons of water obscurity mentioned above, this technique of milfoil picking is unfeasible. SCUBA only works once the plant mass is substantially reduced.

Benthic bottom barriers. These are impermeable sheets spread across very small sections (12 by 24 feet) of the bottom in shallow areas. They require continued maintenance because they accumulate gas underneath, causing sections to float to the surface. They need to be removed every fall, and would be unfeasible on a large scale.

Insect predation. Milfoil-consuming weevils were researched, but it was determined that they would not consume the variety of milfoil in the pond. They are illegal in Massachusetts.

Mechanical harvester (underwater lawnmower). Even though these cut and bail weeds, they inevitably cause fragmentation, and hence spread the milfoil.

Hydro-raking. This machine scrapes up muck and rooted plants from the bottom and dumps them on shore. It is a cumbersome process of going back and forth one scoop at a time, and hence can only go so far out.

Herbicides. The advantage of this technique is that it can cover much larger areas than the above methods. In being absorbed rapidly into

the root system it kills the milfoil without fragmentation, and remains in free form in the water for only a few days. This was approved by the State in their Generic Environmental Impact Report, and permitted in the past by Leverett’s Conservation Commission.

More studies need to be done, but to date, research has found no adverse effects. Over the years the FLP herbicide use has been applied to only 8% of the pond. And over time application procedures have improved the targeting of invasives, and are absorbed more rapidly into the problem vegetation. The herbicide used in 2019 (ProcellaCOR) has proven so effective in removing milfoil that there has been no application for the past two and a half years. Impacts to other plants appear to be minimal or non-existent.

Winter drawdown. Some ponds, such as Lake Wyola, use a drawdown to eliminate nuisance vegetation in shallow areas. Until the FLP restored the failing dam this option was not possible. However, with the new dam, water level can be gradually reduced. This would involve a 2- to 3-foot drawdown in November and December, slowly allowing shoreline fauna to migrate with the receding water and reach its prescribed level by the time of freezing temperatures. The dam gate would then be closed, allowing the pond to refill by spring.

Do nothing. A remaining option is to accept the invasive as a natural process that will hasten the eutrophication of the pond: “let the pond be a pond,” or do nothing. This option over the span of a decade will considerably reduce open water, and therefore its recreational value – swimming, boating, fishing, bird watching. It will also make access from shore, including public access, more difficult, and compromise native fauna dependent on open water.

In essence, the FLP applied for a permit from the Leverett Con Com that attempts to keep the pond healthy for all and maintain its diverse habitats: that is, to keep the pond as we know it.

Although vegetation will continue to encroach it is still the town’s most valued resource. On January 31 the Con Com approved the permit, with conditions.

Brooke Thomas is a member of the Friends of Leverett Pond, and has lived near the pond for 47 years.

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SIGHTSEEING from page A1

pulled water from this reservoir to cool its rods, and for a generation the 15-mile stretch downstream was warmer – passing the Number 5 dam at Monroe Bridge and then through the mighty Bear Swamp project, built in the '60s too.

As Tunnel Road curves leftward, we catch a glimpse of a funny structure past the trees. Is that an old grain elevator? A coal silo? Emerging from the woods we're surprised to see it's farther away, and larger, on the other side of the river.

This is the beginning of Harriman Station, the real goal of today's pleasure drive. The 1927 dam and reservoir we've been driving past was an afterthought, added to help balance out a much larger project. The curious structure on the opposite hillside is a *surge tower*, designed to vent pressure as a tremendous volume of water rushes southward at us through a 14-foot-wide, two-and-a-half-mile-long underground pipe.

We pull the car over to gawk at the tower, and Harriman Station proper, which went online in 1924 – a handsome brick block, tall arched windows, Gothic buttresses, capable of putting out 40 megawatts of power. High-tension wires everywhere.

A hundred years ago, when Henry Ingraham Harriman and his partner Malcolm Greene Chace were building all these plants, every one of them added more electricity to New England life. The hydroelectric era leapfrogged off the back of the industry that pock-marked the rivers, turning the falling water directly into energy that could be sent anywhere. Transmission lines from where we're now gawking connected it to Worcester, and on to Boston.

It's the same story back at Turners Falls: water falling through the mills turned machines directly, and then it turned little turbines that made electricity for those mills – and then came the giant hydro plants, in the era of the Great War, making the output of decades of manufacturing seem quaint overnight.

I think about Bernard Farren, who finished the Hoosac Tunnel and helped build the first section of the power canal at Turners, frowning in his old age at the proposal to extend it.

Farren had his workers on the West Shaft of the tunnel build a brick lining, seven bricks thick, to keep the mountain from crumbling in on itself. He would have been on the job a year when the worst single-day tragedy of the project took place – the collapse of the hoist house into the Central Shaft, a hole being dug down from the top of the mountain to meet the east-west tunnel. These shafts took years to build, and their purpose was to remove the water.

He didn't live to see Cabot Station switch on – 36 megawatts in 1916, even as the bad news was

coming in from Europe that war, too, was becoming vast and concrete and super-powered.

I think about the power lines they strung over the mountain to deliver electricity all the way from the American Zylonite Company in North Adams to Monroe Bridge, just to help build Deerfield No. 5 project – itself located to divert water to a power station built to supply electricity to the Hoosac Tunnel. There was an existing dam at Monroe Bridge to power the James Ramage Paper Company, and it was adapted to the hydroelectric age.

This entire region was brutally extractive for so long – all the trees sawn up and dragged out, the thin highland soil depleted and abandoned in frustration, businessmen like Crocker and Farren and Ramage and Harriman carving up the map and bringing huge work crews out to the land – that it's no wonder the promise of a new age of virtually limitless nuclear energy was an easy sell.

But those plants were as far as it got; other people had a different vision for what inland rural New England should look like. The cancellation of the Montague Nuclear Power Plant in 1980, the shutdowns at Rowe in 1991 and Vernon in 2014 – our readers know the story.

The two pumped-storage projects on the Deerfield and Connecticut rivers remain as an artifact of that time, but a good case is made that they serve a New England-wide grid and will help allow less environmentally brutal generation capacity to come online elsewhere.

And despite considerable contestation, the hydroelectric landscape seems here to stay, provided station owners make considerable concessions to both ecological restoration and eco-tourism, the latter framed as "recreation" but sold, when it comes down to it, as the basis for restoring jobs to the region after both the paper mills and nuclear plants have been decommissioned and demolished.

Here at Harriman Station, the Deerfield's water comes back together: the useful energy water coming at us through that submontane spillway, half as wide and half as long as the Hoosac train tunnel, and the sad, natural water left to fend for itself in the 4.4-mile bypass stretch to our west. ("Eventually it becomes impassable," Massachusetts Paddler advises, "especially in the autumn when only a minimum flow is present.")

We drive up along Tunnel Road into Readsboro, gaining altitude and potential energy, and turn right onto Vermont Route 100. We're looking for Dam Road on the left, four miles exactly. It's easy to find, but caked with hard frozen snow – and since we skipped the snow tires on this old Honda entirely this winter, having nowhere really to drive, this is now an adventure. The sun is getting low.



The "Glory Hole," a morning-glory spillway at the south end of the Harriman Reservoir, drains the Deerfield on warmer days.

Dam Road rims the southernmost jag of the Harriman Reservoir, or Lake Whitingham, take your pick. It's ten times larger in area than the Sherman Reservoir. We've been to the northern end before – there's a big picnic and swimming area, totally overrun on a weekend summer day – and it's hard to imagine, sneaking up behind it through the woods like this, that it's the same body of water.

A mile and a half up Dam Road we reach the dam – and the Glory Hole.

Harriman Dam, first of all, was "the highest earthen dam built at the time of its construction," according to the *History of Hydroelectric Development on the Connecticut and Deerfield Rivers*, 215 feet high and a quarter mile long. A certain amount of water is let out on the other side into the bypass stretch, but the water destined for power goes into the gigantic morning-glory spillway. The drain's design prevents the earthen dam

from ever being overtopped – they "crumble if crested," the Society of Architectural Historians explain.

We peer down at the Glory Hole through a chainlink fence, our minds reeling. We had watched the cool YouTube videos, a perfect ring of water cascading inward over the flashboards, but Harriman Reservoir is *frozen* now, and what we are seeing looks like an entrance to an ancient alien city. A shyly exposed orifice of a smooth, perfect machine-planet. A portal.

Sunset stretches mute pink and blue across the ice on the lake. Wisps of dry snow wander over its surface, flashes of tiny gold.

When we think about our regional history we often think stone walls and cellar holes, fishing weirs and brickyards, sawmills and looms. At most we get to railways and tenements and the big rowdy paper mills. But the interventions we made in the landscape, a long time ago, are much, much larger: canals and interstate highways; tun-

nels bored through rock; miles of high-tension line; dikes to contain the hundred-year floods; quarries and reservoirs and dams.

Twelve hundred workers built the Harriman Development.

The village of Mountain Mills – with a hospital, railroad station, post office, office building, boarding-house, and school – was evacuated and flooded, and now sits at the bottom of Lake Whitingham. The dam holds in 38 billion gallons of water. Henry Harriman went on to serve as president of the United States Chamber of Commerce.

I wonder idly whether a cataclysmic flood of this lake would ever send water spraying out the surge tower two miles to our south. It's cold, and almost time to drive home. We laugh about what it would be like to slip on the ice and slide helplessly toward that hole. The Deerfield River does it every day. It's a 180-foot drop, and I can sense from here the darkness below.



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GILL from page A1

to use the impact fees.

"You start getting into a gray area of that 'charitable giving,'" he added, "for the selectboard to decide to give impact funds to a charity without talking to town counsel. It raises a little bit of a fuzzy feeling for me."

"I would rather see the funds come to the town, and have the selectboard determine it, rather than have it predetermined," said selectboard member Randy Crochier. "I think of it as like [Northfield] Mount Hermon money – we collect it, we send it out, we have a little more say in how it is spent that way."

Crochier also said he did not feel comfortable with specifying that funds would be directed to the Gill-Montague district when the town also has the Four Winds School, and other Gill students attend schools out of the district.

Selectboard chair Greg Snedeker agreed, saying that he thought it would be "cleaner" to not make specific stipulations, but to state that the funds would be "impact fees that the town will receive."

"This board gets to set a precedent as to how that spending goes," said Crochier. "It would help future agreements – although I do not think [host community agreements] are going to stick around for a long time."

"Yes, the impact fee is only for five years," said Snedeker. "It is not that much money, but I am sure we can put it to good use."

The board expects to finalize the agreement on February 28.

Crochier expressed his discontent that neither of Leaf Joy's owners has met with the selectboard. "They have said that they are a 'community-based, family operation,' but we are yet to meet anybody who is going to be in the ownership of this," he said. "We have never been told if they plan on remaining living out of state, or if they are going to be relocating in state."

Crochier added that if the own-

ers cannot attend the next selectboard meeting on February 28, he would like to post a meeting outside of the selectboard's regular schedule for them.

"It would be awkward to be sitting here having a liquor license hearing for a new liquor license, without a company representative that was not their attorney," he said.

Other Recreation

The board unanimously authorized Snedeker to sign FirstLight Power's "Agreement in Principle" for recreational improvements along the Connecticut River near the Northfield Mountain pumped storage project and the Turners Falls hydroelectric projects.

Minor changes to the final document included adding distinct arrows for Rose Ledge and Farley Ledge in Erving, which had previously been grouped together on FirstLight's proposed map, and removing the signatory page for the National Park Service. According to Purington, the Park Service's counsel "did not agree with all the boilerplate language in the Agreement in Principle."

Purington also said that another important change was new language stating that the stakeholders pledge their support and commitment "to developing a final settlement agreement, and other necessary documents for the comprehensive settlement."

"What happens if we refuse?" asked Crochier.

"You would quite likely get uninvited to all future conversations about it," Purington replied.

"But it would still continue?" said Crochier.

"Yes," responded Purington. "You are saying that we are not going to reopen any of these topics."

Other Business

The Schuetzen Verein club was approved for a 2022 gathering permit, with Crochier recusing himself because of his club membership.



ROBINSON PHOTO

Turners Falls's Alex Quezada faces a broad Pioneer Panther defense during the last regular-season game on Tuesday.

SPORTS from page A1

late. On school nights, they cheer for others, while on weekends, they cheer for the judges.

On Sunday the squad competed in the Eye of the Tiger competition at South Hadley High. Although they faced setbacks and injuries this week, they placed third in Division 4.

Coach Sarah Underwood was not expecting to win the trophy.

"Our goal was to go to the competition for the experience, to get some feedback about our skills, and to have fun," she said. "Their hard work and dedication really paid off, and now we are all even more excited for our upcoming competitions at Malden HS, Shepard Hill, and Holyoke High."

Girls Basketball

FCTS 33 – Pioneer 29
Mount Everett 48 – FCTS 26
FCTS 45 – Lenox 33

Franklin Tech, whose only two conference losses this season came against Turners, went 2-1 this week to finish the season with a 13-4 record. More importantly for their seed, they have gone 8-2 against Division 5 foes.

Last Thursday they faced the Pioneer Black Panthers. The Cats pounced early, leaving the Lady Birds on the losing end of a 16-6 halftime score. The third quarter was all Eagles, however, as they outscored to take a 21-18 lead heading into the fourth. The teams played evenly for the final eight minutes, and Tech held on to win 33-29.

Only four girls scored points for the Eagles. Kaitlin Trudeau led with 14, followed by Hannah Gilbert (10), Lea Chapman (6), and Emily Merritt (3).

Tech traveled to Sheffield on Friday to take on another flock of birds, the Mount Everett Eagles. Franklin beat Everett way back on December 9, but Friday's game had a much different outcome. Tech kept it close in the first half, but could only score 6 points in the third and 2 in the fourth, dropping the game 48-26.

The Lady Birds finished their season on Tuesday with a 45-33 home win against the Lenox Millionaires.

TFHS 38 – Smith Academy 24
Easthampton 52 – TFHS 26
TFHS 43 – Athol 21

Turners Falls beat the Smith Academy Falcons 38-24 last Thursday, clinching the Franklin South Conference championship with the win. There was a debate

on Facebook about the last time Turners won a conference title; I think the consensus is 1981. I asked Coach Jim Cadran if they get a trophy. They don't, but the new gym banner is on order.

Thursday was also Senior Night, and lone senior Emily Young took time out of the game to accept flowers and to get her picture taken.

Then the ladies played a road game. "We don't count Easthampton," one of the mothers told me after the 52-21 loss to Eastie. The 16-1 Easthampton Maroon Eagles play in Division 4, and will compete against schools their own size in the postseason.

Turners concluded their regular season on Valentine's Day with a home win against the Athol Red Bears. This was an amazing game to watch, and the victory places an exclamation mark on the season.

For one thing, Blue started the game with an incredible run, and didn't allow Athol to score a single point until midway through the second period. Powertown barely let up in the second, cruising to a 31-4 halftime lead. This one-sided scoring allowed Cadran to liberally substitute from his bench.

Another interesting thing about this game was how quickly it went: the entire game was over in less than 57 minutes. This was partly due to a lack of fouls. The very first Turners player to shoot from the foul line was Morgan Dobias, with less than two minutes remaining in the game.

Taylor Greene had the hot hand for the Thunder, hitting five outside 2-pointers and a 3 for 13 points. Young sunk two from 3-point land and ended with 10 points; Lily Spera also scored 10, mostly from underneath. Holly Myers (4) and Madison Liimatainen, Abby Holloway, and Dobias (2) also scored for Blue.

The champions cannot rest on their laurels: on Monday, they play their first game in the Western Mass Tournament.

Boys Basketball

Smith Academy 69 – FCTS 29
Smith Academy 52 – FCTS 37
Mahar 68 – FCTS 53

On Monday the Franklin Tech Eagles played Smith Academy for the second consecutive day. A day earlier, on Superbowl Sunday, the Tech Boys went to Hatfield and lost convincingly, 69-29.

"We have to win tonight," one of the Tech regulars told me before Monday's game. "If we win tonight and Wednesday, we might make the playoffs." After a strong

start, the Eagles have had a rough go of it, dropping 7 of 8 games to close out the season.

Monday's game started out promising for the Birds. They hit their shots and pulled down rebounds to go ahead 10-7 after one quarter. Smith pulled back into it, and by the time the buzzer sounded to end the half, they were ahead 22-21. The second half was all Smith, and they quickly pulled away to a 52-37 final victory. Ty Sadoski outscored everybody, ending with 19 points.

On Wednesday the 3-and-13 Mahar Senators came to Tech. Right out of the gate, Mahar was on fire, dropping 3-point bombs and pulling down rebounds. Tech's efforts to stem the tide resulted in personal fouls, and by halftime, Mahar was on track to score over 80 points.

Tech settled down in the second half, but they couldn't chip into the lead, and the Senators took the game 68-53.

Pioneer 57 – TFHS 27

The Boys of Thunder played their last game of the regular season on Tuesday, against the Pioneer Panthers. As spectators arrived they were greeted by a large trophy on the ticket takers' table. "It's for the cheerleaders," one of the workers explained.

Before the game started, Adam Graves called seniors Blake and Brandon Pollard and their family to center court to honor them at their last regular-season game of their high school careers. Then he called Chloe Sumner and her entourage forward. The cheerleaders grew even louder as their captain received her bouquet.

The game did not go well for the Thunder. The Pioneers immediately hit a 3-pointer, followed by another score. Powertown attempted to keep pace, but too many takeaways allowed the Cats to double Blue's output, and when the buzzer sounded to end the first half Turners was down 29-14. Their woes did not end there, and Pioneer went on to win 57-27.

Seven different Turners players scored in the loss: Levin Prondecki (7), Alex Quezada and Brandon Truesdell (6), Cam Burnett (4), JJ Charles (2), and Devon Sloan and Brandon Pollard (1).

Although the Boys Thunder haven't been able to win this season, they will play on. "They're just playing to play," Graves told me later. "We don't know where or when, but they will play next week."

NOTES FROM THE GILL TOWN CLERK

Community Notices

By DOREEN STEVENS

GILL – The Town census forms were put in the mail in early January as well as dog registration.

It is very important to keep the town census up to date to keep your voting status active. (If your voting status does become inactive, you will need to bring your state ID and proof of residence to the polls in order to vote.)

Check the information on the form sent to you, make any changes or additions, sign it, and either drop it off in the drop box by the back door or put in the mail.

It is also important to note that even if there are no changes, you should sign the form and get it to the Town Hall.

Dog Registration forms were also included with the census forms. Please fill out the information asked on the paper, include a copy of your dog's rabies vaccination, and payment.

This can all be dropped off in the drop box, mailed, or brought into the Town Hall with your census form. The 2021 dog licenses are valid until March 31, 2022; after that there is a \$10 per license late fee.

The Annual Town Election is scheduled for Monday, May 16, 2022. We have a vacancy on the Board of Health. If you are interested in running for this position or any other position on the ballot, please contact the Town Clerk to obtain nomination papers.

Dates to Keep in Mind:

April 26, 2022: Last day to register to vote in Annual Town Election

May 16, 2022: Annual Town Election

TBA: Annual Town Meeting

September 6, 2022: State Primary

November 1, 2022: State Election

Town Clerk's office hours are Mondays 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesdays 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Wednesdays 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and Thursdays 3 to 6 p.m. The Town Clerk is also available by appointment at (413) 863-8013.

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THE SPIRIT SHOPPE

MONTAGUE from page A1

a viewing platform adjacent to the bridge, and a commitment to working with the town of Montague to find a “qualified organization” to take responsibility for preserving the historic Cabot Camp buildings at the confluence of the Millers and Connecticut rivers.

Ellis said Montague had focused on recreational improvements within the town because that is where it felt it would have the most influence on the final FERC license. He also said the town was “agnostic,” but supportive, of the recreational proposals of other communities in the license area.

Ellis was asked if the selectboard would be voting to endorse other sections of the agreement dealing with “fish and flows,” erosion, and cultural resources including Native American sites. “They would have to be considered in order for the town to sign a comprehensive settlement agreement,” he responded. However, he later told the *Reporter* that he did not believe the board would necessarily be endorsing preliminary settlement agreements on those issues.

The board authorized Kuklewicz to sign the recreational AIP, which is not considered a binding agreement.

Zoning for Housing

Town planner Walter Ramsey presented the planning board’s proposal for a “Smart Growth Overlay District,” as allowed by state law Chapter 40R and previewed in last week’s *Reporter*.

The district, located in downtown Turners Falls, would include two sub-districts – the former Railroad Salvage or Griswold Mill parcel on Power Street and two parcels on Second Street, one of which is now a parking lot owned by the town.

Ramsey showed artist’s conceptions of two mixed-income housing developments on the sites, which would be required to have 20% of the units “affordable” under the state definition of the term. This would potentially bring Montague above the required threshold for the “affordable housing inventory” under state law.

Ramsey was asked if the designation “affordable” was appropriate, since his presentation showed that the rental units could be over \$1,000 per month for a single-bedroom apartment in Turners Falls. Ramsey pointed out that this was the state’s definition of affordability, calculated on the basis of the 80% of the town’s median family income, and that the rental amount was a “ceiling, not a floor.”

The board did not take a vote on the overlay district, which will now go to the state for a “determination of eligibility,” and then to town meeting after a public hearing by the planning board.

Increased Surveillance

Parks and recreation director Jon Dobosz came before the board to discuss a proposal, scheduled to appear on the March 3 special town meeting warrant, for “Surveillance System Upgrades” at Unity Park following incidents of vandalism and a threat to a child on the playground.

Dobosz said that a camera is currently directed at a portion of the playground. The department, supported by the recreation commission, is seeking to install at least three new cameras to cover more of the playground, one of the ball fields, and the “parking lot area.” Dobosz said over the past year and a half he had become more concerned with “vandalism and generally poor behavior by some patrons.”

Police chief Chris Williams said that when he spoke with Ellis a few years ago about increased surveillance in “different areas of the town” he was “against it,” but that he supported this proposal for the “safety and security of the kids.”

The previous week selectboard members had expressed concerns about increased surveillance at the park without a broader town policy, but on Monday it was left to member Matt Lord to object to the proposal. He said the arguments for more surveillance were poorly supported, noting that Dobosz had stressed vandalism on the basketball courts which would not be covered by the new cameras, and that he would rather see the town find “other ways” to encourage respect for the parks.

When the March 3 special town meeting warrant came up for consideration, all of the fourteen articles were unanimously endorsed by the selectboard, with the exception of the appropriation of \$4,700 for Unity Park surveillance cameras (Article 7) which received a “nay” from Lord.

New Store in Millers

The board awarded Crystal Spring Investments, LLC, an “off premises” wine and malt beverage license for a shop to be located on 27 East Main Street in Millers Falls. Owner and manager Tammy Tolzdorf, who also owns the Millers Pub next door and the building in which both businesses will be located, gave a presentation about the shop’s business plan.

Tolzdorf called the new business “pub general,” selling local beer and wine as well as “local products” such as frozen food from the Diemand Farm in Mormon Hollow. She said a “specialty store” in the village would appeal to increasing “foot traffic” visiting the vintage furniture store Rustic Romance across the street.

Kuklewicz said the proposal was a “great idea,” but that Tolzdorf would probably need the board of

health’s approval to sell food.

Other Business

The board approved a proposal by Suzanne LoManto to add lighting to the sculpture on the northwest corner of Avenue A and Third Street. The lighting, requested by Tim de Christopher, who created the sculpture to honor aspects of Turners Falls’s past, will consist of six “very small LED lights” positioned “in and around the three pieces of sculpture.” She said that the cost had been reduced significantly by labor from the department of public works for “hardscaping” the brick, and could be funded within RiverCulture’s existing budget.

At LoManto’s request, the board also voted to execute a \$7,500 grant to the Turners Falls Cultural District from the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno was appointed to one of two vacant positions on the Montague historical commission. Sawyer-Lauçanno, who has done considerable design work for the town on buildings including the Gill-Montague senior center and the Unity Park field house roof, said he had received “clear guidance” from the state historical commission about when he should recuse himself from deliberations.

“He’ll be a natural,” said selectboard member Chris Boutwell.

The board briefly reviewed a range of issues to discuss with state senator Joanne Comerford and representative Natalie Blais when they appear before the board on February 28. The topics emphasized infrastructure funding, including for roads, bridges, and the dangerous intersection at the corner of Routes 63 and 47 in Montague Center. But they also ranged from permanent policies to allow remote meetings, to population-based caps on charter school attendance, to changing the formula for state library funding to allow for smaller libraries in rural communities.

Ellis presented a brief review of the latest COVID case counts, which continue to show a sharp decline. Kuklewicz said the board will consider the future of the local mask mandate, which ends March 1, at its February 28 meeting. Michael Nelson said the board of health, on which he sits, will be meeting on the 23rd, and the Greenfield board will meet the previous day to discuss the local mandates.

Ellis said that 68 rapid test kits for the “general public” remain to be distributed at town hall, and more can be obtained at the library and senior center.

The board retired to an executive session to discuss negotiating strategy with the National Association of Government Employees. Its next meeting is scheduled for February 28.



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

Leverett Assessors Services REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Town of Leverett seeks proposals for firms to supply assessing office services for the town beginning on July 1, 2022 for three years. Services to be provided include general clerking and office hours as well as assessing duties. The office is overseen by an elected three-member Board of Assessors (BOA). Copies of the Request for Proposals are available from Marjorie McGinnis, Administrator, (413) 548-9699 or townadministrator@leverett.ma.us. All proposals must be received by March 25, 2022 at 10 a.m. The contract will be awarded to the proposer offering the most advantageous proposal, taking into consideration minimum required criteria, comparative evaluation criteria as set forth in the RFP, and price. Contract will be awarded by the Selectboard based on the BOA’s recommendation. The Town of Leverett reserves the right to reject any and all proposals in whole or in part, and to waive irregularities and informalities, when at its sole discretion it is deemed to be in the best interest of the Town and to the extent permitted by law.



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

Here’s the way it was on February 16, 2012: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

for underfunding its elementary schools for the last three years.

Mahar Superintendent Asks Wendell to Consider Withdrawing from the Region

Michael Baldassarre, superintendent of the Mahar Regional School District, asked Wendell school and finance committee representatives at last week’s meeting of the Mahar regionalization subcommittee whether the town of Wendell would consider withdrawing from the Mahar region, to let the other member towns proceed with plans for a hybrid region. Wendell special town meeting will vote on articles at a special town meeting on February 28 to clarify the town’s position on regionalization, after rejecting a plan for a hybrid Mahar region by a lopsided margin last fall.

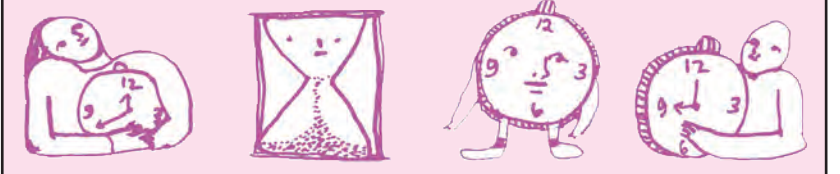
Baldassarre said Wendell could negotiate an acceptable rate to tuition its upper school students into Mahar, if the town agreed to withdraw from the region. Doing so might allow Petersham, New Salem, and Orange to regionalize, which would spare the cash-strapped town of Orange from paying a \$340,000 state charge

Jim McGovern Stumps in Turners

“I’m looking forward to representing this area,” Jim McGovern (D-Worcester), eight-term member of Congress, leading light of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, and Democratic whip for the New England region, told a handful of town officials, Mass Department of Transportation workers, and local residents at Montague’s town hall on Monday, February 13.

McGovern, who represents the 3rd Congressional District of Massachusetts, will be seeking re-election in the new 2nd Congressional District, as Massachusetts shrinks from ten seats in Congress to nine, with redrawn district lines reflecting the loss of population in the western part of the state. The new district will include the towns of Leverett, Wendell, Erving, Gill, and Montague.

McGovern, who won his last election with 56% of the vote against Republican Marty Lamb (39%) and Independent Patrick Barron (4%), has yet to draw a major opponent for the November election.



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LEVERETT from page A1

and said that relief for election workers was “top of mind” in the legislature.

Comerford said that schools were “between a rock and a hard place,” and that she was focused heavily on education and school spending. She listed a number of other legislative priorities including health insurance, regional and shared services, and transportation.

Comerford commented that state Chapter 90 transportation funds were inadequate, and that increased attention in Boston to the problems rural communities face in maintaining dirt and gravel roads was a “direct result” of Leverett residents reaching out to her on this subject.

A flier was passed out at the meeting soliciting community input on this subject for a joint project between the Franklin Regional Council of Governments and Blais. The flier provided a website address, www.tinyurl.com/3ydv2d6, with an interactive map where residents can add the locations of problems, and also upload pictures and details.

Selectboard member Melissa Colbert asked how the board could support the representatives in coming up with a better process for opting towns out of the state’s mosquito spraying program. Comerford replied that “towns like Leverett make us smarter,” and said “we made clear, because you made clear” that there were problems with the existing system.

Board member Tom Hanksinson said Leverett had residents with expertise who could provide additional information. “Don’t wait for me to ask,” Comerford replied. She said that the current mosquito legislation expires this year, and that she is hopeful the state’s mosquito task force will come up with recommendations for easier and more transparent procedures in the future.

Blais said her and Comerford’s work is a direct reflection of what they hear from constituents, and encouraged the sending of testimony and photos. “We’re only as strong as you make us,” she said.

Amherst District

Chair Julie Shively reported that an agreement had been reached at the most recent meeting of representatives of Amherst, Pelham, Leverett, and Shutesbury to use a “modified statutory” assessment method for funding the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District. The towns are required to use a “statutory” assessment method provided by the state unless they unanimously agree on an alternative method which meets state approval.

The agreement will increase the district budget by 2.5%, but did not resolve ongoing dissatisfaction with the process. Shively said she did not want to agree to it, but voted in favor of the proposal to “get it done.”

Shively also said that she was sure that an oversight led to a twice-requested list of the towns’ per-student cost not being made available at the budget meeting, but that she

had received it later, and it showed Leverett at \$17,205, Amherst at \$16,135, Pelham at \$15,672, and Shutesbury at \$14,385. She said the method chosen by the towns used the state’s statutory formula as its basis, but modified it with a “guardrail” by referencing a five-year rolling average of the assessments state’s method would produce.

Town Budget

The board held FY’23 budget hearings for several town departments, having previously guided departments to seek maximum increases of 3% over FY’22, which ends June 30.

The transfer station’s draft budget showed an increase of approximately 17%, which transfer station coordinator Annette Herda said was driven by a 37% increase in trash hauling fees and a 59% increase in bulky waste hauling, two of the department’s largest expenses, over which it has little control.

Board members noted that the transfer station was not expected to be self-sustaining financially, but the possibility of raising prices for residents was discussed.

The need to purchase personal protective equipment for the fire department was cited as being responsible for its requested increase of approximately 22%. Fire chief Brian Cook said the department needs to replace two full sets of gear per year, and the cost had risen by 20%.

Cook also reported that the department, which in a “perfect world” would have 16 to 18 members, was down to 11. The chief said the need for more on-call firefighters was under consideration by the personnel committee, along with the possibility of cross-training members of the highway department as firefighters to increase daytime coverage.

Colbert noted that her young son was ready to step up, and the chief suggested he check back in 15 years.

The board of assessors’ draft budget totaled \$48,675, an increase of \$750 over the current year, staying within the guidance of no more than a 3% increase.

Costs of Living

After a discussion, the board unanimously approved a 3% cost of living adjustment (COLA) for town workers, as recommended by a 3 to 1 vote of the personnel board.

The personnel board uses inflation figures from the federal consumer price index, which showed an inflation rate of 5.9% between December 2020 and December 2021, as a basis for its recommendations. Concerns were raised about inflation being higher in more recent months, but the board went with the lower figure.

Shively said she did not favor a 4% increase over concerns that COLA increases set a new baseline for future years, and pointed out that town workers receive other significant benefits such as health insurance for life after 10 years of employment, which are partly reflected in salaries.



Farren Thing Continues

By MIKE JACKSON

MONTAGUE CITY – A band of determined preservationists continued Monday to let the Montague selectboard know they would not like the former Farren Hospital building to be demolished. Meanwhile, town administrator Steve Ellis was authorized to send a letter to owner Trinity Health New England seeking “specific assurances” about the demolition plan.

“We assume Trinity intends to demolish the entirety of the existing hospital and its related structures... with restoration of these grounds to a level lot with seeded lawn,” the letter read. “We assume you remain on your projected schedule and demolition is slated to begin this spring...”

Montague’s letter requests a “binding agreement” that Trinity will raze the property completely, including utility lines, pavement, and storage tanks, conduct a Phase II environmental assessment, plant a lawn, and turn it over to the town. It also asks that the Catholic healthcare non-profit allow the historical commission to preserve artifacts, including bricks, and that it grant the town \$100,000 to fund a redevelopment study and cover the mowing of the lawn.

“It reflects what we talked about at the last meeting pretty well,” said selectboard member Matt Lord.

“Sounds like we have a consensus,” said chair Rich Kuklewicz. “This isn’t a debate,” he added, for the benefit of members of the public using the remote meeting software’s “hand raising” function.

The original building on the property, once the Farren Memorial Hospital, was built around the turn of the last century by Bernard N. Farren, a Pennsylvania engineer who came to Massachusetts in 1866 to help Fitchburg Railroad president Alvah Crocker dig a tunnel through the Hoosac Mountain. While Farren was overseeing that project’s completion, according to the *History and Proceedings of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association* (PVMA), he personally “derived a large income from a charge of one dollar for each passenger passing through,” a fee equaling over \$23 today. Farren fell in with Crocker’s band of capitalists at Turners Falls, a new planned industrial community, and helped build the power canal and mills here, as well as a large hotel. He was significantly invested in the growing village’s real estate.

Farren retired to Philadelphia but spent summers in Montague City, and after the untimely death of his son he built the Farren Memorial Hospital. He placed its operation in the hands of the Catholic Sisters of Providence, and set up a trust in 1909, stipulating that if it were ever dissolved the money would go to the Franklin County Commissioners to be “applied to the relief of the deserving poor of Franklin County.”

Similarly, the 1910 property deed Farren turned over to the hospital contains a clause that if it were ever used for purposes other than a hospital, ownership would revert to him or his heirs. When Farren died in 1912, according to

the PVMA, his will also provided “that if ever the Farren Hospital property is used for any other purpose than for what it was founded it shall revert to the County of Franklin, to be used for a public hospital forever.”

Catholic healthcare systems merged over the decades, and the Farren was converted to a special long-term care facility in 1990. When the hospital trust dissolved in 1995, Farren Care Center Inc. took control of the revenue; the county commissioners apparently relinquished their claim as the company was working, as one said, for “the greater good,” and providing free space for other charities. The Franklin County government was abolished by the state in 1997.

After a long and public struggle to urge the state to fund the upkeep of the deteriorating building – a place of last resort for patients rejected by other nursing homes – either through grants or by increasing their unique Medicaid reimbursement rate, Trinity Health reached a deal last year to transfer the residents to a Holyoke facility, which it sold to a private company.

Trinity maintains the Farren is unsafe, and refuses to release its most recent building assessment, though it has shared an estimate that it would take \$24 million to bring up to code.

While B. N. Farren reportedly has a number of living heirs, none have publicly indicated they plan to exercise their claim. Last week Trinity spokesperson Christine Looby confirmed to the *Reporter* that the company is “in communication with the family,” and that “the future of the building is still under consideration.”

The selectboard, which has stated it favors the proposed demolition, held a hearing on the matter last week and was not planning further discussion on Monday beyond approving Ellis’s letter. Montague City Improvement Association founder Lilith Wolinsky asked to speak, and chair Rich Kuklewicz, audibly irritated, said he would grant her 60 seconds.

Wolinsky read Looby’s quote from last week’s *Reporter* and said that she was trying to understand Ellis’s letter “within that context.” “Trinity said they have not made a decision,” she said. “They clearly stated that.”

“I’m going to stick by what they’ve said to us directly,” Lord said.

“Their plan was to demolish the building,” added Kuklewicz.

The board then acknowledged a letter to the town from the nonprofit Preservation Massachusetts, offering its “support in urging Trinity Health Care to share their assessment report... and to also engage them in a larger public conversation about the current and future state and opportunities for the building.” This week the Massachusetts Historical Commission accepted the Farren onto the state Historic Inventory; a similar application to include it on the National Register of Historic Places is pending.

“If somebody comes by with a wheelbarrow full of bills and is willing to renovate that building, I’m here to listen,” Kuklewicz said on Monday. “But I’ve seen what’s happened.”

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DON PLANTE PHOTO

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OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER

FEBRUARY 17, 2022

Above: Swans in flight; electricity in transmission. Thanks to reader Don Plante for the photo!

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NOTES FROM THE HEARTFELT CAFE

BY TROUBLE MANDESON

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GREENFIELD – “An apple a day keeps the doctor away” is something we’ve all heard, but where did this saying originate? It seems to have evolved from an old English proverb, first published in an 1866 magazine: “Eat an apple on going to bed, and you’ll keep the doctor from earning his bread.” The meaning is clear – eat healthier foods and you won’t need to visit the doctor as often.

In England the word “apple” was often a generic term used for all round fruit other than berries. When Europeans first saw tomatoes, they called them “love apples,” while both potatoes and cucumbers were sometimes called “earth-apples,” and in some languages, oranges are referred to as “golden apples” and “Chinese apples.” Apples are full of vitamins A and C, rich in fiber and antioxidants, and contain quercetin, a natural reddish pigment found in the skins which has anti-inflammatory properties. It is one of the most abundant flavonoids and is found in vegetables, fruits, grains, green tea, and red wine. It helps boost our immune system and fight off disease.

This crisp, juicy fruit is naturally low in calories, contains no sodium, fat, or cholesterol, and even helps with good dental health by cleaning your teeth as you bite into it. Sweet, but still low on the glycemic index, apples won’t raise your blood sugar as much as foods with medium or high GI levels, like white rice, potato chips, highly sweetened fruit like watermelon and pineapple, or sugar-laden breakfast cereals.

The history of how we came to have apples in the Americas began in central Asia, in an area east of the Caspian Sea. Kazakhstan’s capital, Alma Ata, means “full of apples” or “father of apples,” alluding to the many trees in the mountainous area.

Apples do not reproduce well, as the seeds in fallen apples sit on the ground and require animals or humans to disperse them. Neolithic farmers were the first humans to cultivate apple’s earliest ancestor, *Malus sieversii*. From there, apples traveled to China and then continued to spread along the Silk Road to other parts of the world, evolving into today’s domestic fruit, *Malus domestica*.

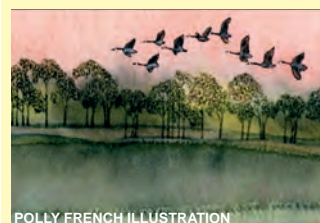
An interesting side note here on the Latin word, *malus*, which means both “apple” and “evil.” It has been suggested that apples got a bad rap as the fruit Eve used to tempt Adam, when in fact it may well have been a fig, apricot, pomegranate, or grapefruit that planted the

see **HEARTFELT** page B5



MANDESON PHOTO

Crates of apple varieties at a local store.



POLLY FRENCH ILLUSTRATION

WEST ALONG THE RIVER

OUT ON THE ICE

By DAVID BRULE

THE CONNECTICUT – It’s been a quiet month of February in my little world along the west-flowing river. Zero-degree nights, not much snow, but a good buildup of ice. Eagles come upstream to our bend regularly since the Connecticut is frozen solid for the most part. Open fishing holes in the ice occur at the French King Rock, the Northfield Mountain intake, the still-unfrozen stretch just above the dam. But there’s not really enough open water for an eagle to make a living or a dinner.

The Paguag river rushes by, until it disappears into the Connecticut, just a mile away. There my river remembers its name one last time before flowing into the big river at the French King.

Given this state of affairs, a Sunday is a good time to sit quietly and do some armchair time travel.

On a different frozen February Sunday back in 1957, we left the DeSoto near the abutment across from Doc Cassidy’s where the boat club buildings were. The northernmost point of Unity Park was the best way to get out onto the river. In the summer, the Franklin County Boat Club put in the docks near the abutment, where you could walk out onto rocking planks supported by barrels that kept the docks afloat. On certain racing Sundays in those days you could watch what we called hydroplanes buzzing across the water like mad hornets.

But that was back then, in the summer. Now in February all was frozen solid, and for the first time in my memory, my father gave us permission to go out onto the ice.

Once out there, we were not alone. Seemed like the whole town was out on that Sunday. A plank ramp had been laid down from the shore, and once on the ice, we took our time crossing over, I was trying not to trip or flop with the clumsy skates I had. There we were, the three of us: my

father Art, on his one day a week day off from Williams Garage, my sister Sue, and me.

Now in those days in the ‘50s you could more or less count on the river freezing over. In decades before, horses, ice sleds, cars and even trucks would be out there, cutting and hauling ice to be stored in the Davis ice house to keep food cooled in the summer. Every home had an ice box. Some ice companies shipped blocks of ice packed in sawdust down south, probably so those Southerners could sit on their verandas and sip cool mint juleps chilled with our New England ice, or so I imagined.

We hadn’t gone far out before we saw a dapper gentleman gliding effortlessly by, skating backwards, waving and smiling. My father pointed out Harvey Welcome, locally famous for his flawless skating and his performing dog. Easily he sailed by on the windswept ice, reappearing with his wife, the couple now waltzing as gracefully across the surface as anyone on the floor of a ballroom.

We struck out across the main part of the river, confident the ice would hold us up, headed for Barton Cove. I spent the crossing flopping and gliding as best I could on those ancient hockey skates, while my sister tripped pertly across the ice in her new high lace-up figure skates.

Way out in the middle of the frozen river, I was struck by the vast openness of the ice and sky. Our little house up above the Narrows was partly on the edge of the woods, so we didn’t often see so much sky, or at least didn’t pay too much attention, hemmed in by trees. But out there in the wide open spaces, it was like being in another country.

To be sure, in the past summer, I had gotten my first rowboat, a clunky wooden craft that somehow my father had found for me. I kept it tied up near Red Rocks see **WEST ALONG** page B5



CASEY WAIT ILLUSTRATION

By CASEY WAIT

TURNERS FALLS – Hello dear readers and welcome to my new monthly column, *Your Sick Friend!* Who is this sick friend, you ask? My name is Casey Wait. I’ve lived in Turners Falls for four years, and have been many people’s “sick friend” for... basically my whole life!

I was born with a rare genetic disorder called Hypermobile Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome (hEDS), a condition that affects the way my body makes connective tissue. Because the entire body is made up of connective tissue, this issue impacts many aspects of my bodily functioning. It took me nearly 30 years to get a diagnosis that

explained the many debilitating symptoms I have experienced since childhood. I was finally diagnosed this past October, after an exhausting year of seeing 12 specialists, getting many invasive procedures and tests, and doing a huge amount of research and self-advocacy.

There is no cure for hEDS, and very few reliable treatment options. I live with a lot of pain and worsening mobility. At 30 years old, I need a cane or walker to get around in the world. I wear braces around my shoulders, hips, and wrists to stop my joints from sliding out of place. I have a personal care attendant who helps me cook, dress, and bathe, and I take nearly 20 pills a day to function at all. I am entirely

financially supported by my partner and our housemate, as I had to stop working last year. I am an artist who can no longer draw because of the pain in my hands. I spend most of my days in bed, often dealing with more than one symptom.

And I have a wonderful life. Not despite all of this, but amongst it and because of it.

Becoming gradually more disabled over the course of my teens and 20s led me to my political home in Disability Justice. As Wikipedia explains it: “Disability justice is a framework that examines disability and ableism as it relates to other forms of oppression and identity (race, class, gender, sexuality, see **FRIEND** page B4



MONIQUE BRULE PHOTO

More ice, more sky: Barton Cove, frozen over this week.

Pet of the Week



C. CARMODY COLLAGE

“BIG BOY MONTY”

Big Boy Monty's background is quite a mystery. We don't know anything about this kitty since he was left in a carrier by Dakin's clinic door. Well, if someone couldn't keep him, at least they left him somewhere where he would be found and cared for.

While he's been at Dakin, he's enjoyed pets from staff and been a good boy for all his exams. He's in a good place now, but a better place would be a place he could call home. How about yours?

Change is hard for this boy. He will be very nervous when you first bring him home. You will need to set up a room with a litter box, food, and water. It will take him a few days to acclimate.

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

BOOK REVIEW

Saying Complexity Simply: Vincent Tripi's *Chrysalis*

By CHRISTOPHER SAWYER-LAUÇANNO

TURNERS FALLS – I have long admired the meticulous attention that Ed Rayher of Northfield's Swamp Press lavishes on his gorgeous, limited edition letterpress books of poetry. His paper choices, crisp typefaces, arrangement on the page, use of color (and often illustration) are hallmarks of his dedicated craftsmanship. He is a master printer and designer, as well as a fine poet himself.

Rayher also chooses to publish poets who have something to say and know how to say it.

Case in point: *Chrysalis* by Vincent Tripi, edited by Jeannie Martin and John Martone, a unique “book” consisting of 65 haiku printed on 3x5 Superfine cardstock and encased in a cork enclosure with a butterfly woodcut by Hyde Meissner.

Tripi was one of the most accomplished haiku poets of our time. According to the editors, when Tripi died in August 2020, he left behind several thousand haiku poems, typed on 3x5 cards. The choice, therefore, to print this selection on cardstock is not only fitting but a way to honor the poet and his method of composition.

I first came across Tripi's poems in the mid-1990s when my friend Raffael de Gruttola, then president of the Haiku Society of America, gave me a copy of *Haiku Moment: An Anthology of Contemporary North American Haiku*. Both had poems included. Both poets stood out as remarkable masters of this very difficult form.

And the poems in *Chrysalis*, written over about a decade, reveal that Tripi only got better, in part because he freed himself, unlike many English-language practitioners, from trying to make his quintessentially American versions sound like precious mistranslations from Japanese, where the form originated.

He largely abandoned the traditional three-line 5-7-5 syllable



Chrysalis is a “book” consisting of 65 haiku printed on cards.

count yet adhered to the traditional ethos of saying much and suggesting even more in just a few words. He also largely followed the emphasis on nature as a metaphoric entry into a more philosophical or spiritual awakening.

Tripi commented on how he sees haiku functioning in his introduction to his earlier Swamp Press collection *to what none of us knows*: “What is it about haiku that makes it both a question and an answer? It answers us each & every time we begin to question ourselves... to question life. It's a small poem. It's a small door. It's a small key and a small lock.”

Indeed, Tripi's poems often imply both questions and answers. Here, arranged like water cascading over the Turners Falls dam, is one of his gems with a definitive answer to an impossible question:

Roar
of
the
falls
what
I
don't
know
i
know

Or as he also wrote in his earlier introduction: “One seeks for resolution as the beetle seeks the water. Is the water. The search for answers is as futile as the search for haiku. The search ends with the searcher. It ends with the current.”

Mystery, for Tripi, should remain. Should be.

A cloud where millions
of clouds have been before
gone

“All I can say,” wrote Tripi, “is that poems are my special way of questioning the reader, of challenging their consciousness, of reaching out for help to find the bottom.”

His method of challenging his readers is truly artful, a skill rare among American haiku poets: complexity in the guise of simplicity. He was masterful at writing in simple words the innermost core of emotions, apprehensions, insights, and awe.

Apparently Swamp Press has plans to publish additional collections, which is very good news. It will help fulfill his wish:

Me too
the wish to be remembered
autumn colours

MOVIE REVIEW

Mahalia (Lifetime, 2021)

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – A while back, this movie about Gospel singer Mahalia Jackson played in the Lifetime TV network, with Danielle Jackson starring as Mahalia. This woman sang at John F. Kennedy's inaugural ball and supported the Civil Rights movement with her voice, including singing alongside Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at the March on Washington in 1963.

I watched it online. The beginning of it consists of her singing as a kid – her aunt advises her that her singing will take her far, if she works hard at it. Then we see her try and earn a little bit of a living at it. A couple of times, she discovers the sound and the style of her singing aren't always to people's liking.

We also get a portrait of a woman of deep faith, who is willing to

open her home to feed people who are hungry, like her aunt did. During such a time, a person said to her, “I believe you will be famous, and walk with kings and queens.”

I know her aunt's words were advice to her. But like the “kings and queens” line, it would seem to be a bit of foresight about her life. However, she did follow her aunt's advice, and found an audience that enjoyed her. She also managed to get in a studio to record at a time when I am sure it wasn't easy to do that.

Mahalia sang at Carnegie Hall, which anyone then or now would see as a big deal. At one of the times when she didn't get an audience that enjoyed her, she found a lifelong friend and piano player to play for her. She got to be so successful she could get a nice house in a nice neighborhood – but not without the problem of it being vandalized.



Mahalia Jackson.

The film shows her meeting Dr. King, and talking about matters of faith with the man. Of course, it shows a re-creation of her performing at the March I mentioned.

In case it hasn't occurred to anyone, it would appear that line about “Kings and Queens” foretold this particular event happening with her involved. That is my interpretation of this line, and her doing this.

You can decide for yourself by watching the film. This woman's hard work did indeed lead her to go far with her singing.

Senior Center Activities FEBRUARY 21 THROUGH 25

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 2/21

Closed (Presidents Day)

Tuesday 2/22

9 a.m. Good for YOU

10 a.m. Line Dancing

Wednesday 2/23

9 a.m. Strength & Conditioning

10 a.m. New Chair Yoga

12:30 p.m. Bingo

Thursday 2/24

9 a.m. Re-Store & Re-Emerge

10 a.m. Stretch & Balance

Friday 2/25

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 2/21

10:15 a.m. Aerobics

11 a.m. Chair Exercise

1 p.m. Knitting & Needlecrafts Circle

Tuesday 2/22

12 p.m. Tuesday Morning Knitters

1 p.m. Chair Yoga

3 p.m. Tai Chi

Wednesday 2/23

10:15 a.m. Aerobics

11 a.m. Chair Exercise

1 p.m. Bingo

4 p.m. Mat Yoga

Thursday 2/24

1 p.m. Cards & Games

Friday 2/25

12 p.m. AAPP Tax Prep

by Appointment

LEVERETT

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.

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OUT OF THE PARK

FEBRUARY 2022

By JON DOBOSZ



UNITY PARK – Hello again everyone! We hope you are doing well in these last few weeks of Old Man Winter. We are gearing up for our spring programs and will be distributing that information in the next few days. In the meantime, we have a sneak peak of what we have in store.

One of the first signs of spring is our annual **Peter Cottontail's EGGstravaganza**. As you may recall, the last couple of years have been a little different. However, this year we are tentatively planning to return to our traditional in-person hunt at Unity Park. We still need to coordinate with Peter Cottontail to gauge his comfort level, but no matter the format, please note that we will be holding an EGGstravaganza event on Saturday, April 16. We'll be sure to get the word out as soon as we confirm the details with Mr. Cottontail.

A couple of our other traditional Spring programs, **Tee Ball and Rookie Baseball**, will begin Saturday, April 23. Tee Ball and Rookie Baseball are held Saturday mornings, and conclude in early June. Tee Ball is available for kids in grades K through 2, with Rookie Ball for kids in grades 3 and 4. Rookie ball is a coach-pitch program and has proven to be a solid stepping stone to the Newt Guilbault Little League.

Not being "just for kids," MPRD also offers an **Adult Co-ed Softball League** that goes from May through August. The league is an American Softball Association-sanctioned league, with games held Monday and Thursday evenings at Unity Park. Those interested in putting a team together, or getting on the individual player list, should contact MPRD soon!

While the temperatures may be getting a little milder here and there, please note that we still have a few remaining sessions of **Open Swim**. Be sure to get your last little bit of pool time at the Turners Falls High School Pool on Tuesday and Friday evenings from now until March 11. Family Swim is held from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., with Adult Lap Swim from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.

That's about it from here. If you want to stay on top of our programs and services, be sure to log on to montagueparksrec.com, or view our Facebook page. You can also pick up copies of our spring brochure at the Unity Park Fieldhouse, the Montague Libraries, and at Montague Town Hall.

Stay warm, stay active, and enjoy the remainder of your winter!

Jon Dobosz is the director of parks and recreation for the town of Montague.

Montague Community Television News

Meetings & Concerts...

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

TURNERS FALLS – We have both the Gill and Montague select-board meetings up this week, as well as the Franklin County Varsity Sports Report. And continuing with the series of performances from last summer's music festival, *Barbès in the Woods*, we have newly shared footage from "Kaleta with Super Yamba Band."

All MCTV videos are available on our Vimeo page, which can be found linked to the website, montaguevtv.org, under the tab "Videos." All community members are welcome to submit their videos to be aired on Channel 17, as well as featured on the Vimeo page.

MCTV is always available to assist in local video production as well. Cameras, tripods, and lighting equipment are available for check-

out, and filming and editing assistance can be provided.

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 infomontaguevtv@gmail.com.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Fire & Ice; Parking Lot Crashes; Walking With Hoods On; Stolen Plate; Sunken Pothole; Unneighborly Annoyances

Monday, 2/7

8:46 a.m. Following a traffic stop on Seventh Street, a 54-year-old Turners Falls woman was arrested on a default warrant.

9:28 a.m. Some kind of construction causing traffic issues near the Canal Road bridge. Officer advising all work is stopped until detail officers arrive.

3:58 p.m. Caller reports that she backed into another vehicle at Sheffield Elementary School. She gave the other driver her information, but reports that the other driver started threatening her and then drove off. Caller at station speaking with an officer and showing the damage. Officer spoke with other driver, who stated there must have been a miscommunication and no threats were made.

7:50 p.m. Following a vehicle stop in the Second Street alley, a 50-year-old Turners Falls woman was arrested on a default warrant and also charged with operating a vehicle with a suspended license.

9:13 p.m. Caller reports seeing flames near the Turners Falls Road-Millers Falls Road split; stated that they are close to a garage. Shelburne Control advised; TFFD requesting officer to respond. Officer advises that there was a fire outside in some brush and debris and no one is home.

9:49 p.m. Officer advises roads are getting slippery. DPW advised.

Tuesday, 2/8
12:18 a.m. 911 call from a driver who states he was sleeping in his truck on Industrial Boulevard when a car slid on the ice into the trailer of his truck. Caller states he is fine; operator of other car complaining of some head pain. Control contacted to

dispatch TFFD. Officer requesting tow.

1:17 a.m. Caller states his neighbor is harassing him because the caller doesn't like smoking and drugs. Caller states this is an ongoing issue and the police were there last night for this same thing. Caller states that when his neighbor gets up to go out for his cigarette, he bangs on the wall and it wakes the caller up. Caller also states he is deaf and not able to hear the buzzer to let officers in. Advised of complaint.

8:58 a.m. Caller from Second Street would like on record that his brother's black BMX bike was stolen yesterday morning. Brother does not want to report it; will call back if they decide to speak with an officer.

6:27 p.m. Caller requesting assistance from officers getting his dog out of the canal; states that the dog is drowning. While caller was on the line, the dog was able to get out of the water.

Wednesday, 2/9
1:21 a.m. Caller from Third Street states that the people upstairs are being loud again and just woke him up; it sounds like they are throwing a party or something. Officer listened for a while; no sounds coming from that apartment at all.

4:26 a.m. Caller reporting accident in parking lot at Lightlife Foods; one car was backing out and hit another car. Investigated.

10:54 a.m. Caller from Fourth Street states that four males are walking with hoods on and believes they are "on dope." Referred to an officer.

1:03 p.m. Anonymous report of sidewalk in front of a business on Millers Falls Road not being shoveled or having ice removed. Officer spoke with

business owner, who will take care of the sidewalk.

4:41 p.m. Caller from Canada reporting that she is being threatened and harassed by a male party from whom she and her brother purchased a business. Advised of options.

4:51 p.m. Walk-in reporting a large pothole on Turners Falls Road; stated it is dangerous and will cause major damage. DPW advised.

5:10 p.m. Caller reporting that people have been in and out of a Fourth Street location all day; suspects drug activity. Referred to an officer.

6:52 p.m. Report of female party shoplifting from Food City; requesting officer to view footage. Officer advises that they were unable to identify the suspect from the footage. They will be on the lookout in the area.

Thursday, 2/10
8:31 a.m. Caller from Central Street states that when she came out to her vehicle this morning, the rear license plate had been stolen. Report taken; plate entered as stolen.

11:09 a.m. Caller states that the walk/don't walk signals at the intersection of Avenue A and Seventh Street are not working. DPW notified.

9:51 p.m. Caller states that the company across Millers Falls Road is playing music very loudly; ongoing issue. Caller states her husband went to speak with people in the office today and was told that office staff would speak with night shift, but it is still ongoing tonight and seems louder than normal. Referred to an officer.

10:19 p.m. 911 caller states she hit some black ice and her car slid into a ditch in Shelburne. No injuries. Call transferred to Shelburne Control.

Friday, 2/11
4:35 p.m. Party from Montague Street into station to report that the manhole cover in front of his house has dropped approximately six inches and the road around it is all cracking; concerned about a sinkhole. Party states same thing happened last year and sewer backed up into his house. Party states he has called DPW multiple

times with no response. Officer advises it is a little sunken; there is a large amount of water coming off the fields. DPW contacted; will take a ride and check it out.

5:45 p.m. 911 caller reporting car vs. deer on Turners Falls Road. Vehicle moved into driveway. Dead deer on property next to accident scene. Investigated.

8:35 p.m. Caller from Eighth Avenue states that a female has been harassing her and started swinging at her today while she was walking on the street. Advised of options.

Saturday, 2/12
3 a.m. Caller from Third Street reporting loud and disturbing noise from neighboring apartment; also states people are going up and down the stairs frequently. Officer spoke to third-floor tenant, who advised that she did get into an argument over the phone. No further issues.

1:31 p.m. Caller states that people are riding around the Randall Wood Drive neighborhood on go karts and dirt bikes. Juveniles located and advised of complaint.

6:56 p.m. Caller reporting someone setting off firecrackers on G Street; believes it is the house that is currently having a fire and gathering. Officer advised he spoke with the people at the fire and they stated they were all done.

9:48 p.m. Caller reporting loose dog in watershed area of Main Street that appears to be injured. Officer advises dog does not have any tags. Caller is following officers to the shelter with the dog.

Sunday, 2/13
2:29 a.m. Caller reports a truck being loud and possibly racing in Millers Falls near the bar and the railroad tracks. Officer advises he was in the area and did not observe anything of that nature.

11:30 a.m. Caller from East Main Street reports someone smeared dog feces all over her car.

7:53 p.m. Caller reporting she received a spam call from a male party claiming to be from the FBI. She hung up on him and did not provide any information. Advised to block the phone number.

47 episodes are now available!

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Backfiring Car; Flash of Light; People Who Should Not Be There

Saturday, 1/1

11:36 a.m. Missing tan pitbull mix on Setback Lane.

2:38 p.m. Caller from the French King Highway reported his bumper was hit by another car. The drivers exchanged words. Video to be reviewed before report assigned.

7:27 p.m. Montague dispatch advises they had a caller who believes their husband is on the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge and is a suicide threat.

Sunday, 1/2

5:12 p.m. Disabled motor vehicle at the Gill Mill. Radiator hose broke; driver to call AAA. No hazard.

5:58 p.m. Assisted EMS with Main Road medical emergency.

Tuesday, 1/4

5:51 p.m. Alarm at a building on the French King Highway. Called alarm company, no answer.

Wednesday, 1/5

3:39 p.m. Caller from West Gill Road reporting a suspicious white SUV that came up her driveway and then left quickly upon seeing her. House is pending sale.

3:46 p.m. Medical emergency on West Gill Road.

Thursday, 1/6

9:11 a.m. Welfare check on Main Road.

5:49 p.m. Pushed vehicle with a dead battery into Factory Hollow rest area. Owner to call AAA. Courtesy transport.

6:46 p.m. Welfare check and EMS assistance on Franklin Road.

Friday, 1/7

11:01 a.m. Caller from the French King Highway reports a vehicle driving by her residence last two evenings between 9 and 11 p.m., backfiring as it drove by.

11:28 a.m. Removed unwanted subject from property on Franklin Road.

3:43 p.m. FedEx driver states upper Mountain Road is slippery. DPW advised.

Saturday, 1/8

12:15 p.m. Trespassing complaint received on Main Road.

1 p.m. Loose dog on Main Road attacked another dog. ACO advised.

Sunday, 1/9

5:40 p.m. Assisted Erving PD with welfare check on party on the French King Bridge. Subject taken into custody by Erving PD for mental health evaluation.

Monday, 1/10

8:14 a.m. Assisted resident on Main Road with juvenile issues.

12:13 p.m. Medical emergency on West Gill Road.

5:55 p.m. Disabled motor vehicle on the French King Highway.

6:56 p.m. Medical emergency on Boyle Road.

Tuesday, 1/11

9:16 a.m. Checked sleeping person in vehicle on the French King Highway. All OK.

11:10 a.m. Disabled motor vehicle on the French King Highway and Riverview Drive.

4:01 p.m. Black Honda reported driving erratically at West Gill and Main roads.

4:13 p.m. Riverview Drive caller states someone got their credit card number.

4:26 p.m. Report from South Cross Road of three loose dark brown horses with no bridles. Horses located and returned home.

Wednesday, 1/12

5:32 a.m. Disabled Camry on Lamplighter Way.

9:43 a.m. Caller from the French King Highway reporting more gunshots or car backfires again last night after 10 p.m.

12 noon. Caller from the French King Highway reports a dark blue SUV tailgating and driving aggressively.

3:58 p.m. Caller from Walnut Street reported a prior dog attack.

4:20 p.m. Caller from the French King Highway advises a Mercedes has been in his parking lot for over a day, and he's concerned due to the restaurant's proximity to the Bridge.

7:05 p.m. Assisted Bernardston PD with disturbance on Church Street.

7:37 p.m. Served a summons on Main Road.

9:12 p.m. Medical emergency on Boyle Road.

Friday, 1/14

8:20 p.m. Caller from Main Road states that there are people who should not be there.

11:27 p.m. Female party on Main Road reports she struck a deer.

Saturday, 1/15

4:29 a.m. Fire alarm chirping on Mountain Road. No smoke or flames.

10:36 a.m. Single vehicle crash reported at Hoe Shop and Bascom roads. No injury.

5:26 p.m. Car hit a deer on West Gill Road. Deer injured.

Sunday, 1/16

10:14 a.m. Checked on a vehicle parked on the Gill side of the French King Bridge. Operator

using their phone.

6:31 p.m. Driver stuck on Pisgah Mountain Road.

Monday, 1/17

6:31 a.m. There was a flash of light and power went out on Main Road.

7:05 a.m. Report of a tree and wires down blocking River Road.

Thursday, 1/20

6:21 a.m. Vehicle lock-out on the French King Highway. Entry gained.

9:13 a.m. Caller reports a blue sedan passing multiple vehicles in a no-passing zone with oncoming traffic on the French King Highway in Erving.

Friday, 1/21

8:34 a.m. Past theft from farm reported from Maple Way.

Saturday, 1/22

10:41 a.m. Suspicious vehicle on French King Bridge.

12:46 p.m. Animal complaint on River Road.

6:19 p.m. Carbon monoxide hazard reported on Riverview Drive.

Monday, 1/24

5:05 p.m. French King Highway caller asked that a vehicle in the parking lot be removed that has been there all day. Not a hazard.

6:36 p.m. Responded to West Gill Road to keep the peace.

Tuesday, 1/25

5:47 p.m. Out with a death notification on Dole Road.

Wednesday, 1/26

10:01 a.m. Served a summons.

4:53 p.m. Two-car accident with injuries on Barney Hale Road.

Saturday, 1/29

10:55 a.m. Assisted funeral procession on the French King Highway and Main Road.

12:07 p.m. Medical emergency on West Gill Road.

9:12 p.m. Medical emergency on Boyle Road.

Sunday, 1/30

12:36 a.m. Carbon monoxide alarms activated at a Main Road residence.

Monday, 1/31

10:52 a.m. Medical emergency on Mountain Road.

11:29 a.m. Caller from South Cross Road states they were assaulted. Under investigation.

12 noon. Boyle Road caller says a silver Dodge pickup has been parked in the "middle of the fork" past her house for a couple of days.

1:52 p.m. 911 call from Main Road. Denied the need for any services.

FRIEND from page B1 citizenship, incarceration, size, etc.).... Disability justice also acknowledges that 'ableism helps make racism, christian supremacy, sexism, and queer- and transphobia possible' and that all those systems of oppression are intertwined."

Embracing my ever-evolving disabled, nonbinary, queer identity has been more empowering and healing than any of the odd treatments that I've tried or had suggested to me. (Ever heard of a coffee enema? No thank you!) Through online disability communities, I've met my best friends - people who keep me alive, and who I've helped keep alive, too.

My disabled friends and I swap medical horror stories, help each other prepare for doctors' appointments, coordinate care for friends in crisis (even ones who live halfway across the world), share money from our very small fixed incomes to keep friends housed, and celebrate birthdays, engagements, and long-fought-for diagnoses.

Friends of mine have a fabulous Health Justice podcast called Death Panel, and the signoff for every show has become something of a mantra for our community: "Medicare for All Now, Solidarity Forever, Stay Alive Another Week."

These words have never meant more to me than they have in the last three years. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to hit my community hard. Being disabled and

loving disabled people is very scary in a pandemic, and would be under any circumstances! But in the United States, where healthcare is a for-profit industry and where anyone who is not healthy, white, straight, cisgendered, male, and wealthy is essentially disposable, "staying alive another week" is not a given.

Over the course of the pandemic, many hospitals, local ones included, have been over capacity. This often leads to medical triage - choosing to treat patients thought to have the highest likelihood of survival. If I walk into an ER with severe COVID-19, I fear being marked as "not worth treating" simply because I use a walker.

I decided to write this column after a friend said: "The only time you hear pundits, government officials, and politicians talk about disabled people anymore is when they're assuring everyone else that 'it's only the already sick people who are dying.'" And she's right! Rochelle Walensky, head of the CDC, actually used the word "encouraging" to describe COVID deaths occurring mostly among vaccinated people with preexisting conditions. On February 5, the New York Times buried a front-page headline that said "900,000 Dead, But Many Americans Move On" under Olympics news - and a story about how well the economy is doing despite Omicron.

I am writing this column because

I am not moving on. My friends are dying, becoming more disabled, and living in fear for their lives every day this pandemic rages on. I'm writing this column so that every time you, dear reader, see a headline or hear a talking head invoke the meaninglessness of disabled death, you can think of me, Your Sick Friend - not some abstract, silent sacrifice to the economy and "the new normal," but a human being with a full life and people who love me. I am writing this column so that people can hear directly from someone with several pre-existing conditions and know that my life, and the lives of others like me, matter and are worthy of protection.

A tenet of Disability Justice is the phrase "Nothing About Us, Without Us," so here I am - a sick person here to talk about sickness! Navigating the health system, changing abilities, and finding creative ways to connect to the world when you have to stay home or in bed all day is pretty much my specialty.

This column will be a monthly check-in where I give a window into what it's like to be disabled, get medical care, and have a social life against the backdrop of COVID-19. I'll also share wisdom I've gained from my sick and disabled friends that could help us all get out of this crisis alive!

Until next time -

Your Sick Friend



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WEST ALONG from page B1

at the Narrows, below our house. I had rowed over these waters, poked around in the marsh near the island that would later be home to the first bald eagles to return to the river. The three of us had gone out in the rowboat on a summer Sunday in August to visit the Bear's Den, the Lily Pond hole, and the little sandy island in the middle of the Cove, home to a birch tree or two.

But now, all was locked in ice. Once across, we skated from ice fisherman to ice fisherman, my father seeming to know everyone, although I can't be sure now whether he knew them or not, since he talked to anyone and everyone so easily! But it didn't really matter, everybody was eager to talk about the ice, their luck, and the weather. We explored the Bear's Den on skates this time, instead of in the rowboat.

There was a blazing fire in the middle of the cove right near the little birch tree island. We stopped there to warm up and chat some more, while other skaters criss-crossed the cove or played hockey.

The ice that day was three feet thick, but we knew better than to try to continue up the river through the Narrows. Just the thought of the treacherous currents there, and the 140-foot deep water, was enough to make you want to rush back to the shore and walk home.

My father claimed to have skated up the river from Turners to his father's camp, one time before the War. The camp was situated on the stretch called the Horse Race, just below the French King Bridge. We sort of wanted to believe him, but didn't care to try it out just that Sunday!

There was a period of time when the river did not freeze. The nuclear plant upstream at Vernon used to

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release heated water from the reactors, and although such releases were supposedly tightly restricted, enough of that warm water kept the river open all winter. To think that some of us have outlived that nuclear plant! The plant closed years ago, and the river once again freezes over, has come full circle, back to the freezing and thawing cycle.

So now, more than 60 years have passed since the three of us stepped down that ramp onto the ice. Out

there on that open frozen expanse we had a 360-degree view of our little world of that time. From horizon to horizon I could sense the limits of the world I knew. There was our house at the top of the Narrows where my mother waited, reading a book in her cozy parlor. Just to my north was the home of my grandparents upriver on the Millers. Across the frozen river lay the village where my father and mother worked, the school on the hill, the Farren Hos-

pital on the bank of the river where so many of us were born, my grandparents' home at Second and L.

All of our world laid out within a mile or two from where we stood in the middle of the ice, in the middle of the river. Beneath our feet were the hearth stones of a Native village hidden far below the three feet of ice, ten feet of water. The village at Peskeompskut had been inhabited for 10,000 years, until a fateful day in 1676.

But that story I was not to learn until much, much later.

What we did know that afternoon was that the three of us, on our way home at the end of a wonderful day in our lives, felt we had wings on our feet. Cold and tired we glided back across to the village in the late afternoon. The steeples of St. Mary's, St. Anne's, and Our Lady of Czestochowa were outlined against the reddening sky of a winter sunset.



HEARTFELT from page B1

seed of temptation and not the unfortunately-maligned apple.

By 1300 BC, apple orchards were growing in Egypt along the Nile, and 500 years later the ancient Greeks were practicing grafting techniques. Ancient Romans were planting apples in Britain in 200 BC, and by the 1500s and 1600s, Spaniards had introduced apples to Mexico and South America. There are now 7,500 varieties of apples grown around the world.

The first apples in North America came from England with the Pilgrims, who planted them in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. There are about 2,500 varieties grown in the US, with Washington state the number-one producer of commercial apples.

Your humble author would like to share that during my teens in the late 1970s, I left home with a long-haired hippie named Lion and traveled north from Los Angeles to Wash-

ington's Okanogan Valley, along the Canadian border, where we picked apples at several different orchards for a couple of seasons.

The pay at the time was anywhere from five to eight dollars per wooden bin, which measured three feet by three feet by three feet. On my best day I was able to fill maybe two bins while Lion, a fast picker and the only reason they hired me, had the best daily average of seven bins. It was hard work and I sometimes opted to work in the sorting shed or collecting drops in the field rather than as a picker.

Most fun of all was the loveable cast of characters from around the world who came to pick. Living in the orchard under trees, in tents or cars, sometimes lugging out with a small cabin, I learned to cook for a crowd on an ancient wood cookstove while listening to stories about travelers "along the gringo trail," which is both a 1977 book about backpacking in South America and a description of an uncomplicated hippie lifestyle in Cen-

tral or South America.

But I digress. Back to apples. I didn't know about different varieties; as a kid, the choices were red, green, or yellow. It wasn't until in my later teens when I was a picker that I became aware of many more varieties.

Today I love the different types of apples that can be found in this area, and the existence of orchards where I can even pick my own. Pink Lady, Gala, Fuji, McIntosh and my fav, Honeycrisp, offer different textures and flavors that can be eaten off the core, baked in pies, roasted, fried, and caramelized.

My favorite thing to do with a windfall of apples is to make applesauce. And by make, I mean washing and dumping a pile of apples into my largest pot, adding about a cup of water, bringing it to a boil, and leaving it there until it turns to mush. That's fruit, skins, seeds, and even sometimes stems in there. I use a potato masher to squish it all down into the pot, and then I give it a good whirl in my food mill over a big ceramic bowl.

All the skins and seeds will be left inside the mill, while your bowl will be full of lovely, unsweetened applesauce. You can go ahead and hot water-can it (a peck of apples will make enough for six pint jars) or put it in the refrigerator covered with a lid, but it must be consumed pretty quickly once opened.

If the fruit is sweet enough, you may not need to add sweetener, but the last batch I made had some pretty sour apples so I did add about a half cup of honey to counter that. Any type of sugar or maple syrup can also be used to sweeten your applesauce. I also spontaneously dashed in some cranberry bitters and got a lovely pink hue. Put one cinnamon stick inside each jar before closing them up.

Whatever your favorite things to do with apples, I leave you now with some interesting facts: the world's largest apple peel was created in 1976 in Rochester, New York by a 16-year-old girl who grew up to manage an apple tree nursery (it was 172 feet, 4 inches long); the



Putting apples through a food mill, which sorts seeds and skin from pulp.

largest recorded apple picked weighed three pounds; and the longest living apple tree, planted in 1647 by Peter Stuyvesant in his Manhattan orchard, was still bearing fruit when it was struck by a derailed train in 1866.

Trouble lives in Greenfield with Wifey and Mama Catt Elliott and manages the office part-time for a nearby farm. She loves to talk, read, write, garden/farm, cook, and make art.



Two local apples in the author's kitchen.

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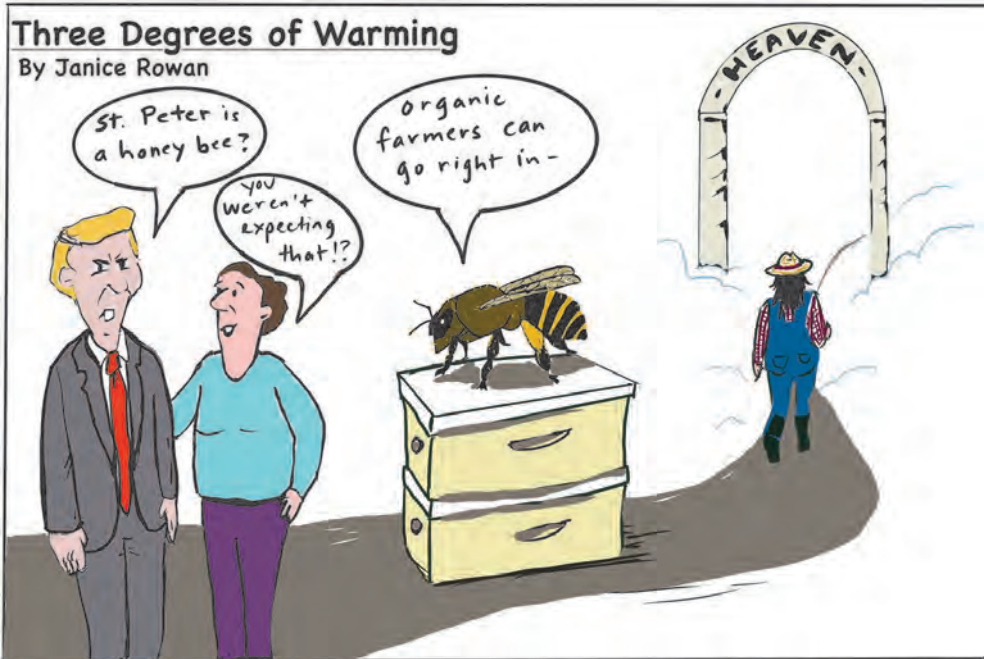
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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



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

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Storypalooza 3: Danger!* \$ 8 p.m.
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *The Pangeans*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19

Pioneer Valley Brewing, Turners Falls: *Pioneer Valley String Band*. 6 p.m.
Mount Toby Friends Meetinghouse, Leverett: *Sara Thomson*. \$ 7:30 p.m.
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Guy Ferrari, Lucy, Fake Sisters, The Musical Chairs*. \$ 8 p.m.

Hutghi's at the Nook, Westfield: *PWRUP, Knock Over City, Cheap City, Greenclub*. \$ 8 p.m.

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

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 20

10 Forward, Greenfield: Movie night, *Killer of Sheep* (1977), and three shorts. \$ 6 p.m.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24

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

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Rubblebucket, Home Body*. \$ 9 p.m.
Tree House Brewing, South Deerfield: *Iron & Wine*. \$ 7 p.m.
Palladium, Worcester: *Cannibal Corpse, Whitechapel, Revocation*, more. \$ 6:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26

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

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Professor Caveman, Valley Gals, Phroeggs*. \$ 8 p.m.

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

Shutesbury Athletic Club: *The Diamondstones*. 8 p.m.

Academy of Music, Northampton: *Bruce Cockburn*. \$ 8 p.m.

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

TUESDAY, MARCH 1

Academy of Music, Northampton: *Ladysmith Black Mambazo*. \$ 8 p.m.

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

THURSDAY, MARCH 3

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Corsano/Baldwin/Gelineau trio, Clear Falls, Meginsky/Tonne duo*. \$ 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *The Songs of Dolly Parton* feat *Kris Delmhorst, Zara Bode, Tracy Grammer* and more. \$ 7 p.m.

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

FRIDAY, MARCH 4

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Corsano/Flaherty Duo, Stella Silbert,*

Wednesday Knudsen, DJ 45 HZ. \$ 8 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Sasami, Zulu, Dutch Experts*. \$ 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

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Spectre Flux, Death Spiral, Chris Wardlaw*. \$ 6:30 p.m.

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

TUESDAY, MARCH 8

Treehouse Brewing, Deerfield: *Warren Haynes*. \$ 7 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9

Treehouse Brewing, Deerfield: *Warren Haynes*. \$ 7 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 10

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

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

FRIDAY, MARCH 11

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Patch Productions presents *The Phantom of the Opera*. \$ 7 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *The Gaslight Tinkers*. \$ 8 p.m.

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

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

SATURDAY, MARCH 12

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Patch Productions presents *The Phantom of the Opera*. \$ 3 and 7 p.m.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: Movie with live soundtrack, *The Arrival* (1983) with music by *The Emphyreans*. \$ 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

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Kaleta & Super Yamba Band*. \$ 8 p.m.

Academy of Music, Northampton: *The Psychedelic Furs, Royston Langford*. \$ 8 p.m.

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, Northampton: *Henry Rollins*. \$ 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, MARCH 20

Four Star Farms, Northfield: *Rosie Porter and the Neon*

Moons. 3 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Megan Burtt*. 9 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 24

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



Top: Charles Burnett's revered 1977 film *Killer of Sheep* screens at 10 Forward this Saturday. Bottom: *Rubblebucket* return to Franklin County for a two-night run at Hawks & Reed next Thursday and Friday. *Carinae* and *Home Body* open.

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

FRIDAY, MARCH 25

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

SATURDAY, MARCH 26

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

Treehouse Brewing, Deerfield: *M. Ward*. \$ 7 p.m.

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

TUESDAY, MARCH 29

Palladium, Worcester: *Obituary, Gruesome, 200 Stab Wounds*. \$ 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, APRIL 1

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

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Bella's Bartok*. \$ 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 2

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

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

SUNDAY, APRIL 3

Parlor Room, Northampton: *Jill Sobule*. \$ 7 p.m.

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

THURSDAY, APRIL 7

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

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

FRI-SUN, APRIL 8-10

Bombyx Center, Florence: *ColliderFest!* feat. *Lido Pimienta, Combo Chimbita, Les Filles de*

Illighadad, Alash Ensemble, and Garth Stevenson. \$ See www.bombyx.live/colliderfest for more information.

FRIDAY, APRIL 8

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *The Suitcase Junket, Philip B. Prince*. \$ 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 9

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Start Making Sense, Talking Heads* tribute. \$ 8 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *Kali Malone, Stephen O'Malley*. \$ 7 p.m.

Academy of Music, Northampton: *Cowboy Junkies*. \$ 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, APRIL 14

Bombyx Center, Florence: *Club d'Elf* with *John Medeski*. \$ 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, APRIL 15

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Giraffes? Giraffes!* \$ 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 16

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Mad Professor*. \$ 8:30 p.m.

Parlor Room, Northampton: *Cloudbelly*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

Academy of Music, Northampton: *Godspeed You! Black Emperor*. \$ 8 p.m.

Nova Arts, Keene: *Giraffes? Giraffes!, Ava Mendoza*. \$ 7 p.m.

TUESDAY, APRIL 19

Colonial Theater, Keene: *Melissa Etheridge*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, APRIL 22

Bombyx Center, Florence: *Juana Molina*. \$ 8 p.m.

Academy of Music, Northampton: *Aimee Mann*. \$ 8 p.m.

SAT-SUN, APRIL 23-24

Franklin County Fairgrounds, Greenfield: *Mas Grass* feat. *Leon Trout, 3 The Hard Way, Rhythm Incorporated*, and many more \$. See kotvibes.com for lineup and info.

SUNDAY, APRIL 24

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Janis Ian*. \$ 8 p.m.

Iron Horse Music Hall, Northampton: *John Gorka*. \$ 7 p.m.

TUESDAY, APRIL 26

Academy of Music, Northampton: *The Zombies, Jesse Lynn Madera*. \$ 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, APRIL 28

Academy of Music, Northampton: *Hot Tuna Acoustic*. \$ 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, MAY 7

Space Ballroom, Hamden, CT: *Deerhoof, Editrix*. \$ 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, MAY 13

Calvin Theater, Northampton: *Tom Rush, Leo Kottke*. \$ 7 p.m.

FRI-SUN, MAY 13-15

Franklin County Fairgrounds, Greenfield: *Peaks & Valleys Music and Arts Festival* feat. *Soul Keys, Carissa Angelo, Sylvia Pearl, Wild Weeds* and many more \$. See kotvibes.com for lineup and info.

MONDAY, MAY 16

Gateway City Arts, Holyoke: *Battles*. \$ 8 p.m.

THURS-SUN, MAY 19-22

Nova Arts, Keene: *The Thing in the Spring* feat. *Sammus, Lee Ranaldo, Nat Baldwin & Stella Silbert, Jeff Parker, Myriam Gendron, Kimaya Diggs, Tashi Dorji, The Huntress and the Holder of Hands* and many more \$. See novaarts.org for lineup and information.

FRIDAY, MAY 20

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *Laraaji: Celestial Sound Immersion*. \$ 7 p.m.

SATURDAY, MAY 21

Palladium, Worcester: *Turnstile, Citizen, Ceremony, Ekulu, Truth Cult*. \$ 7 p.m.

FRI-SUN, MAY 27-29

MASS MoCA, North Adams: *Solid Sound Festival* feat. *Wilco, Bonnie "Prince" Billy, Terry Allen, Sylvan Esso, Iceage, Eleventh Dream Day, Sun Ra Arkestra, Nels Cline* and many more \$. See solidsoundfestival.com for lineup and info.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *NRBQ*. \$ 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, JUNE 10

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

FRI-SUN, JUNE 24-26

Franklin County Fairgrounds, Greenfield: *Green River Festival* feat. *Lake Street Dive, Father John Misty, Galactic, Guster, Waxahatchee, Hiss Golden Messenger, Allison Russell* and many more \$. See greenriverfestival.com for lineup and info.

Northlands, Swanzey NH: *Northlands Music & Arts Festival* feat. *Joe Russo's Almost Dead, Lotus, Twiddle, Lettuce, Melvin Seals, Yonder Mountain String Band* and many more. See northlandslive.com for lineup and information.

FRIDAY, JULY 8

MASS MoCA, North Adams: *The Roots*. \$ 8 p.m.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 16

Look Park, Northampton: *Elvis Costello & The Imposters, Nick Lowe & Los Straitjackets*. (Tickets on sale now.) \$ 7 p.m.

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LIFESTYLES

A Letter to the World

Dear Creators, Dear Makers of Art, Craft, Assemblage, Gardens, and Cuisine,

For many of us in COVID-times, the need to create takes on a much more significant role. It becomes a sustainer of the soul, an escape into tranquility, including a desire to be far away from news of the coronavirus variants, and the current political divide that continues to baffle the mind.

My "Bestie" gnome was created in sheer bliss, away from this outside world, during the thaw of March 2021. Tired of stitching art quilts, a switch to a three-dimensional medium was refreshing to my brain. Bestie was modeled from Sculpey Clay, and baked in the oven at 275 degrees for fifteen minutes. Emerging at thirteen inches high, her smile was intoxicating.

What's funny about Bestie is, she wanted to travel to all the outdoor spaces I love. And so began our photographic journey for one year, in all seasons. Was Bestie my secret alter ego, emerging from a lockdown, happy to engage the world again?

A traveling gnome was beautifully portrayed in the 2001 French romantic comedy *Amelie*. The movie explores the intricacies of French culture in a magical way, and its famous soundtrack by Yann Tiersen can stay in your head and linger. Perhaps this was buried in my subconscious, only to reappear as Bestie gnome, many years later.

Jan Atamian
Lake Pleasant



1

2

3



Do you recognize these locations? Answers – and more destinations – in an upcoming issue!

Text, photos,
and gnome by
JAN ATAMLIAN

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3. have drink
4. eat grub

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