

The Montague Reporter

YEAR 20 – NO. 17

also serving Erving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

\$1

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

MARCH 10, 2022

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

District Puts New Elementary Building On the Public Radar

By JEFF SINGLETON

Should the Gill-Montague Regional School District (GMRSD) consider building a new elementary school in Montague to replace the two town-owned buildings that house the elementary grades? That was the question put on the table at Monday's Montague selectboard meeting by GMRSD superintendent Brian Beck and business director Joanne Blier.

"We thought we should at least start talking about this," said Blier. "Do we want to look at a potential [major] capital project? ... We'd like to continue conversations, and do more research."

These comments followed a lengthy slide presentation during which Blier and Beck described the current needs of the buildings and the cost of addressing them. After reviewing the district's elementary school enrollment, which showed a "dip" during the pandemic but is

now "coming back," Blier showed cost estimates for necessary repairs at the two elementary school buildings – Hillcrest, which covers pre-kindergarten through first grade, and Sheffield, which includes second through fifth grades.

The estimates, made by the consulting firm PCA360, showed a combined cost of nearly \$7 million to address the two schools' core problems over a five-year period. "That's a huge amount of money to put into two of our older buildings that are overcrowded," said Blier.

Beck then described a litany of flaws at the two buildings, including "heating/cooling, flooring, ceiling, façade, and roof." He also said that Hillcrest does not have a library or sufficient storage space, and Sheffield lacks sinks in classrooms, a music room, and many other features of up-to-date elementary schools.

Blier then gave a "very rough estimate," for either a new single see **MONTAGUE** page A7

High School Sports Update: Winter's Last Three Cheers



ROBINSON PHOTO

Madison Liimatainen looks for her teammates and finds everyone well-defended last Friday as Turners Falls was eliminated by the Bernardians of St. Bernard's.

By MATT ROBINSON

TURNERS FALLS – In the span of just two nights, three teams from Franklin Tech and Turners Falls High School concluded their winter seasons. Last Thursday, March 3, the Tech girls' basketball Eagles dropped a playoff road game against the Palmer Panthers. Then on Friday, the Turners basketball

girls were upset by the Bernardians, and the hybrid Turners Falls-Tech cheer team tumbled their last routine until football season.

The 2021-22 winter sports season was very successful for the athletes from both schools. Combined, they took home two new gym banners, a conference title, a state title, and three huge trophies.

see **SPORTS** page A6

Baystate Nurses Call for More Support, Better Pay

By SARAH ROBERTSON

GREENFIELD – Around 100 people attended a virtual public forum with labor activists Wednesday night to discuss working conditions for nurses at Baystate Franklin Medical Center. Nurses engaged in contract negotiations with the hospital's parent company, Baystate Health, aired their concerns over staffing levels, inadequate pay for local nurses, and what they say are profit-minded decisions to close the mental health units at three community health centers.

"Anyone who is still working in that hospital after what we've been through is built of some pretty tough stuff," said longtime nurse Donna Stern, co-chair of the union's bargaining unit. "And I mean no disrespect to anybody who has had to leave, because it's been brutal."

The contract the Massachusetts Nurses Association (MNA) settled in 2018 with Baystate Health, after 18 months of contentious negotiations and two strikes, expired at the beginning of this year. The union hosted Wednesday's forum with

see **NURSES** page A5

Zoning Article Fails By a Vote, Amid Suspicion Of 'Strangers'

By KEITH WATERS

ERVING – An anonymous letter, titled "The Rape of Erving," was circulated in the town in advance of last Saturday's special town meeting (STM). The three-page letter compared selectboard chair Jacob Smith to Putin, made rude comments about a half dozen other town employees and elected officials, and accused the selectboard of an "infatuation with STRANGERS [sic]," evidenced by their support for public bathrooms, parks, and affordable housing.

The letter claimed in particular that Article 13 at the STM, a Planned Unit Development (PUD) amendment to the town's zoning bylaws, was intended to enable a "massive low income housing project at the old Millers Falls Paper location," and urged voters to "SAVE ERVING" by attending Saturday's meeting and voting against the PUD.

Saturday's meeting was well-attended, and about two of the meeting's three hours were taken up by discussion of Article 13, which ultimately failed by one vote.

Town assistant planner Mariah Kurtz, selectboard chair Jacob Smith, town administrator Brian Smith, and Debra Smith of the planning board contended that the PUD

see **ERVING** page A4

Montague Town Meeting Rejects Park Surveillance

By MIKE JACKSON

MONTAGUE – Town meeting members met last Thursday for a special town meeting via Zoom for a warrant of 14 articles. The meeting began with a moment of silence for town moderator Chris Collins, who died last month, and Michael Nelson was elected and sworn in as temporary moderator.

The meeting voted to give funding to the cemetery commission (Articles 2 and 3), including to rebuild a collapsing cemetery wall; to the highway department to lease a vactor truck (Article 4); to the airport commission to rehab a house on the airport (Article 5); and to parks and rec for a ride-around mower (Article 6).

The streak ended with Article 7, money for "enhanced surveillance systems" at Unity Park. "The behavior of some of our patrons seems to be taking a turn for the worse," parks and rec director Jon Dobosz explained.

"I'm generally opposed to expanding general surveillance of the population," selectboard member Matt Lord said in explanation of his earlier vote against the article.

see **REJECTS** page A8

EARTHQUAKES

Why Were We Shaking?



KOPERA PHOTO

One of the region's many extinct, northeasterly-aligned faults "daylighting" in a roadcut along North Main Street in New Salem. (Last week's earthquake did not happen along this particular fault.)

By JOE KOPERA

WENDELL – Wendell and Erving residents were startled from their dinners by a loud boom and shaking at 5:50 p.m. on Friday evening, later confirmed to be a magnitude 2.4 earthquake by the U.S. Geological Survey. This area isn't exactly known for earthquakes, so why was there one in Wendell?

To answer this question we need to delve into the planetary-scale forces and regional

geologic history that made for an exciting start to the weekend.

For over a century geologists have observed that the surface of the earth is broken up into several large pieces that we call tectonic plates. They comprise the thinnest, outermost crust of the planet's near 8,000-mile diameter. Most earthquakes tend to be concentrated along the edges of these plates. Like cracked ice on a large lake, the pieces are grinding

see **QUAKE** page A6

ANALYSIS

Representatives Needed

By JEFF SINGLETON

MONTAGUE – "We really need people to step up to the plate and have a say in how their town is run," Montague town clerk Deb Bourbeau told the Reporter this week. "A lot of people come in to my office and complain, but they actually have the opportunity to do something about it."

Bourbeau might have added that by becoming town meeting members, citizens can have a direct say

in their tax rates, their sewer rates, the future of the town's school buildings, and the reorganization of the town hall staff.

The commitment is generally three meetings per year, and few of the issues debated reflect the current national partisan divide.

But there are currently many "holes" in the representation of Montague's precincts, Bourbeau pointed out. The meeting consists of 126 members, with 21 from each

see **NEEDED** page A8

G-M SCHOOL DISTRICT

Kids Ruled Safe Enough

By MIKE JACKSON

GILL-MONTAGUE – Members of the public read prepared comments at the beginning of Tuesday's school committee meeting for and against ending the school mask mandate, but that power has been granted to the administration, and the committee did not take a vote. Superintendent Brian Beck and district nurse leader Melissa Bednarski said they plan to lift the mandate Monday, March 21.

Montague member Heather Katsoulis asked if a student can request a teacher wear a mask, and Beck said staff should try to accommodate such requests. Gill member Bill Tomb asked if a teacher can

request the same of students, and received an answer in the negative.

"We do need to make sure that students are not applying peer pressure to one another," Beck said, pointing out that some will want to protect family members.

Montague's Nick Licata said that only 51% of county residents between 5 and 11 years old are vaccinated. "I think it's too early," he said.

The committee officially passed the FY'23 budget, and approved a trip to Nature's Classroom for the Gill Elementary sixth grade.

Student representative Syna Katsoulis reported that 11th graders were running a "pie in the face fundraiser," for which students get to nominate teachers.



Billions and Billions Served

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The Montague Reporter

"The Voice of the Villages"

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Founded by
Arthur Evans Harry Brandt David Detmold
August 2002

From Above

Two weeks into the Russian state's invasion of Ukraine, the news of violence and apparent violations of international law are steadily worsening, and many are understandably frustrated and worried watching the war's slow, asymmetrical burn.

While an economic blockade makes sense as an indirect and less-escalatory way for other nations to support the Ukrainian side, sanctions very, very rarely accomplish their official goal of prompting people to rise up against their leaders. Nevertheless, sanctions are the go-to move because, as former British ambassador to the UN Jeremy Greenstock said in a 2010 interview, "there is nothing else between words and military action if you want to bring pressure upon a government."

While Russia has been attempting to "sanction-proof" its economy for a time like this, it is likely being very hard hit, and severing so many flows will negatively affect the global economy too. In the US and elsewhere, the timing of the war – just as governments are

making a concerted push to unwind or roll back the emergency welfare states they built at the outset of the pandemic – makes a dramatic and sustained downturn look likely.

This might be time to dust off those neighborhood groups and other associations of support people were forming back in the spring of 2020. Let's face it: despite the hopeful rhetoric, the pandemic has left most people more isolated and suspicious of their neighbors than before. Strong state stimulus sustained material life for many, but paradoxically, this shared experience has not fostered consensus.

If a single program – school lunch waivers – is not extended this week, it will push an estimated 3.7 million children back into poverty. This, too, is a form of economic sanctions – warfare by more polite means. Its outcome will be measurable in deaths. But just as the deaths that sanctions cause are seen as something other than war casualties, we would never count the deaths Mitch McConnell or Joe Manchin cause in terms of hospital bombings. Maybe we should.

The Best We Can: Support Our Neighbors

The Russian Empire invades Ukraine again, and this time with deeper incursion than the 2014 Russian annexation of the Crimean region. Outrage, protest, and sanctions in response have not sufficed as curtailing devices. Nevertheless, we read and listen, attend rallies, and send money.

Father Andriye Trip of the Descent of the Holy Spirit (DHS) Ukrainian Church in South Deerfield delivered a sermon that impressed me last Sunday, March 6. His demeanor was staid and poignant as one who intimately experiences the oppression of war.

How can one "lead the flock" in 2022? Prayer helps on a personal level; international assault solicits another level of response.

The parable Father Andriye cited was of a child witnessing violent religious intolerance as a prophet was burned alive before the masses. The child repeatedly spit on the flames. "What are you doing child?" the prophet asked.

In reply, the child claimed he was doing "the best he could."

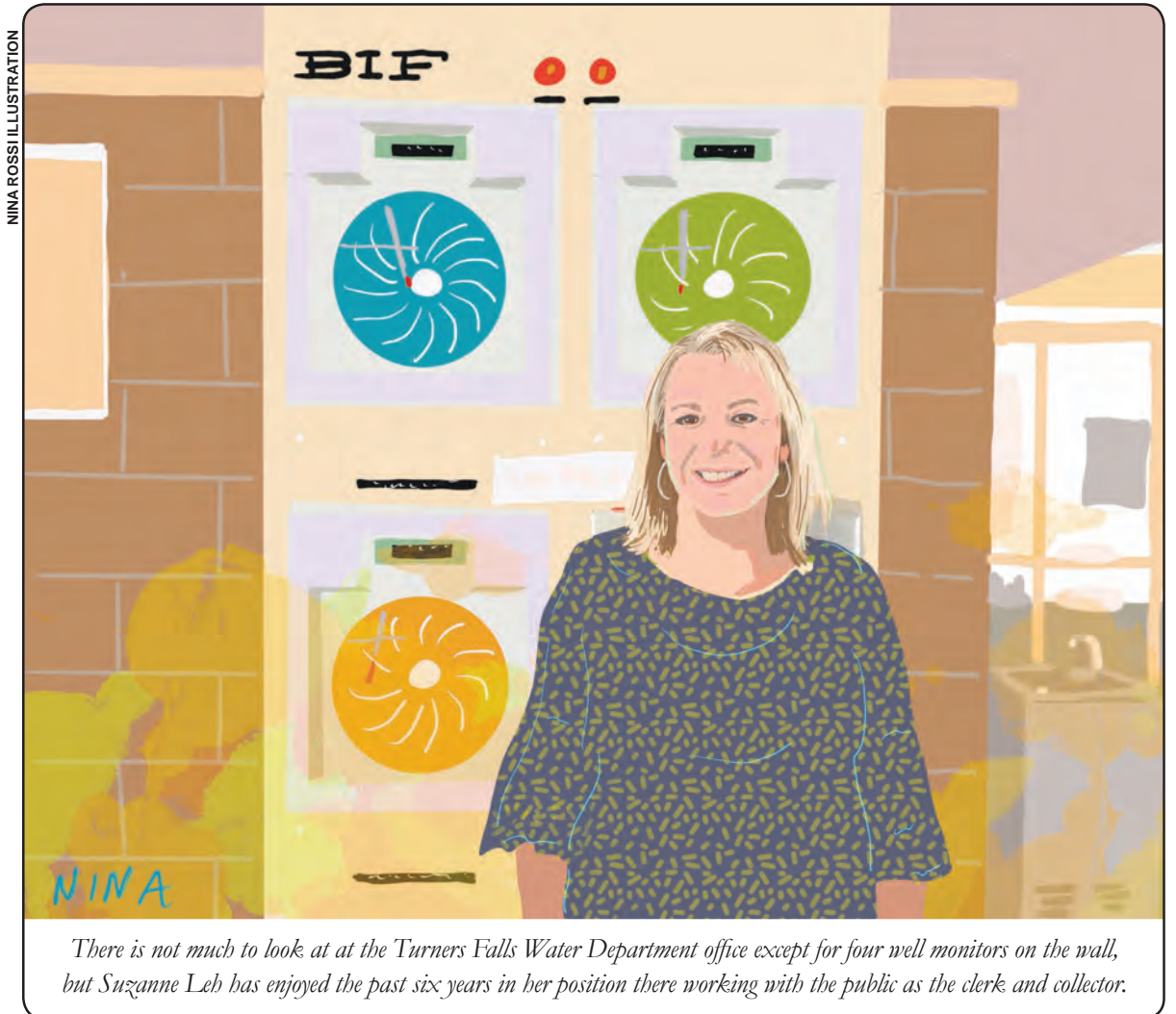
We might not be directed to recognize our best response to world threat. Meeting local Ukrainian

communities, and anyone from that threatened area, can create community – a local version of "Hands Across the Hills," a project that recently deceased peace activist Paula Green would understand and prioritize.

March 7 is called "Bloody Sunday" for multiple reasons. One occasion was the notorious firing on unarmed Irish civil rights demonstrators in 1920 and 1972 in protest against British rule in their country. The Edmund Pettus Bridge, named after a KKK leader and US Senator, was where US civil rights protestors walked from Selma to Birmingham on Bloody Sunday, March 7, and was another instance of governmental attack on protestors. The continuance of Russian incursion into Ukraine became even more aggressive on that day this year.

We can inquire of our neighbors, so many of whom have relatives and personal society in Ukraine, Moldova, the Black Sea region, and other countries threatened by Russian war in their midst, what they propose and how best to support their people.

Nina Keller
Wendell



There is not much to look at at the Turners Falls Water Department office except for four well monitors on the wall, but Suzanne Leb has enjoyed the past six years in her position there working with the public as the clerk and collector.

Letters to the Editors

Neal Backs Surprise Medical Bills

One thing wrong with our current health care system is a scheme called "surprise medical bills." When someone needs to go to the doctor, the emergency room, the hospital, etc., they often assume, or are even told directly, "insurance will cover this treatment." Yet weeks or months later, a surprise medical bill may arrive – often for thousands of dollars. The insurance company refuses to pay, so the hospital or health care provider demands payment from the patient.

The result is often financial difficulty or even bankruptcy for the poor victim. An emergency room visit can often become a financial emergency as well. Medical bills are the number one cause of personal bankruptcy in the US.

The Biden Administration, to its credit, recently banned these surprise medical bills. That is why we

are shocked and dismayed that Representative Richard Neal is attempting to bring back surprise medical bills. (See theintercept.com/2022/01/17/surprise-medical-billing-lawsuit/.) This will please corporations that donate to his campaign, but not people who need medical care.

We can only speculate about Mr. Neal's reasons, but we think he should be fighting for his constituents, not helping the health care industry overcharge us. Isn't that why we sent him to Congress?

If you are troubled by Representative Neal's actions, we urge you to call or email his office and ask him to fight for us, not the health care corporations.

Brooks Ballenger, Amherst
John Weissman, Granby

OP ED

Weapons to Windmills: Saying "No" to War and Warming

By ANNA GYORGY

WENDELL – Bombs drop on Ukraine, and women and children flee for safety in a wave of European refugees not seen since World War II.

We all want peace, and for this horrible war to stop. It will stop eventually, and with a political settlement, but will it be on an ash heap, perhaps radioactive, that was once a world bread basket? Or can there be a peace that allows Ukraine to exist independently, while recognizing that the Russian people are not to blame for this war?

Despite official bans of civil society groups and closure of independent media, many Russians oppose this war. As international actions for peace took place worldwide – locally too – on March 5 and 6, we learned that over 13,000 Russian demonstrators have been arrested.

We hate the pain and destruction of this war. But as all eyes turn towards Ukraine, the misery in countries that suffered US and NATO bombing is ignored. What about Afghanistan? What about children dying of malnutrition in Yemen, and US support for the Saudi war?

Former reporter and Middle East expert Chris Hedges has a new article at [Scheerpost.com](https://scheerpost.com) called "Worthy and Unworthy Victims." It's not an easy read.

Hedges examines the way that Putin and Russia are being demonized, while "[w]hat Russia is doing militarily in Ukraine, at least up to now, was more than matched by our own savagery in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Libya and Vietnam. This is an inconvenient fact the press, awash in moral posturing, will not address."

He closes: "The life of a Palestinian or an Iraqi child is as precious

as the life of a Ukrainian child. No one should live in fear and terror. No one should be sacrificed on the altar of Mars. But until all victims are worthy, until all who wage war are held accountable and brought to justice, this hypocritical game of life and death will continue. Some human beings will be worthy of life. Others will not. Drag Putin off to the International Criminal Court and put him on trial. But make sure George W. Bush is in the cell next to him. If we can't see ourselves, we can't see anyone else. And this blindness leads to catastrophe."

Northampton's Michel Moushabeck, founder-editor of Interlink Publishing, has a similar international lens. In his "War Sets Humanity Backwards: Don't Let Racism Divide Us" posted at traprock.org, he writes:

"I often wonder about why we see WAR next page

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Compiled by NINA ROSSI

We'll "spring forward" one hour for the **end of Daylight Savings Time** on Sunday, March 13, at 2 a.m. Set the clocks ahead one hour!

Save your Styrofoam: a special **recycling collection for Styrofoam blocks and sheets** will take place the first four Saturdays in April (April 2, 9, 16 and 23) from 9 a.m. to noon at the Montague Recycling and Transfer Station. This free collection, offered by the Franklin County Solid Waste District with volunteer help from members of Drawdown Montague, is open only to residents of Montague.

The materials will be brought to Gold Circuit E-Cycling in Palmer. The only materials accepted are "Styrofoam" (EPS or PS#6) blocks and sheets, rigid flat foam packaging sheets (#4 LDPE), and foam insulation board (XPS). They cannot accept food-related items – cups, plates, bowls, clamshells, trays, or egg cartons – packing peanuts, or any wet or dirty materials.

Pre-registration is not required. To see photos of acceptable materials, visit www.recycleyourfoam.com. For more information contact info@franklincountywastedistrict.org or (413) 772-2438.

The annual Smith College bulb show in the greenhouse is not accepting walk-ins this year, and their visitor schedule is already full (you can take a virtual tour, though, at garden.smith.edu).

You can go to Stockbridge instead, and **breathe the perfume of flowering bulbs** at the Fitzpatrick Conservatory at the Berkshire Botanical Gardens. They welcome visi-

tors through March 13 to their evolving collection of traditional New England favorites such as narcissus, tulips, and grape hyacinths, together with hardy varieties new to the show.

According to the Conservancy, you can see "a striking, dark purple tulip with fringed petals named 'Vincent Van Gogh'; a diminutive, pink-orange tulip called 'Salmon Gem'; a trio of new daffodils; and two exquisite dwarf irises, 'Harmony' and 'Pauline,' with flowers of brilliant blue and deep purple, respectively. But the star of the show might just be the enchanting Fritillaria meleagris or Guinea Hen Flower in a mix of colors. Its nodding, bell-shaped flowers vary from reddish purple checkered to black, to faintly checkered green, to pure white."

The show is open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily, and admission is free.

Take a youngster to **breakfast with a movie** this weekend. Greenfield Garden Cinemas and Brad's Place put together a unique special inspired by Dr. Seuss's *Green Eggs and Ham* story. March 2 was Theodore Geisel's (Dr. Seuss's) birthday, and rolling it forward to Saint Patty's day on March 15, "What could be more green than *Green Eggs and Ham*?" they ask.

This Saturday, March 12, Brad's Place will offer a Green Eggs and Ham special for \$5. Cinema owner Isaac Mass offers a free 11 a.m. show of the 1973 animated special *Green Eggs and Ham*, based on the 1960 book, which has sold over 8 million copies.

Curious about **growing and eating live foods like sprouts**? Learn about the abundant benefits in on-line classes with Amar Fuller of Le-

verett. Amar introduces aspects of growing sprouts, along with meditation and yoga practices.

This Saturday, March 12 at 11 a.m. the class focuses on how to grow beans, lentils, and grains in water, with a recipe for sprouted buckwheat tabbouleh. On March 26, the class outlines sprouts grown in soil such as wheatgrass, sunflower greens, pea shoots, and buckwheat lettuce. Buckwheat lettuce pasta with red pepper sauce is the recipe.

Find out more and register at www.gracedbygreen.com.

Spring is the time when male American Woodcocks present an **amazing aerial courtship dance** to attract females. This spring ritual happens in fields just after sunset. Join the watchful crowd on Saturday, March 19 at the Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary in Easthampton to witness this dance.

The program will take place entirely outdoors, starting with an introduction at 6:30 p.m., before looking and listening for Woodcocks in the field until 8 p.m. This program is for people 16 years and older. Tick protection and sturdy footwear are recommended, and registration is required – contact arcadia@massaudubon.org or call (413) 584-3009. There is a small fee.

The Village Neighbors newsletter mentions some **tech sessions for older people** coming on March 21 and 22. If you have questions about technology, you can drop in and receive assistance with basic tasks on computers, tablets, or smartphones, and college-age volunteers will help you. There are a variety of locations for afternoon and morning sessions. See the www.villageneighbors.org website to find one near you!

Medicare open enrollment options close on March 31. Certified SHINE counselors are available to assist you in making the right Medicare coverage decisions for your personal situation. This service is free and available year-round. Counsel-

ors are available in person, by phone, or for an online appointment, whichever you prefer. Call (800) 243-4636 to find a counselor near you.

Gateway City Arts in Holyoke is looking for a **fresh new design for t-shirts** and other merchandise. The call has gone out to the world at large to see what kind of artwork comes up. The winner of the design contest receives a \$50 gift card to Judd's Restaurant, two tickets to any Gateway show, and a free t-shirt. Submit your design online at gatewaycityarts.com before April 1.

The Deerfield Valley Art Association, located at the Fiddleheads Gallery at 105 Main Street in Northfield, is looking for entries for a **Marshmallow Peeps Diorama Contest** on Friday, April 1 or Saturday, April 2 from 12 to 5 p.m. It's okay to participate even if you strongly dislike Peeps!

To register, send a note to margedvaa@gmail.com. Vote for the "People's Choice Award" at the gallery on April 3, 8, or 9. Prizes will be awarded on Saturday, April 9 at 4 p.m. in four categories: youth 12 and under, teens 13 to 18, adults, and family. The People's Choice Award is a \$50 gift certificate to Fiddleheads Gallery.

The gallery is open Fridays and Saturdays from 12 to 5 p.m. and Sundays from 12 to 4 p.m.

The Art Garden in Shelburne Falls announces its 2022 week-long **summer arts camp programming** for children and teens. Grab your spot now for these popular programs.

All of their programs are collaborations between artists, educators, and the youth leadership group. Sign up for yoga, art, and clay classes in July, and farm and art classes in August, through a partnership with Wilder Brook Farm in East Charlemont. Email csartgarden@gmail.com to find out more.

Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

PUBLIC HEARING

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 138, General Laws, as amended, the Inhabitants of the Town of Montague are hereby notified that **Santo Taco** d.b.a. Santo Taco, Ivette Mateos Reyes as manager, has applied for a Seasonal § 12 General On-Premises Wine and Malt Beverage License. The premise is located at **148 2nd Street**, Turners Falls, MA consisting of a 5,500 sq. ft. fenced/roped outdoor lot. There will be a mobile food trailer and locked refrigerated shipping container for storage. There will be 2 entrances and exits.

Date and place of hearing:
Monday, March 21, 2022
at 6:40 P.M. via ZOOM:
www.montague-ma.gov/d/6640/Selectboard-Meeting

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WAR from previous page

choose to selectively condemn violations of international law and human rights law? How can we see clearly the bombardment of Ukraine, but can't see the bombardment of Yemen? How is it that we scream about the Russian occupation, but remain silent about the Israeli occupation? How can we open our borders to fleeing Ukrainian refugees, but shut them in the face of Syrian and other refugees?

"A Palestinian can't help but wonder. How can America and Europe send weapons to the Ukraine in order to fight an occupier, while at the same time send weapons to Israel in order to support its illegal occupation of Palestinian lands? How can we call for sanctions to end Russian occupation, but we impose bans on BDS, the boycott called for by Palestinian civil society as a form of nonviolent resistance? How can the West stand up to Putin's crimes while at the same time support Israeli crimes of Apartheid?"

Now consider deadly conflicts with other victims, not represented at the UN, but whose presence on this planet makes human lives possible.

One is the ongoing destruction of biodiversity in the 6th extinction.

Biodiversity is about more than the insects, amphibians, fish, and animals that inhabited forests leveled for commercial plantations. It's all life; destroy the forest, ruin the watershed. Poison fields with agricultural chemicals, eliminate pollinators key to plant fertility and many food crops, not to mention birds.

The two great ecological challenges of our time – now! – as humans on this unique planet are protecting remaining biological diversity and doing all we can to prevent a planetary meltdown from climate change, global warming. That meltdown, already underway, takes various forms, seen ever more clearly. In some areas it's fire; in others, uncontrolled flooding and ocean surges. Every region is affected, some more than others.

The Russian attack on Ukraine began early on February 24. Four days later, the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued a new report, "The Numbers Behind the Science."

Despite its dire message, "Urgent action required to deal with increasing risks," the scientists' most serious warnings yet were relegated to inside pages of local papers.

A quick summary, from www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/resources/press:

"Increased heatwaves, droughts and floods are already exceeding plants' and animals' tolerance thresholds, driving mass mortalities in species such as trees and corals.

"These weather extremes are occurring simultaneously, causing cascading impacts that are increasingly difficult to manage. They have exposed millions of people to acute food and water insecurity, especially in Africa, Asia, Central and South America, on Small Islands and in the Arctic.

"To avoid mounting loss of life, biodiversity and infrastructure, ambitious, accelerated action is required to adapt to climate change, at the same time as making rapid, deep cuts in greenhouse gas emissions. So far, progress on adaptation is uneven and there are increasing gaps between action taken and what is needed to deal with the increasing risks, the new report finds. These gaps are largest among lower-income populations."

"Accelerated action," adaptation, and "rapid, deep cuts in greenhouse gas emissions." How do we do this in a world of both economic inequality and great need? We believe that the funds are

there, but only if we redefine "security" away from bombs, tanks, and drones.

We know that wars bring great profits to the military-industrial complex, well known for its revolving door for military higher-ups, massive lobbying efforts, political donations, and weapons-related facilities strategically located so keeping "local jobs" can swing Congressional votes.

Take the current 2022 military budget – even before the billions headed to Ukraine. The projected total of \$768 billion, half of the nation's discretionary budget, was the highest ever. The lead graphic on the Traprock website lists seven major public needs that could all be funded instead, with some left over: from free childcare and public universities, to guaranteed housing and 100% renewables by 2050.

World military expenditures, led by the US, feed conflicts worldwide. The 800+ US bases worldwide, the weaponization of space, training and arming of militaries in Africa and beyond: most Americans have no idea of the extent of the US war machine, or the abrogation of various treaties that could protect from nuclear war.

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RECYCLE

PAPER
Week of March 14
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ERVING from page A1

would actually allow the planning board more control over any potential development at the International Paper (IP) Mill site, in addition to several other locations it would have covered.

Brian Smith said that with Erving in the position of having no affordable housing, falling short of a state requirement to have 10% of its housing be affordable, any prospective developer is currently able to petition the state under Chapter 40B and get an affordable housing development approved, with no input from the town and no need to follow any of the town's zoning laws.

The town has known it needed affordable housing for 20 years, since it adopted a Master Plan in 2002 with a clear statement to work towards the 10% goal; that it has known that for so long and has done nothing to work toward that goal makes state approval under Chapter 40B much more likely, Smith argued.

A man who did not identify himself, but who the moderator recognized as Mark Burnett, indicated at great length that he did not believe what the selectboard, planner, or administrator said on the matter. Burnett said that he was not the author of the anonymous letter.

A number of townspeople attested in favor of

the PUD, including Dan Hammock, a longtime resident and member of the zoning board.

Burnett suggested that the town could prevent a large affordable housing development by not selling the IP Mill complex, or any other town-owned properties. He recommended demolishing the IP Mill complex.

Jacob Smith said that the estimated cost of demolishing that property is in the tens of millions of dollars, and that while some money is available from the state for demolition, \$600,000, it is only available if the demolition is part of a redevelopment of the property, not to create open space.

While the town owns the IP Mill, it must pay for insurance for it. Town moderator Richard Peabody reported that insuring the property had become so expensive the only insurer the town could find has been Lloyd's of London, and the firm says it will not insure it any more after this summer. If Erving does not find a developer by then, it will have a large, dangerous, uninsured building on its hands, a significant liability to the town.

Burnett was not convinced, and voted against the article when a vote was finally called. Article 13 required a two-thirds majority to pass, and with 37 yes votes to 20 no, fell one vote short.

All 13 other articles passed, twelve of them

unanimously, including Article 14, which concerned changes to the zoning map and was tied to Article 13 in the anonymous letter.

Article 14 did have to be amended on the floor to remove reference to the PUD, which had just been voted down.

Prior to the meeting, the selectboard drafted a response to the anonymous letter. "We are disappointed that that author(s) of this letter has decided to spread misinformation throughout our community," they wrote. "Personal attacks against the Select Board members, our employees and our families are unjustified and counterproductive."

The board's response said the PUD was "meant to provide additional development option for unique areas like the IP Mill" and pointing out that it was "the result of more than a year of work by the Planning Board members and town staff that was conducted at public meetings and that has been presented at a public hearing."

With the PUD's failure last weekend, a large affordable housing project at the IP Mill may be approved by the state. Whether the letter was "misinformation," as the selectboard wrote, or disinformation intended to benefit a large developer familiar with Chapter 40B, may never be known.



OP ED

Next Steps for the Six-Town School Study

By **GREG SNEDEKER**
and **ALAN GENOVESE**

FRANKLIN COUNTY – The Six-Town Regionalization Planning Board (STRPB), serving the towns of Bernardston, Gill, Leyden, Montague, Northfield, and Warwick, just concluded its first round of community forums and outreach after almost three years of financial and educational research.

The goal of these meetings was to inform the six towns as to where the STRPB currently is in the process of our feasibility study, which looks at the financial and educational sustainability of combining the Gill-Montague Regional School District (GMRSD) and the Pioneer Valley Regional School District (PVRSD). The board also focused on public feedback through these community forums and a written survey to gauge public sentiment about the proposal of a combined district.

The community forums held between late November and early December 2021 were led by STRPB members and Mary Broderick, a facilitator hired by the board to lead the forums and collate the oral and written feedback into a comprehensive report. The full board met with Ms. Broderick on February 9, where she shared data in a Power-Point presentation summarizing the combined findings. This can be found on the STRPB's website, sites.google.com/view/strpb/home.

Both GMRSD and PVRSD have been experiencing declining enrollment over the past two decades. This trend is a result of many factors, including a declining and aging regional population, school choice, and competition from private and charter schools. Declining enrollment creates both financial and educational challenges for school districts, because the "foundation budgets" established by the state to calculate its Chapter 70 aid to districts are driven by student enrollment.

In the past three years, the STRPB has taken a deep dive into the financial and educational challenges of both districts, with an eye on the feasibility of whether combining the two districts' middle and high schools might bring a more sustainable model by improving the economies of scale.

Hitting the Scales

The good news is that both school districts have excess infrastructure capacity in their middle and high schools, so if the six towns decided to move to a new combined district there wouldn't be physical plant constraints. Both districts' MS/HS buildings have capacity to house the combined enrollment at the middle and high school levels.

The Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools (MARS), one consultant group hired by the STRPB, recommended that if the two districts combined, the middle school students might attend school at the PVRSD building, with the high school students housed in the GMRSD building.

MARS produced two educational reports for the STRPB which can be found on the board's website. These reports concluded that, in general, middle and high schools that are small – under 300 students – face significant educational challenges due to economies of scale and financial constraints due to Chapter 70 funding. Both districts have fallen in and out of "hold harmless" status over the past ten years, resulting in only nominal revenue increases from the state. These budget shortfalls are addressed through more local taxation, budget reductions, or both.

MARS also found that secondary schools need to have an enrollment of at least 350 to 400 students to adequately support rigorous educational offerings – electives, arts, co/extracurricular activities, sports, clubs, etc. This is not unique to public mainstream secondary schools, but applies to private and charter schools as well. Because low enrollment does not reach adequate economies of scale, it creates significant course scheduling challenges by limiting what classes and co/extracurriculars (athletic teams, clubs, etc.) can be offered and scheduled.

Therefore, just improving a school's financial situation – e.g. by using additional Student Opportunity Act funding – will not adequately address many of the academic challenges caused by the lack of the economies of scale.

Failure to reach adequate economies of scale also has financial implications. For example, the per-unit cost of administration, fac-

ulty, and staff drops considerably when enrollment rises. A combined GMRSD/PVRSD district would double the enrollment of the middle and high school. Both GMRSD and PVRSD have been under-enrolled for many years.

Combining the two secondary schools would not only create efficiencies in administration (reducing two central offices to one would bring an estimated savings of \$380,000), but also increase classroom enrollment in courses, which would create the opportunity to schedule second sections of required classes, bringing flexibility to the daily schedule and allowing for more course electives with the existing combined staff.

When a secondary school becomes very small – under 200 – it becomes extremely challenging for the school to support its programs without redesigning its strategic plan, but even then, economy-of-scale issues will persist. If a school doesn't have the infrastructure capacity to grow and reach economies of scale, financial and educational sustainability will be difficult to achieve.

These are the two areas the STRPB is trying to address. Traditional athletic teams, performing art groups such as band and chorus, and clubs become difficult to support in under-enrolled schools as these school groups begin to compete for the same students, which can often leave some students feeling pulled in multiple directions and overscheduled, among other things.

Costs and Benefits

Financially, a GMRSD/PVRSD combined regional school district would produce a mixed result, but there are reasons to be optimistic.

In terms of Chapter 70 funding, the combined region would fall into "hold harmless" status because Pioneer Valley is in excess of base aid over foundation aid, which would absorb the increased aid attributable to Gill-Montague.

However, if the towns view the proposed combined districts through a cost-benefit lens, the financial outlook improves. If we can envision and show concretely how doubling the enrollment of the middle and high schools will bring sub-

stantial educational benefits to our students, even with the loss of some state aid, not only will the towns be rewarded with more opportunities for students, but the combined district might see a reduction in choice-out students and be a magnet for choice-in students.

The point of this is not to view a new Six-Town regional school budget of \$38 million as a loss of \$1 million in state aid which would otherwise be there if the districts remain separate (\$39 to \$40 million), but to ask – what will the six towns receive in educational benefits from having a combined \$38 million budget that has a middle and high school with double the enrollment? It is important to note that the STRPB firmly believes that elementary students should continue to be educated in their respective towns.

Understandably, having the two districts remain separate and small may appeal to some in our communities for many reasons – community/school identity and transportation, among others. But the trade-off will be fewer and fewer educational opportunities for students, and limited extracurricular activities.

Looking Forward

Residents of the six towns will ultimately decide whether or not to proceed with creating a new school district, but it is imperative that we have a clear picture of the complexities and challenges ahead, with the economies of scale being the greatest obstacle to overcome.

Over the next few months the STRPB, with the help of one or more facilitators, will conduct another round of forums and working groups to share survey results and opinions expressed, and to highlight additional findings from the previous two studies. The facilitators may also engage stakeholders in addressing some of the challenges of a combined district, and exploring potential solutions.

Once the Planning Board concludes its research, we will make a recommendation for the town folks to consider at their respective Annual Town Meetings.

Greg Snedeker is the treasurer and secretary of the STRPB. Alan Genovese is its chairperson.

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NURSES from page A1

Greenfield city council president Sheila Gilmour and the Western Massachusetts Area Labor Federation (WMALF).

"Our nurses' working conditions absolutely dictate our community's health," said WMALF organizer Lydia Wood. "We've watched time and again over the last two years as hospital corporations and administrators thank their healthcare heroes for weathering this pandemic and caring for their community, while they simultaneously turn around and continue to cut and privatize services, systematically understaff their hospitals, and increasingly rely on contingent travel nurses rather than offer a fair contract to their community's nurses."

Several area legislators or their aides listened in, including state representatives Susannah Whippis, Lindsay Sabadosa, Natalie Blais, and Paul Mark, senator Jo Comerford, and US Congress member Jim McGovern. MNA president Katie Murphy commented on the large turnout.

"I remember, before the pandemic, feeling like you were short-staffed and being worried about your well being, and how it was going to affect the community," Gilmour said. "And that's out the window now."

MNA associate director Nykole Roche presented details about Baystate's finances. Headquartered in Springfield, the not-for-profit company manages five hospitals and 12,000 employees in western Massachusetts and Connecticut.

Baystate Health CEO Mark Keroack earned \$6.4 million from 2018 to 2020, Roche said, but was quoted in 2020 as saying the hospi-

tal had a "lean and perilous year." Roche explained that while the hospitals did lose revenue as they were forced to cancel non-emergency surgeries and treatments amid an influx of critical coronavirus patients, federal grants and loans more than made up the difference.

In 2020, Baystate Franklin lost \$1.5 million in revenue, but has since received \$27.4 million in federal grants and forgivable loans, according to Roche. The larger Baystate Health hospital system has received a total of \$404 million in federal aid and earned \$44.2 million in revenue in 2020, making it the sixth-most-profitable healthcare system in the state during that time.

"It makes it a real standout in western Mass," Roche said. "Baystate's priorities are really all about technology and innovation and growth, and all of those things are important in healthcare, but I would say the most important components of healthcare are the people."

Roche described nurses working without proper protective equipment in the early months of the pandemic, wearing trash bags and continuing to work at unsafe staffing levels. Citing data showing the number of licensed nurses statewide has increased by 24% since 2019, she argued that there is no nursing shortage, but instead a trend of professionals leaving the industry due to burnout.

"Baystate Franklin nurses are also among the most underpaid in the state," Roche said. "It's just impossible to retain highly educated, highly trained and experienced nurses when you treat them like that."

Several attendees said traveling nurses can make more than twice as much as local nurses, fueling an ex-

odus of skilled workers to other hospitals such as UMass Medical Center in Worcester. Stern said this trend affects job retention, training, nurses' familiarity with the host facility and their patients, and quality of care.

"We have been telling them, and sounding the alarm bells for years: if you want to retain and recruit, you must support your nurses better," she said. "Franklin County nurses are well below what they should be making for the work they do. We are like every other nurse in Massachusetts, working our tails off in some dangerous situations."

Another nurse, Shaari Mersack, said the pandemic had taken an incredible personal toll.

"Those early days were the hardest, especially when you had multiple people dying during your shift. It's like nothing I've ever experienced before," Mersack said. "I love my coworkers, I love my patients – it's a great place to work. I just wish I felt valued. And honestly, why wouldn't we leave to be travel nurses, and make four to five times the amount of money we do now for our families?"

In 2019 Baystate announced plans to close mental health units in Greenfield, Westfield, and Palmer, and consolidate those services into a new \$208 million addition to its Holyoke location, a for-profit venture called the MassMutual Wing.

"The mental health unit in Greenfield has been slated for a very long time for closure," Gilmour said. "That was delayed, thanks in part to the organizing we've done in the past, but also a lot of it has been because of delays due to the pandemic. Unfortunately, as they're breaking ground in Holyoke, they're talking

PUBLIC SCHOOL REGIONALIZATION PLANNING FACILITATOR

The Gill-Montague Regional School District will accept price quotes for a Facilitator for a Public School Regionalization Planning Study. The project is made available by grant funding from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education.

The RFQ can be found on the district website, www.gmrdsd.org, or www.gmrdsd.org/welcome-gmrdsd/departments/business-and-operations.

All quotes should be submitted to: Gill-Montague Regional School District, Joanne Blier, Director of Business and Operations, 35 Crocker Avenue, Turners Falls, MA 01376 or joanne.blier@gmrdsd.org by **Thursday, March 24, 2022 at 11 a.m.**

Quotes may be emailed, mailed, or hand-delivered. They should be clearly marked "**Facilitator (Regional Planning)**."

Facilitators may call Joanne Blier at (413) 863-3251 if they have questions. The Gill-Montague Regional School District, which is the awarding authority, reserves the right to accept or reject any or all quotes, in total or in part, as they deem in the best interest of the public.

about closing down the [mental health unit] here in Greenfield. That's going to have an impact on our community."

Stern, a psychiatric nurse, said that Baystate Franklin's mental health unit serves an especially vulnerable population of people with comorbidities like substance use disorder, and that local patients will suffer if services are moved to Holyoke.

"Patients that end up in our unit are the patients no one else wants, because they don't have health insurance, and oftentimes they're really really sick and need access to medical units," Stern said. "It's shocking

to me that the Department of Mental Health gave the greenlight on this. People are going to suffer in Franklin County."

Patients in Franklin County, Roche said, are more likely to experience chronic illness than people in other parts of the state, and therefore to require care on a "cyclical" basis.

"They also treat patients who have challenging behaviors, or who don't have insurance," Roche said. "And most importantly, I think... is that they treat patients in their communities, where they're close to their support systems."



NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Pay for Filling In; Police Mutual Aid; Schedule Conflicts

By **JOSH HEINEMANN**

Wendell's tax collectors and assessors dominated the time at the selectboard's March 2 meeting, discussing software that would allow the assessors' computers to communicate directly with the tax collectors' computers.

Tax collector Penny Delorey and assistant Kathryn Soule-Regine want to switch to a Quality Data Systems (QDS) program. Soule-Regine said she had confirmed with Wendell's assessing contractor, Kelly Szocik of the Leominster-based Regional Resource Group (RRG), that the QDS tax programs are already working well with the assessing program that Wendell uses.

Assessor Anna Seeger said she preferred interfacing her board's assessments with programs by VADAR Systems of Acton. She agreed that the tax collectors are the people using the programs, so the choice was theirs, but said the president of RRG preferred VADAR.

Soule-Regine said QDS was better than VADAR, and after some back and forth said she would arrange a demonstration.

Selectboard chair Dan Keller thanked them all for the research they had done, and selectboard member Gillian Budine asked where the money would come from.

Finance committee chair Doug Tanner, admitting that ARPA funding has made Wendell's finances a bit less tight this year, said there might be more tight years ahead, but that a change is needed to make assessing and tax collecting workable. QDS has an annual cost of \$7,200, and a one-time startup cost of \$6,200.

Wage Dispute

Tanner also asked for a discussion of the working assessor's pay, a line item on the FY'23 operating budget. The board of assessors asked for \$25 an hour, allowing 200 hours, for an annual total of \$5,000. Tanner said he

felt that \$25 an hour was out of line with other town positions that get \$20 an hour, including himself (as acting coordinator) and the librarian, who has a masters degree in library science.

Seeger said a need for an acting assessor is not likely in any case since the town is employing RRG, but that the item should be kept in the budget in the event of an interruption in RRG's work, and should stay at \$25 an hour. She said she and Chris Wings, former chair of the board of assessors, worked 20 hours a week trying to keep the assessors' office working, with 6 and 10 years of experience respectively, and that it is not right that they work for nothing.

Seeger added that the board of assessors has paid a consultant \$50 an hour for the work, and the pay they are recommending is in the middle of the range of town employee pay.

While she was talking, Tanner interrupted, saying his issue was not with the position but with the pay.

Seeger said they could again hire a consultant for \$50, and Tanner asked if she was trying to blackmail the town, then apologized immediately.

"I don't like your tone," Seeger said.

"I don't like yours either," Tanner replied.

Seeger asked, "Can anybody help me?" and Keller stopped their back-and-forth. He asked each of them to raise a hand before speaking, and he had to restate that once.

Tanner said \$20 is more in line with other town employees, although not with those who make a living doing town work. Seeger conceded that working for the town is at least partly for the town's benefit.

Keller said he thought it was time to hear from a selectboard member. Budine first said it was hard to hear the animosity, and that because RRG is a large company, it is unlikely that the line item would be used. Member Laurie DiDonato said she would hope for a middle ground, but that if anything she would

lean toward the finance committee.

The pay rate will become effective in FY'23, so Keller allowed "kicking it down the road" until the next meeting.

More Personnel

The selectboard voted to change their clerk's pay from a stipend to an hourly wage, after treasurer Carolyn Manley said she had no objection.

Town clerk Anna Wetherby, who is currently writing the minutes for the selectboard, said she will be "delighted" when they hire someone. DiDonato said she has posted the position on the town listserv several times, but so far no one has responded.

Mutual Aid

Town coordinator Glenn Johnson-Mussad began the meeting by bringing up a request by Leverett police chief Scott Minckler that Wendell sign on to a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the western Massachusetts law enforcement mutual aid agreement among towns in Franklin, Hampshire, Hampden, and Berkshire counties.

Signing on would allow police in Wendell to get help from another town if a situation called for it.

Another department would not come to Wendell unless called.

Budine was delayed getting to the meeting, and so Keller and DiDonato waited until she Zoomed in, and then the selectboard voted to accept the MOU. Keller said the town already has a similar MOU with the state police.

New Phone Company

The selectboard agreed to have Whip City change the town's phone lines from Verizon to OOMA through the fiber-optic network.

Some problems appeared: Wetherby said the state veterinary service requires a fax, and

fax does not work with OOMA. The library and office building alarm systems are connected to Verizon wires.

Fire captain Asa DeRoode, on the other hand, said he will be delighted when the fire station phone system is with OOMA. Tanner said the Verizon bill is \$5,000 a year, and Keller said the paperwork takes hours. Johnson-Mussad accepted the job of finding which Verizon phone lines can be eliminated.

Other Business

When he was hired by Wendell, Johnson-Mussad said he would continue serving in his elected position as a Greenfield school committee member. That committee meets on the second Wednesday of every month, and the selectboard had agreed that he could continue going to those meetings.

In April, May and June, though, his school committee meetings conflict with Wendell's scheduled selectboard meetings. Keller suggested changing selectboard meetings with that conflict to Thursdays, although that would be a break with a long tradition.

Johnson-Mussad suggested changing the meeting schedule to the first and third Wednesdays, and including the fifth Wednesday when there is one. The warrant schedule is set at every two weeks and cannot be changed or bills will not get paid, but board members are currently going to the office to sign the warrant individually, so signing the warrant does not have to coincide with meetings.

Tanner said he would prefer changing the selectboard schedule to the first and third Wednesdays over changing one meeting to a Thursday in certain months. Board members agreed to try meeting on the first and third Wednesday of each month as an experiment.

The selectboard also voted to allow the Wendell chorus to use the town hall for Monday evening practices.

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QUAKE from page A1

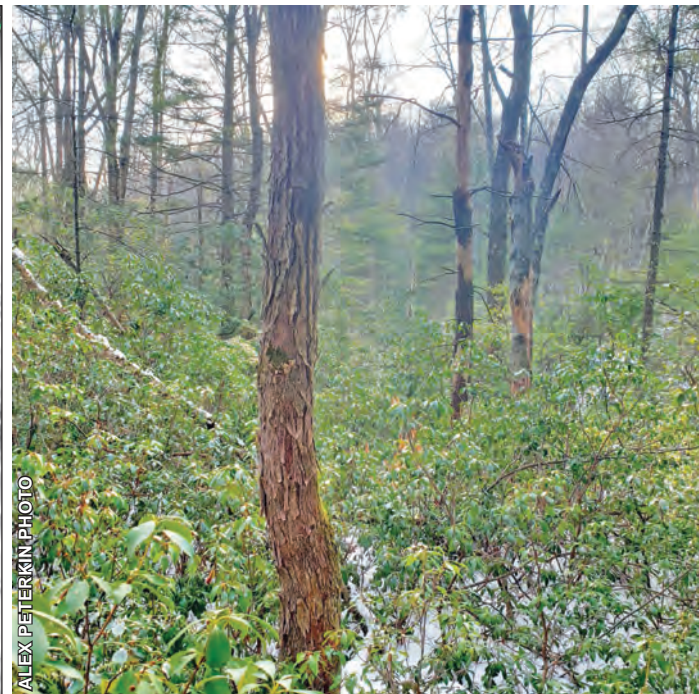
against one another and getting thrust under along their edges, moved by forces underneath.

The Earth's mantle underlies these tectonic plates and makes up most of our planet's interior. Radiogenic decay of various isotopes of Potassium, Uranium, and Thorium, etc. in the rock there generate huge amounts of heat causing it to convect, albeit slowly over millions of years. The tectonic plates and their continents are constantly "drifting" because they are connected to the constantly moving mantle underneath.

The earth's mantle is not liquid magma, contrary to popular belief: it is very solid rock. It is also under a tremendous amount of pressure from the weight of all the solid rock above it. Under this heat and pressure rock flows while it is still solid, albeit very slowly. Over millions of years it behaves like a fluid.

Many geologists run experiments making rock flow using special equipment in a lab designed to mimic conditions deep in the earth's crust and mantle. These experiments – in combination with thousands of other lines of evidence collected over the past century, including data from large passive seismic arrays such as NSF's Earthscope – have allowed us to form a relatively accurate picture of how the mantle convects and drives plate tectonics.

There are several places where this convection pulls these plates apart. The closest to us here is the mid-ocean ridge in the Atlantic, where the North American tectonic plate is being pulled westward, away from the Eurasian and African plates at about 1.2 inches per year. If you look at a map that shows the bathymetry of the oceans it stands out like the seam on a baseball.



According to the USGS, the epicenter of last Friday's earthquake was 42.581° N and 72.389° W, just north of Bowen's Pond off Wendell Depot Road. The red star on the map at left indicates this point. Note the topographic features here that run northeast-southwest, which express the region's underlying rock fracture network. At right: Near the reported epicenter of the quake, as scouted by a Reporter reader. (USGS revised the estimated coordinates over the weekend by .006° longitude!)

In the 1960s this was first proposed as a controversial hypothesis, part of the "plate tectonic revolution" in geology at the time, based on geophysical data collected from oceanic surveys. With modern GPS satellite technology we can now watch this movement happening in real time.

As the North American plate slides against the next plate to the west, the Pacific plate, it creates an active zone of earthquakes along the San Andreas fault, but tremendous stress is also carried throughout the entire plate. While we are not near any active fault lines, we are at the center of this plate.

Geologists measure the direction and strength of this stress field at the surface in a number of different ways: most commonly we look at how the circular boreholes of deep water wells deform and crack over time. While the direction of the stress field varies across the continent, in

Massachusetts it is oriented almost due east-west. Engineers have to take it into account when designing large infrastructure such as dams and water supply tunnels.

Geologists know from seismic and other data that most quakes in southern New England occur along a regional system of northeasterly-aligned rock fractures and extinct faults formed during the rifting of the supercontinent Pangea about 200 million years ago.

These fracture systems are commonly expressed in local topography: many local gorges, including Rattlesnake Gutter in Leverett and the Bear's Den in New Salem, were eroded from some of these fractures and small faults by huge amounts of glacial meltwater at the end of the last ice age about 15,000 years ago.

Rock at the surface is most definitely not fluid or hot but still

has to accommodate that tectonic stress. Across New England the fracture system is in a perfect orientation within that stress field for one of the fractures to occasionally slip and "pop," just a few millimeters at a time, relieving the tiniest bit of the tremendous pressure on the continent.

The temblor residents felt on Friday evening occurred 2.17 miles below the surface, along a linear topographic feature in the bedrock that is one eroded expression of this larger regional fracture system. While small earthquakes of this type tend not to leave any sort of surface rupture, and this feature was not caused by the earthquake, our tectonic plate let us know that it, too, is under a lot of stress right now.

To learn more about earthquakes in New England, check out Dr. John Ebel's recent book *New England Earthquakes: The Surprising Histo-*

ry of Seismic Activity in the Northeast (2019, Globe-Pequot), which can be ordered through any one of the many excellent bookstores that advertise in this paper.

Those interested in the bedrock geology surrounding the epicenter of the earthquake can examine the late Dr. Peter Robinson's 2008 geologic map of the area at www.tinyurl.com/5bc2pe88. Note the several northeast-trending extinct faults.

Joe Kopera is a geologist currently living in Montague. He was the Associate State Geologist and co-directed the MA Geological Survey's mapping program from 2003-2016. He's measured thousands of rock fractures across the state. He currently assists the GIST graduate program at UMass in addition to making cartographic art of local rivers.



SPORTS from page A1

Basketball

Palmer 45 – FCTS 37

Saint Bernard's 50 – TFHS 37

The Franklin Tech Eagles were bumped out of the playoffs on March 3 by the Panthers of Palmer during the MIAA Division 5 Round of 32.

The twelfth-ranked Panthers came into the game as the home favorites, having just gotten a little rest after a first-round bye. For Tech, it was their fourth tournament game in six nights. Palmer pounced early, almost doubling Tech's output in the first quarter, 15-8. But the Eagles stiffened their defense in the second, holding the Cats to just 3 points, and Tech went into the locker room trailing by a single point, 18-17.

Palmer scored 15 points again in the third, but the Birds held on, putting up 11 of their own, so going into the last eight minutes, the score was 33-28.

Five points is not a lot in basketball, but trying to make up five points against a great team can be a chore. The Lady Birds did put up 9 points in the final quarter of the season, but it wasn't enough, and the Palmer Panthers took the game 45-37.

Surprising, only five Tech players scored. Kendra Campbell netted 13 points, grabbed three rebounds, gave three assists, and made a steal. Hannah Gilbert hit the long shot, sinking three 3-pointers on her way to 13. She also had four rebounds, an assist, and a steal.

Emily Ryan worked the inside, and led Tech with 10 rebounds; she scored 6 points and also made a steal. Lea Chapman got seven rebounds, one assist, and three steals, scoring 3 points off a field goal and a foul shot. And Kaitlin Trudeau was the basketball thief in this contest – even though she only scored 2 points, she led the team with six steals.

Although Franklin Tech was eliminated from the playoffs, it has been a very success-

ful season for coach Joe Gamache and his team. "I couldn't be prouder of the girls' performance, and the season as a whole," he said after the game. "They battled to the very end of every game we played this season, and we accomplished some great goals."

One of those great accomplishments is the Massachusetts state championship for small vocational schools. For the first time in school history, that state title comes to Tech.

The Turners Falls Lady Thunder fell in the same round of the tournament, with a 50-37 loss to Saint Bernard's of Fitchburg on



Turners Falls senior Emily Young drives to the net during her last high school basketball game last Friday.

March 4.

Before the game, I asked the coach about their mascot. "We're the Bernardians," he explained. "Like the dog breed." Saint Bernard's are classified as a working breed, and the Saints certainly worked in Friday's game.

From the opening tip-off, both teams jostled and bumped, and Blue didn't score their first basket until halfway through the first period, making it 3-2 Saints. To combat these stingy

defenses, players forced the ball to the net, and both teams incurred shooting fouls. Turners scored their next two points one at a time, and that's how the first quarter ended, 9-4.

The Saints retained that five-point lead until midway through the second when Thunder cracked to within a field goal, 12-10. But another Turners foul, coupled with a few breaks, put the visitors up 17-12. Blue scored the next hoop, and with zero seconds left in the first half of a tight 17-14 game, Bernard hit a desperation bucket on the buzzer to make it a five-point lead once again.

After the halftime huddle, the TF girls came out to play. They banged and they bumped, and in less than three minutes they had tied it up at 19. With 1:32 left in the period, it was still a tie ball game, 24-24, but Bernard scored six unanswered points in that last minute and a half to take a 30-24 lead into the final frame.

Blue missed some opportunities in the fourth quarter, as passes were thrown too hard and ended up out of play, and this allowed the visitors to expand their lead to 9 points. Turners had narrowed the gap to 37-30 when the Bernardians went on another run, and soon they were up by 47-34. With less than a minute to play, Turners was forced to intentionally foul.

Although things didn't look good, the hometown crowd never quieted, and the Powertown Spirit was in the house. Throughout the game, one or more of the fans would start the chant, "Let's Go, T-F!" The Cheerleaders would join in with their synchronized clapping, and then the Pep Band's rhythm section would add their noise, and soon the whole crowd was clapping and stomping along with the others. Even as the seconds clicked away, they never stopped.

At the final whistle, after a Saint sank her last two free throws to run it up to 50-37, the home crowd applauded a wonderful season, and walked across the court to console and congratulate their girls.

This was a rough and physical game, and for the most part the play was inside the arc. Only two 3-pointers landed, both by the Saints. The rest of the scoring came one or two grueling points at a time. Thunder took 14 trips to the foul line, hitting 60% for 9 points; the Saints went to the line 26 times for 13 of their points. The rest came from inside the trenches.

Emily Young, in the last game of her high school career, led her team with 15 points and four fouls. The rest of the girls committed three or fewer personal fouls. Madison Liimatainen also hit for double digits with 10, Morgan Dobias hit two field goals and two foul shots for 6 points, Abby Holloway netted a 2-pointer and both her free throws for 4 points, and Taylor Greene sank a bucket for 2.

The loss does not diminish a great season. "The girls had a fantastic season" coach Jim Cadran said after the game. "They won a league championship for only the second time in school history, and the first time in 39 years."

The Blue Ladies did play exceptional ball this season, and for the first time since Emily's mom was on the team, the Turners Falls girls' basketball team won the conference title.

Cheer

The third winter sport that wrapped up their season this week is the Turners Falls Cheerleaders.

Cheer is the one high school sport that spans multiple seasons. In the fall, they cheered on the Franklin Tech Football Eagles; in the winter, they divided their time between the two Turners Falls basketball teams. And on their days off, they traveled across the state to compete against other cheer squads.

As the fans from Turners and Tech could have predicted, they cleaned up. The cheerleaders brought home three huge trophies this season for the expanded display case at Turners Falls High School.



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MONTAGUE from page A1

elementary school building or a renovation and addition to Sheffield, of \$55 million. With the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) reimbursing the district at an estimated 76%, that would leave Montague with a price tag of \$13.2 million. She favorably compared payments for that option on a 20-year bond – \$825,000 a year – with PCA’s five-year repair scenario, which amounts to \$1.4 million a year.

Blier also warned that it could take at least five years before the MSBA approves a project, and another five years before it is complete. “Our buildings are going to need a lot of work before then,” she said.

Selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz asked the officials “what your school committee has said about this.”

Beck answered that “in the budget presentation,” the committee had been shown the slide comparing the cost of the PCA scenario with the estimate for a full-scale rebuild. Kuklewicz said he would like “a clearer message from the school committee to this board.”

Ask for a comment, Montague town administrator Steve Ellis sent the following statement to the *Reporter*: “Following consultation with one [owner’s project manager] who is familiar with school building projects, I believe it likely that whatever we may intend to do, the MSBA will carry substantial influence over any design they are asked to fund. I also understand that they tend to encourage fewer structures where practical, particularly where old school buildings are in close proximity.

“If this is true – and noting that Sheffield is a better overall building, and has benefited from MSBA-funded projects that would need to be repaid if the building does not remain a school – I would expect it to push our design in the direction Joanne Blier suggested. That is, toward a single elementary school that encompasses the entirety of the existing Sheffield/Administration building, plus a new wing of some sort.”

The MSBA is described on its website as a “quasi-independent government authority created to reform the process of funding capital improvement projects in the Commonwealth’s public schools.” It was created in 2004 to replace an older school building assistance program within the Department of Education.

MSBA requires an owner’s project manager for all major school building projects. PCA360 describes itself as an “owner’s project management firm.” PCA’s evaluations of Hillcrest and Sheffield can be accessed at the town website on the page of the capital improvements committee.

Cannabis Revenue, Alcohol Revenue

The board heard more detail on recent requests from the Gill-Montague and Franklin County Technical School (FCTS) districts to expand their joint Alcohol and Substance Abuse program to allow for a full-time counselor at each school. The total cost is estimated at \$86,900 for each position, which includes funds for “curriculum supplies.”

GMRSD pupil services director Diane Ellis and Nathan May, her counterpart at FCTS, said the staffing expansion will allow for more assessment, treatment, and an after-school program that “expands options for service delivery and engagement.” The program is funded from Montague’s cannabis impact revenues.

Selectboard member Matt Lord, noting that other towns in the 19-member tech school district also have cannabis revenues, wondered “if any thought had been given to going to other towns to ask them for contributions as well.”

May said this had not been considered, because “the opportunity had had been presented to us [by Montague].” “It’s an excellent question, and I will bring it back to my superintendent,” he said.

Steve Ellis reviewed the status of the cannabis stabilization account and said the expansion of counseling services, which will go before the spring annual town meeting, “is well within our ability to afford.”

Brick House executive director Kwamane Harris and parent and family services director Stacey Langknecht reviewed the progress of their upcoming Strengthening Families program, also being funded by the town’s cannabis revenues. Langknecht said the Brick House had initially considered a summer program, but realized it would be “much harder to get participants” during the summer. The agency plans to implement two consecutive spring programs, one running March 22 through May 10 and the next May 17 through the “end of June.”

Langknecht showed a promotional graphic for the programs, which consist of seven sessions each for families with young people between the ages of 10 to 14. She said outreach is being coordinated with the GMRSD. “Having counselors at the schools is awesome,” she said. “It’s also the parents that can make a huge difference.”

The board discussed a request from the Rendezvous

bar and restaurant on Third Street in Turners Falls to continue to use a portion of the town parking lot for outdoor seating, as has been the case for the past two years under liberalized state liquor license regulations during the pandemic.

Steve Ellis said these more liberal regulations were set to expire “at a most inconvenient time,” on April 1, and that the town was encouraging businesses to seek a “permanent solution” – potentially an expanded scope for their existing licenses.

Kuklewicz noted that requests for outdoor seating on town property have generally been for a limited number of dates during the spring and summer, but the Rendezvous was asking to use a portion of the parking lot from April 1 to November 30.

Executive assistant Wendy Bogusz said the business needed a “specific plan,” including a clearer map, for the outdoor seating that would be “written into their license” and approved by the state.

Ellis said the commitment for outdoor seating would be valid for this season, but not a “forever commitment.” Matt Lord and Kuklewicz expressed the concern that writing outdoor liquor service into the license and then denying the option in the future might leave the town liable.

Rendezvous owner Mark Wisniewski, after reviewing the use of the parking lot area during the past two years, said he thought the license modification and the use of public property were separate issues, with the selectboard having control over the latter. Ellis suggested that he “engage town counsel in the conversation,” and this was agreeable to the selectboard.

A request for a new liquor license for a restaurant called El Nopalito, to be opened in the building on 196 Turners Falls Road formerly occupied by Roberto’s Family Restaurant, was also presented to the board. The restaurant will serve pizza and Mexican food.

No vote was taken on this license. Since it is an additional license for the town, the board will need to put a request to the state on the annual town meeting warrant, in order to request approval from the state legislature and then the Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission before returning to the selectboard for final approval.

Other Business

The board had a lengthy discussion of potentially creating an “additional cushion” in the town budget in response to a number of requests for new personnel, including an assistant town administrator, a new sergeant on the police force, and an additional employee in the dispatch department.

The board reviewed a number of options presented on an interactive spreadsheet created by town accountant Carolyn Olsen, and agreed to beef up tax revenues by funding next year’s lease payment for a vactor truck from capital stabilization or federal COVID relief funds rather than from taxation. That recommendation will be discussed with the finance and capital improvements committees during the next few weeks.

The board agreed to continue with “hybrid” meetings – in-person, with a remote option – for the first meeting of every month, and then remote meetings at other times, until July, when the state provision to allow remote meetings for local boards expires.

The board agreed to host a discussion, with public input, of priorities for spending federal COVID relief funds under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) at its March 14 meeting. Kuklewicz noted that the town has had several “big requests,” including screw pumps at the water pollution control facility and the vactor truck lease, to consider. The board tentatively scheduled the discussion for 30 minutes on the agenda.

A seven-year “vendor contract” with the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), which will allow the town to receive what Ellis called “recycling dividends,” was approved by the board, as well as a special gift account to receive donations made to the town wood bank.

Ellis announced that it was his “pleasure” to announce that the town has been awarded “final foreclosure” on a portion of the property at 11 Power Street, which once housed the former Griswold Cotton Mill, or Railroad Salvage building. “A very long saga has come to a conclusion,” he said. “Or, perhaps, has entered a new phase.”

He also updated the board on the auction of property, currently controlled by the town, between 507 and 517 Federal Street. The auction will take place behind town hall on April 21 at noon.

Ellis announced the state’s annual Chapter 90 highway aid award for the next fiscal year, approximately \$485,000, as well as approximately half of that sum earmarked for the town in a supplemental budget for the current fiscal year proposed by the Governor.

The next selectboard meeting will be held March 14.



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LOOKING BACK:
 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here’s the way it was on March 8, 2012: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

Wendell Examines Solar Contract

The Wendell energy committee met Monday night with Dave Thomas of Seaboard Solar and selectboard member Dan Keller, to ask questions and offer input on a contract the town has been negotiating with Seaboard to make the town of Wendell a solar power development “host customer.”

The February 28 special town meeting authorized the selectboard to enter into a solar power purchase or net metering credit purchase agreement. Monday’s meeting was called to better acquaint energy committee members about the agreement with Seaboard and its effects on Wendell.

Keller said the selectboard wants to sign the contract “as soon as possible,” but the board was open to further input from townspeople. He said it was possible the agreement could be signed at the next selectboard meeting on March 14.

Thomas explained the proposal this way: “We build the system, but the meter says Wendell.” Wendell would be allocated a certain amount of electricity generated by the photovoltaic array, such as 200 kilowatt hours, at a reduced rate for use in municipal buildings. For the rest of the electricity generated, Seaboard would pay Wendell “rent,” while selling the excess power elsewhere. Thomas estimated the net advantage to the town, between reduced electricity

At the Leverett Sugar House

Steam poured out of the Leverett Sugar House on Route 63 on a sunshiny March day. Peering inside the steam filled room, I found Ted Telega tending the fire.

Telega began sugaring in 1936 with his father in Sunderland, next door to George Hubbard’s house. Steve Hubbard eventually built a house on the site where that first sugar house once stood.

Telega didn’t seem to regret the demolition of that first sugar house. “It wasn’t that great a sugar house, more or less a shack with a dirt floor,” he remarked, as sweet steam swirled up around his ruddy features.

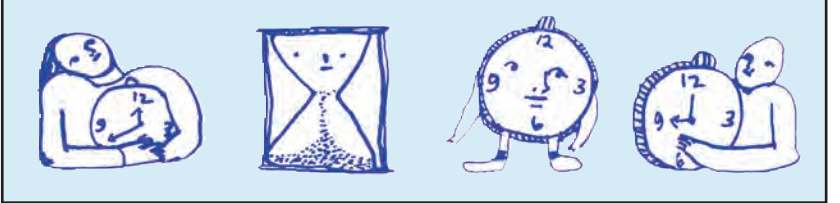
Telega’s grandfather and great grandfather sugared, going back over 100 years. Now Telega’s sons Ted and Danny are taking over, with the help of his daughter-in-law, Priscilla, who was busy bottling syrup. It looks like the Telega family will be sugaring for another 100 years.”

This is a new sugar house, built in 2006.

“We had another old sugar house out back,” Telega said. “But it was getting dilapidated. This is a good spot, here on 63.”

The Telega family set out 2,000 pails, and have 2,000 more taps on a pipeline. So far this season, they’ve produced more than 200 gallons of syrup.

Though they sell some syrup wholesale in drums, most of their syrup is sold at the sugar house.



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REJECTS from page A1

In response to some basic questions about the system from finance committee member John Hanold, town counsel Greg Corbo intervened. "I'm concerned about having a specific discussion as to where these cameras are going to be, what they can do, how they're going to be monitored," he said, explaining that public understanding of the system would be "detrimental to the purpose of installing the cameras."

"I don't think the decisions about surveillance on public property in town should be made on an *ad hoc* basis by individual departments," said finance committee chair Jen Audley, expressing sympathy for Dobosz given that other departments have enough in their budget to install cameras.

Natan Cohen of Precinct 5, a parent, asked if there would be oversight of how playground footage is stored and who would have access to it. Corbo again cut in, warning that the answers "defeat the purpose of having the cameras in the first place."

The discussion continued to spiral along these lines for another 20 minutes, during which it also came out that the town has no oversight policy regarding the park's current surveillance measures. Rec commissioner Dennis Grader said that youth at the skatepark "police themselves," and the majority of the vandalism is

believed to come from adults after hours, and appealed to the meeting to help the town protect its investments in the park. David Jensen of Precinct 2 thanked Corbo for convincing him to vote against the article.

When the question was finally called, the article was defeated by a majority of members.

The library trustees were granted funds to balance the library budget and make a plan to fix the drainage at the Carnegie library driveway (Articles 8 and 9); the assessors were given money to upgrade their technology (Article 10); and more money was spent to transport a local student to Smith Vocational school (Article 11).

The biggest-ticket item, \$315,000 to replace asbestos flooring at Hillcrest Elementary, was passed (Article 12), and the members approved spending against flooding on Montague City Road (Article 13).

The final article involved rewriting the zoning bylaws to address the existence of large-scale solar batteries and allow them to be "properly sited," subject to a site plan review. Town planner Walter Ramsey gave a detailed pitch for the new law, and was met with detailed cross-examination from Jensen, including concerns about measures requiring that pollinator habitat be planted. This article, too, was approved.

Just past the two-and-a-half hour mark, the meeting was adjourned.

**NEEDED** from page A1

of six precincts elected for three years on an alternating basis. That means that in each precinct, seven slots are contested each year, even if the incumbents indicate they will run again. And since people do move or quit, there are often open slots without a name on the ballot, often for one- and two-year seats.

Take the examples of Precinct 3, which is on the southeast portion of "the Hill" in Turners Falls, and Precinct 5, primarily downtown Turners. In the former, only three of the seven incumbent members have so far indicated they will run again for three-year seats this spring, and there are also two "open" two-year seats and four "open" one-year seats on the ballot. In Precinct 5, five of seven holding three-year seats have indicated they will run, but there are four two-year and one one-year "open" seats.

There could well be other openings as the date for turning in papers approaches, so check at the town clerk's office for the configuration in your precinct. The last date for taking out papers is Monday, March 28 and they must be turned in (with signatures of your neighbors) by March 30.

Limited Government

Most town meetings in Franklin County are organized as "open," which means that all registered voters are eligible to attend and vote at them. This was true in Mon-

tague until 1962 when the state legislature, at the request of town meeting, passed Massachusetts General Law Chapter 39 allowing a representative meeting here.

Looking back, the exact origins of Montague's 1962 decision are a bit sketchy. Representative town meetings first appeared in Massachusetts – where the open model had previously been the default – in 1915. Greenfield was authorized to use one in 1921, and the institution was added to the state constitution in 1926.

A warrant for Montague's annual town meeting in March 1946 had an article calling on the moderator to appoint a five-member committee to investigate the pros and cons of moving to a representative structure. That article passed, according to a record of the meeting, but the committee's recommendation in favor of a representative meeting was never acted on.

A 1949 town meeting authorized the moderator to appoint a similar study committee in response to a petition of 25 voters. A study committee was eventually created by town meeting in 1960, but got "bogged down" that fall, according to the *Greenfield Recorder-Gazette*, after members failed to attend and the chair resigned.

The committee revived the next year and, after several fits and starts, an enabling bill sponsored by state representative Walter Kostanski – who had also served on the local study committee –

passed the legislature.

The 1962 annual meeting then approved the proposal, unanimously. ("A hearty 'aye' rang through the hall on Moderator Dolan's call – and you could have heard a pin drop when he called for nays," the Greenfield paper wrote.) In March 1963 it went to a full townwide referendum, where it passed with 70% support, 1,556 votes to 663.

Why the representative option eventually produced this level of support, after years stuck in committee, is also somewhat murky. One possibility was that representative meetings were seen as less prone to being "packed" by special interest groups. This was the theory advanced in a 1953 *Recorder* editorial, which complained of appropriations advocated by special interests being approved at poorly-attended special town meetings in Franklin County:

"For the larger towns, such as Montague, the answer to the special groups might well be representative town meeting. In this way persons who cannot attend or who, it is sad to relate, evidence no interest are never the less represented. The special interest groups find their pet projects must bear scrutiny..."

This theory was repeated by a columnist writing on the eve of Montague's 1963 vote: "It means a more flexible, better informed... town meeting free of manipulation by town officials and minorities," meaning special interests.

"Those who do attend usually

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have a vested interest in one or two articles, or are officials protecting budgets and salaries of their departments," he wrote, adding optimistically that a "limited" town meeting would create a "body of experts on municipal affairs... as the interest increases, apathy departs."

And another columnist argued that the representative model would actually increase the power of the average citizen, because whereas a voter "might have been reluctant to take the floor on various issues on the past for any of a number of reasons," now "he could anonymously make his feelings known through his representative."

But the problem – or perception – of "special groups" with inordinate influence over town meeting has remained, in part because state conflict-of-interest law does not prohibit town employees from being elected to representative town meetings and voting on their own budgets (and salaries). And it is unclear how many local citizens are "anonymously" empowered through their precinct representatives.

As Bourbeau pointed out to us, the Turners Falls and Montague Center Fire and Water District is

governed by an open meeting.

Also Running

Numerous other local offices are also up for election this spring.

Three residents – Kathleen Burek, Rachel Stoler, and Catherine Dodds – have so far "taken out" but not returned papers for the seat on the board of health currently held by longtime member Al Cummings.

Incumbent Ann Fisk is running again for the board of assessors. Two of three incumbent library trustees, Margot Malachowski and Nancy Crowell, have taken out papers so far, and Malachowski has returned hers.

Both the town treasurer and town clerk, which are elected positions, have taken out papers, but only treasurer Eileen Seymour has returned them.

Chris Boutwell is up for re-election to the selectboard, and Mark Stevens is the incumbent tree warden. Each is the only candidate listed by the clerk's office as having taken out papers so far, though neither has yet returned his.

Mike Jackson provided additional reporting.



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MARCH 10, 2022

Above: Gill reader Don Plante comes through once again, this time with a sunrise shot over Barton Cove from the bridge.

NOTES FROM THE HEARTFELT CAFE

BY TROUBLE MANDESON

GREENFIELD – Dear readers, it’s a dream come true – by the time this column goes to print, I’ll be having an adventure in the beautiful state of Hawai’i. I never made the journey during my forty-three years as a West Coast native, but it’s finally becoming a reality, even if it is now a 17-hour trip instead of a six-hour straight shot.

My final destination is a small rural enclave on the eastern end of the Big Island called Paho. It’s located in the Puna district and is described as a “magical, jungle-y wild west,” beset with “outlaws and barefoot hippies.” Sounds exactly like my kind of place.

Some of you may know this area as the site of the Kilauea volcano lava flow in 2018. I’ll definitely be visiting the volcano and the black sand beaches it left behind.

I’ll admit I’m not doing a ton of research on my destination; I want to be open to the mystery of what awaits and I don’t need to know the details until they become relevant. My travel plans are solid, I know I’m in good hands, and everything will present itself to me in good time.

Before heading out to the badlands, I’ll spend one night on Waikiki Beach just to check out the ambiance. I may prefer the more casual



LEIGH OWEN PHOTO

Egg fruit, also called canistel, comes into season in the colder fall and winter months. It has a texture like a hard-boiled egg, and its taste has been compared to sweet potatoes, chestnuts, and Japanese kabocha squash.

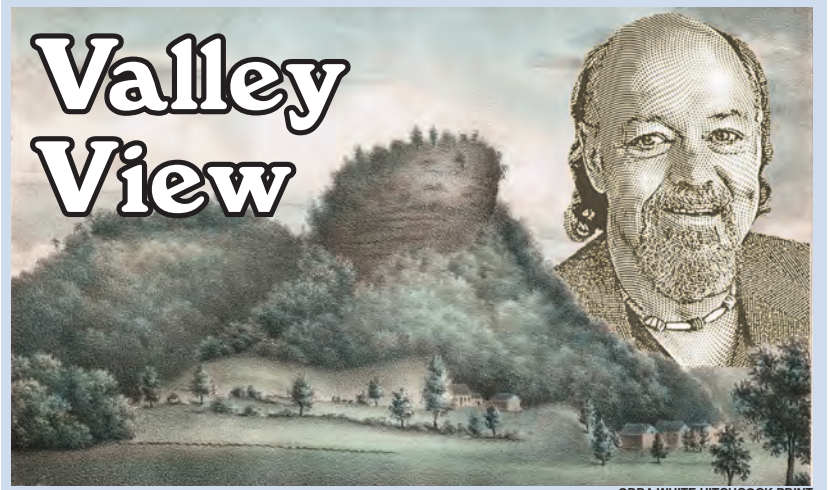
vacation hangout, but I am from L.A., land of shopping malls, and I can still enjoy and appreciate window shopping and having a fancy meal in the city before heading out to a more rural area.

If you’re old enough to remember “Hawaii 5-0” and the ubiquitous pink donut box, well, I’m planning a pilgrimage to Leonard’s

Bakery, still in existence since 1952 making their Portuguese *malasadas*, a fried and sugared confection. I’d like to surprise my hosts with a box – it sounds like a special treat for them, and what a great icebreaker for friends I haven’t seen in nearly 20 years.

I always travel with gifts for my see **HEARTFELT** page B8

Valley View



ORRA WHITE HITCHCOCK PRINT

By GARY SANDERSON

GREENFIELD – My overstuffed December woodshed has been hollowed out by now, leaving a tall, thin reminder along the back edges that the happy sound of spring birdsong is near.

“Don’t let the frigid mornings fool you,” I have many times told myself in recent days, looking up at what’s left. “It’ll soon be over.”

That’s obvious, with daylight lengthening and the sun creeping higher in the southern sky. Before long the backyard brook will roar to the accompaniment of lusty daybreak gobblers from the nearby ridge as eager shad migrate up valley to their June spawning beds.

Keeping a good fire is a primitive skill. I pride myself in being a good firekeeper, tending the soapstone woodstove around the clock during the cold months. To me, there’s none better than wood heat. Nonetheless, I can’t say I don’t look forward to the last flame reduced to cold, powdery, dead ash.

Likewise, I can’t lie. No, I don’t eagerly await the sound of the fall dump truck dropping next year’s fuel supply in front of the woodshed door. Yeah, yeah, I know it’s good exercise for a battered old man trying to remain relevant. But still, it’s an annual chore that only masochists welcome. Why? Because it’s hard friggin’ work, no matter how you view it.

Plus, one must be cautious. Working a woodpile has been the final act for many an unfortunate man trying to do his part, and that includes a few personal friends.

But why fret it? I can think of many worse endings, some of which I have witnessed. There are worse ways to meet one’s maker than by experiencing a sudden onset of weakness or dizziness, a peculiar twinge in the chest, shortness of breath and a sweaty face-first swoon to the next kingdom. We should all be so fortunate. My sons weren’t. They died in hospitals – no place I want to exhale my final breath.

Sorry. Didn’t intentionally drift off to that place. Sometimes it just happens.

What’s nicest to me about spring’s approach is increasingly longer days and earlier daybreaks.

Now that I’m retired, I rise daily to the first grey twinkle of morning light. Such early starts provide several uninterrupted hours of blissful silence. I can read, write, research or fire off emails seeking answers to vexing mysteries of the moment. It seems I’m always chasing for answers to something. It’s just another form of hunting and gathering – another primal chore, like fire-keeping, for which I’m wired.

A man on such a mission can accomplish a lot before the midday distractions of television, phone calls, and surprise visits, even those that are welcomed, not to mention unforeseen household problems that demand immediate attention. I savor early-morning stillness, in my world better than that of late night, when I may be tired but can usually rally for engrossing topics.

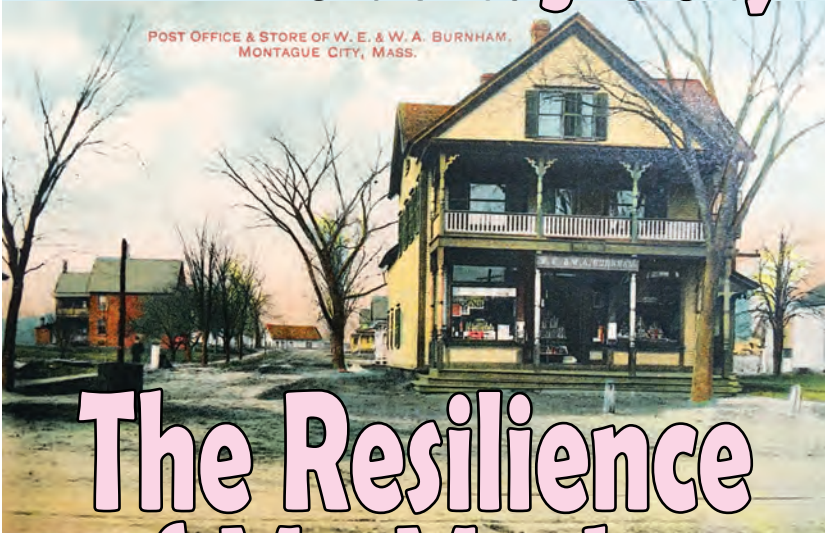
In recent days, my reading has taken me on an adventure to the north coast of Canada’s St. Lawrence Seaway. I was taken there by iconic, early-20th-century American anthropologist and University of Pennsylvania academic Frank Gouldsmith Speck (1881-1950). An expert in Eastern Algonquian and Iroquoian culture in northeastern North America, Speck preferred to study native people who were still practicing their old ways when governments and missionaries were committed to expunging them. The chic term activists today use for that cultural cleansing is “erasure.”

By reading Speck classics like *Penobscot Man* or *Naskapi*, about Eastern Algonquian people of the Northwoods, we get a glimpse into the lifeways of the indigenous Connecticut Valley people here before they were driven north and west by 17th- and early 18th-century colonizers lusting for their best land and forcing heartless diaspora upon them.

Even after native people here were forced onto reservations or fled to the hinterlands, the goal of their foreign oppressors was to *erase* their culture, religion, and language, a task instituted and enforced by uniformed officials of church and state.

By exploring the old ways by which Eastern Algonquians of the see **VALLEY VIEW** page B3

The Montague City Rambler



The Resilience of My Mother

By LILITH WOLINSKY

DENVER – I’m writing this *Rambler* at DIA, the once cutting edge, now slightly dated, but still quite functional airport on the flat brown plains outside of Denver. Denver is the place I’m from, and while gladly here for a milestone birthday visit with my mother, I wonder how I made do with so little

chlorophyll for the many years this place was home.

My mother’s brain disease, profoundly impacting every aspect of her life – a life deeply intertwined with my own – has me doing yet another round of introspection, looking again at the gifts and challenges she, and to a lesser degree my predominantly absentee father, bestowed upon me and my sib-

lings. The constraints – the short list – range from a lack of resources on the physical plane to subtle, perhaps genetically imprinted, patterns, requiring close and quiet excavation to discern.

Of the gifts (perhaps the short list) there is a resourcefulness borne of tight corners and poor odds, a pragmatic creativity, and a bright vision which sees possibility in *schmattas* and shambles.

In light of recent events in my village, I have been pondering vision most of all: who has it, who doesn’t, what spurs it, and the courage it takes to imagine any new future against the fear of disappointment and shame, even ruin, if one fails. In this sense, my mother’s own indomitable spirit, which has rebounded from a number of devastating life circumstances in her eighty years, has deeply marked me.

She raised five children by herself, while attending college and then law school, and abruptly lost the legal career she worked so hard for in the brief flash of surging

see **RAMBLER** page B2

Pet of the Week



DAKIN HUMANE SOCIETY PHOTO

“ADAM”

Adam is a sweet boy with an absolutely adorable face! He has lived as an indoor only cat and enjoys playing with toys. He was also the only pet in the home, and would prefer a quiet home with no other animals around.

New situations and new people can be a bit stressful for Adam, but if he is given the time he needs to adjust, he will come right out of his shell. He loves catnip as well and looking out the window and catch-

ing some rays of sun. He is quite the character!

Change is hard for this cat. This cat will be very nervous when you first bring him home.

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.

RAMBLER from page B1

blood that was a ruptured aneurysm. Law was a second career choice. Years before, studying art in NYC, she was sexually assaulted by the one man she knew there, an uncle assigned to be her protector, and her early, vivid dream was dashed.

She was so young, and with a badly fractured sense of self and safety, she moved back to small-town America and quickly began having children, the ever-present solution for women of that era. While she never returned to the formal pursuit of an artist's life, the walls of my childhood home were hung with her colorful abstract paintings, and her delicate wooden sculptures occupied small nooks in

flat places.

Still, today, with her mind guttering on broken tracks, she is full of plans: thoughts of multi-storied Victorian homes, with her children gathered, delicious food at the ready, two fluffy Persian cats and one poodle in attendance, and a school upstairs offering something vital to someone in need. These are dreams. She lives in what is essentially an underfunded group home for elders with cognitive impairment.

I lose patience, sometimes, now, with people or towns or employers who demonstrate a willful lack of vision, a refusal to seek knowledge and consider enlivened and balanced options, planting their feet instead in fear and doom and

shortcuts, looking askance at enthusiasm as reckless abandon, seeing only a sinking ship and not the moon on the horizon.

Vision is hard, but life without it is bleak, and harder still.

Mid-February, I had dusty yellow flowers blooming on a spindly, gray limbed bush at the periphery of my yard, anchoring my sorrow and gently lighting my late winter days, reminding me that sun and warmth is coming.

Perhaps it is this which is needed – odd juxtapositions: flowers growing out of cracks in the sidewalks, trees winding through debris in a junkyard, bushes blooming on an icy winter day, heart-break held in great love.



Surviving Breast Cancer

By Julie Cunningham

Part 20: How My Mom Saved My Life

AMHERST – My mother saved my life years ago with one simple request. She told me to put lotion on my neck and chest area every day, because when she was my age, no one told her that, and she regretted it.

I remember this memory vividly. She was sitting on her favorite chair by her pool. I had come out to either get something or ask a question. Without realizing the impact it would have, she told me to make sure to put lotion on my chest. Every day.

This is how I found my lump.

I did exams like they teach us to do. My doctors did exams. I had all the blood work and checkups I needed at 36. I took care of myself, and I thought I knew myself inside and out. But one day, Easter Sunday to be exact, I found a lump on my chest while I was putting on lotion. It was big, it was hard, and it was sticking out. It definitely didn't belong there. All it took was my hand going over it to realize I had a problem. A big one.

My beauty routine saved my life. Many times we come down on women for taking too long to take care of themselves. But for me, caring about myself was exactly the right thing to save my life.

I wouldn't use anything fancy. I think at the time I had dollar store lotion that I had gotten at the Dollar General in Greenfield. I would put lotion on my neck in the front and in the back and over my chest area every morning in hopes of staving off the impact of aging.

Now, no one wants to find a lump. But if you're going to find one, find it early. Find it as early as possible.

Because it was Easter, I didn't say anything that day. I had Easter with my friends and family, hoping against all hope that I was incorrect, that it wasn't cancer – it was a cyst, it was scar tissue, it was something else. Anything else.

When I woke up that Monday, hands shaking, I called my OB-GYN to get an appointment as soon as possible. Since I tend to have high anxiety, I explained that I did feel some sense of urgency but I wasn't sure what I was feeling. They got me in within the week and

on Friday I went in to see my doctor. She eased my fear, but referred me to a mammogram anyway.

The mammogram was also scheduled quickly. In another week I was in the office getting my first and only mammogram. (Now that I've had surgery, I won't need a mammogram – we have a different protocol.)

When I was getting the mammogram I remember the looks on each of the technicians' faces and the doctor's face that told me everything I needed to know. The first technician who did the actual mammogram didn't look too worried, but she looked worried enough. The second technician who did the ultrasound of the area did look quite worried. She looked like she was going to cry.

When the doctor came in to explain that she was worried, the look on her face was worse, and I knew at that point it would take a miracle, and even then it was probably still cancer.

On we went. I had an MRI, which confirmed our fears, and a biopsy. The surgeon did the biopsy and I could tell that she also thought it was cancer. I knew that they probably knew what they were looking at.

Nothing could prepare me, though, for that moment when I was officially told what it was. What a flood of emotions went over me at that moment – fear, sadness, worry, grief. There were even more appointments after that. I had a meeting with the oncologist, a PET scan, and something called Chemo Teach. I had a meeting with the plastic surgeon early on so I could set my sights on something positive. I remember being so overwhelmed and just wanting to start chemo so I didn't have to worry so much.

But what I am grateful for are the women who saved my life. Each time we teach a younger woman about how to take care of herself, what to look for and how to look for it, we give her knowledge that can save her life. I don't think my mother knew at that moment how important her advice was to me. I think she was just making a statement and a suggestion, but it ended up being the thing that saved me.

Senior Center Activities

MARCH 14 THROUGH 18

WENDELL

Wendell Senior Center is open for a foot care clinic the first Wednesday of each month. Call Katie Nolan at (978) 544-2306 for information or appointments. Senior Health Rides are now available. Contact Jonathan von Ranson at (978) 544-3758 to set up a ride.

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. Lunch is available Tuesdays through Thursdays.

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 3/14

10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
1 p.m. Knitting & Needlecrafts Circle

Tuesday 3/15

12 p.m. Tuesday Morning Knitters
1 p.m. Chair Yoga
3 p.m. Tai Chi

Wednesday 3/16

9 a.m. Veterans' Agent Hours
1 p.m. Bingo

Thursday 3/17

1 p.m. Cards & Games

Friday 3/18

10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise

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. Foot Clinic is on the second Monday of each month and the first Wednesday of each month we will hold Veterans Services. For any questions or concerns, please call Paula at (413) 423-3649.

Monday 3/14

9 a.m. Re-Store & Re-Emerge
10 a.m. New class coming soon

Tuesday 3/15

9 a.m. Good for YOU

10 a.m. Line Dancing

Wednesday 3/16

9 a.m. Strength & Conditioning

10 a.m. New Chair Yoga

12:30 p.m. Bingo

Thursday 3/17

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

10 a.m. Stretch & Balance

Friday 3/18

9 a.m. Open Sew Quilting

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.

Montague Community Television News

A Notoriously Fun Board to Join

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

TURNERS FALLS – A great way to get involved in the local community is to join a volunteer board!

The MCTV board is a notoriously fun one to be a part of. Board members here host film festivals, support local filmmakers, and ensure that MCTV keeps providing coverage of all of the important meetings and events happening in the town of Montague.

Becoming a board member is easy and low-commitment. Email

us at infomontaguetv@gmail.com for information about the next board meeting.

MCTV filed videos of two important meetings this month. One was the Special Town Meeting, which took place on March 3, and the other was the Montague select-board meeting which adjourned on March 7.

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

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VALLEY VIEW from page B1 Northland were still living when he observed them, anthropologist Speck opens a window into the way of life of the indigenous people who lived here long ago.

Many years ago, I bought and read *Penobscot Man: The Life History of a Forest Tribe in Maine (1940)*, and I still often pull it from my library as a fact-checking reference. The book focuses on Maine's Eastern Abenaki Penobscot people, coastal cousins of the Western Abenaki of northern New Hampshire and Vermont, and also related by marriage and Eastern Algonquian custom to central Massachusetts' Nipmucks and the native people from our neck of the woods referred to as the "Pocumtuck Confederation" by Deerfield historian George Sheldon.

My latest Speck read, *Naskapi: The Savage Hunters of the Labrador Peninsula (1935)*, came to me by way of the University of Oklahoma Press' annual Christmas sale. Because Naskapi were Eastern Algonquian, their cosmos was closely related to that of genetically and linguistically related people from our lower Connecticut Valley. We're talking about shared customs like ceremonial hunting, butchering, and feasting of bears, fishing for and preparing salmon, trout and sturgeon, and even their nomadic seasonal hunter/gatherer travels and villages.

A peculiar new paradigm shift wants to designate as Abenaki the indigenous people native to this place. The Confederation that Sheldon described was comprised of Pocumtuck, Norwottuck, Waranoke, Agawam, and maybe even Nipmuck people, with long-standing marriage ties to the Abenaki and Pennacook to their north as well as the Mohicans who lived west to the Hudson River.

Not until very recent years has anyone tried to designate them as Abenaki. In fact, experts like Eastern Algonquian linguist extraordinaire Ives Goddard hold that based on language, they represented distinctive groups whose dialects would have bordered on unintelligible.

The current confusion may originate with a band of Abenakis known as Sokoki, who showed up to populate the area of present-day Vernon, Vermont and Northfield before 1640. They are believed by most experts to have come here from southern Maine to flee European plagues brought by sailing ships, though others hypothesize that the Sokoki were from the Wabenaki north.

Is this recent shift being used to buttress a thus-far-unsuccessful effort by Wabenakis from Champlain Country to gain federal recognition as a "tribe," by linking Abenakis to Historic Deerfield? It's a hot, and divisive, topic.

Nevertheless, the Native people who lived here and their cousins from the distant north may have eaten different diets, worn slightly different skins and furs, and built

different dwellings dictated by climate, but at their spiritual and ritualistic core they were similar, and thus worthy of comparison.

Something else that caught my attention appeared in a bibliographic Speck footnote naming *Life and Sport on the North Shore* by Canadian naturalist N.A. Comeau as a source of information about Naskapi custom. Published in 1909 and reprinted in 1923 and 1954, the book is still in print.

What interested me most was the author's surname Comeau, my maternal grandmother's Acadian French family from Nova Scotia. When cursory online investigation found a direct link, as I suspected it would, I had skin in the game, always an added enticement.

My grandmother Adele Marie Comeau, was born and raised in Comeauville/Clare County/St. Mary's Bay, Nova Scotia, at the mouth of the Bay of Fundy. Her people were fishermen, mariners, merchant marines, farmers, seamstresses, actors and who knows what else. She and the author were indeed from the same Bay of Fundy roots and neighborhood.

I'm confident that, had I discovered author N.A. Comeau before my grandmother died many years ago, she probably would have recognized him as kin. She was still a young girl living in Comeauville, N.S., when *Life and Sport on the North Shore* was published.

Napoléon-Alexandre Comeau (1848-1923) was the son of a Hudson Bay Company employee. As a result, he grew familiar with Native villages and customs, eventually living with native hunters in hunting and fishing camps. He was also fluent in five languages, three of them Native languages of the Northland, including Montagnais-Naskapi.

French was his native tongue, and he learned English as a teen sent by his father to a school in Trois-Rivières, Quebec. His Comeauville grandfather had moved his family across to the Bay of Fundy's western shore in Trois-Rivières during the final quarter of the 18th century.

The author Comeau bore witness to and participated in hunting and fishing customs that few white men capable of coherently writing about it have experienced. He knew the ins and out of setting ingenious snares and dead falls to capture furbearers as well as the trapping, spearing, cleaning, preparing and storing fish reserves.

What he wrote more than 100 years ago is still an important window into Naskapi culture, which, when reduced to the lowest denominator, is not much different than that of the Connecticut Valley's Pocumtucks.

So, there you have it – another day, another log on the fire, another winter reading adventure – all to the faint trickle of sugarbush saplines dripping toward another glorious budding of spring.

It never gets old.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Three Ambulances Declined; Sounds Heard on Randall Road; Hit-And-Run By Garbage Truck; Cursed Town Hall Elevator

Monday, 2/28

6:16 p.m. 911 abandoned call. Upon callback, female states her sister was having a seizure but has come around now, and doesn't want an ambulance. Officer advised.

6:23 p.m. Caller states that after the last snowstorm, the four corners at Old Sunderland and East Taylor Hill Roads were not cleaned up very well; requesting DPW be notified and asked to clean it up. Officer advising road is plowed just fine.

Tuesday, 3/1

12:46 a.m. Caller reports upstairs neighbor is stomping on the floor and causing other loud sounds. Officer spoke to a female about the complaint. Female advises her uncle is disabled and sometimes accidentally runs into things. They will keep the noise down.

3:18 a.m. Caller from Randall Road reports hearing someone outside her residence; requesting officer check area. Officer checked entire vicinity and did not locate anything.

9:35 a.m. Caller from Randall Road heard someone "jiggle" her kitchen door-knob and heard footsteps outside. Officers checked area. No footprints in the snow.

12:44 p.m. Unwanted male sitting near Walgreens. Party moved along.

1:24 p.m. Caller reports a tall male dressed in black is harassing people in the Walgreens parking lot and also filming them. Property owner called to speak with responding officers. Male advised of options.

7:09 p.m. Caller states that someone just came into Family Dollar and said they were hit at the intersection; two cars moved into parking lot; no injuries reported. Both vehicles could be driven away. Citation issued.

8:55 p.m. Caller states she hit some ice and slid into a tree on North Leverett Road; reports some mild knee pain but does not want an ambulance. Airbag deployed. Caller unsure she wants officer to respond; advised caller that since she called 911, they have to. Tow requested. Officer requesting DPW be notified that roads are slick in the area. DPW foreman notified; will take a ride and check the roads.

Wednesday, 3/2
12:46 a.m. Caller reports a female party outside Cumberland Farms wearing all pink with a white jacket; possibly under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Caller states female has said strange things to people who have passed by her. Officer advises contact made with female party. Female did state she was

drinking earlier in the day, and is stranded, trying to find a ride to the Days Inn in Greenfield. Courtesy transport provided.

1:24 a.m. Caller from Randall Road reports her next door neighbor is being loud and banging items intentionally. Caller also states involved female is yelling at them through the wall. Officer advises female party has since calmed down and made statements of the other half going up to her window. No footprints seen by officers indicating other party has done so. Caller requesting police keep an eye on her building, as she has concerns people are messing with her.

10:06 a.m. Officer flagged down at Avenue A and Third Street by a person reporting a needle on the ground nearby. Item retrieved and disposed of.

8:29 p.m. Assisting with traffic control on Avenue A while an airplane is being towed to the airport.

8:47 p.m. Caller from L Street reporting that her neighbor is playing music very loudly and banging on her door, complaining about the trash barrels. Officer advises quiet upon arrival; he spoke to both parties and advised them of options.

Thursday, 3/3

7:58 a.m. Caller advises that his truck was struck by a Republic trash vehicle that was picking up the trash at Cumberland Farms on Saturday morning. The vehicle left without notifying anyone that they had hit his truck. The store manager looked at video footage and witnessed the Republic truck hit the caller's truck. Caller contacting insurance company; he will call back if he needs anything from the police department.

12:59 p.m. Caller states that she is stuck in the Town Hall elevator; doors will not open. Shelburne Control toning out Turners Fire. Party freed from elevator. FD and building maintenance remaining on scene. Elevator will be closed for the day.

2:51 p.m. 911 caller from Third Street reporting

some type of disturbance involving some juveniles. One may have a knife. Officer located a male party and his father who appear to be involved. Spoke to two involved parties; no knife used or used to threaten. Kids gone upon arrival.

4:01 p.m. A 36-year-old Turners Falls woman was arrested on a default warrant.

5:44 p.m. A 36-year-old Turners Falls man was arrested on a straight warrant.

Friday, 3/4

3:39 a.m. Caller from Franklin Street reports a truck idling for over two hours. Caller states the noise is loud and he is also concerned for the driver, as the vehicle has not moved. Officer advises male party in truck appears to be fine; will stay in the area for a bit.

5:49 a.m. Caller from Randall Road reports hearing noises outside of her window, and believes someone is on the property. Officer advises nobody in area; neighbors were getting ready to leave for work outside, which may have been the noise that the caller heard.

8:59 a.m. Caller reports that a white-and-tan bulldog charged at her while she was out walking her dog on Clark Avenue. She reports being knocked to the ground. No injuries to her or her dog. Message left for animal control officer. Female called back to report she believes her finger is injured. She would like to speak with an officer. She declined an ambulance. Caller will call her son for a ride to the hospital. Officer checking area for dog. ACO called in; all info given to him.

1:13 p.m. ACO spoke to a female resident on Turnpike Road regarding custody of a dog. Both involved parties were advised that the dispute would have to be settled in court.

4:19 p.m. Caller reported that a neighbor's dog lunged at him on Third Street; dog was on a very long lead. Officer spoke with both parties; dog owner advised of proper-

ty line and told not to go on private property.

5:38 p.m. A 36-year-old Turners Falls man was arrested on a straight warrant.

6:56 p.m. Multiple calls reporting vehicle into tree on L Street. Officer advises there was airbag deployment. Shelburne Control advised; TFFD en route. Officer advises party Mirandized via card. Rau's requested for tow. Officer advises operator was able to get a ride home.

Saturday, 3/5

1:03 a.m. Caller states that they are blasting the music again at Hillside Plastics. Advised of complaint.

8:35 p.m. Caller reporting that someone threw a snowball at her vehicle while she was driving near the Shea Theater and it hit her windshield. Caller stated that it looks like a few snowballs have been thrown in the area. Referred to an officer.

Sunday, 3/6

11:16 a.m. Caller states that his vehicle was unlocked and parked behind his Second Street apartment building. Overnight, someone entered his vehicle and stole his medication. Advised caller this would be put on record. PD units advised. Caller called back stating he doesn't like that nothing is happening, and would like to actually speak with an officer; states he needs a report to get medicine refilled. Officer speaking with caller.

5:34 p.m. Caller from Avenue A states she was confronted while taking her garbage out; male appears to be aggressive and in her face; however, she is not able to hear what he is saying due to being deaf. Caller states she has reported this in the past but he continues to do it. Negative contact with either party after multiple attempts.

6:39 p.m. Walk-in stating she was at Unity Park when a male grabbed her arm and stated "let's go, kid" and tried to take her. Caller states she kicked him and ran. Male described as dressed all in black and wearing a mask. Referred to an officer.

we've still got tote bags!

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OBITUARY

John S. Janek (1926-2022)



BEDFORD, MA – John S. Janek, 95, of Bedford, died peacefully at his home on March 4, 2022. He was born in Turners Falls, Massachusetts on October 24, 1926. He was the only child of the late Steven J. and Rose (Sjka) Janek.

John was raised in Turners Falls and was a graduate of Turners Falls High School, Class of 1944. He was a talented violinist, voted most musical, and during his high school years performed with various symphony orchestras and polka bands in the area.

Following high school, he enlisted in the U.S. Army in March of 1945 and served until 1946. He was stationed in the Philippines at the end of the war.

He was a graduate of Tufts University and received his degree in Biology and he earned a Masters in Chemistry at Boston University.

He was employed by Tufts New England Medical Center in Boston as a bio-chemist until his retirement in 1991.

An outdoors sportsman, John enjoyed sailing, hunting, fishing, photography, and the Boston Red Sox. An enthusiast of tractors, music, dogs, woodworking, and

the sea, John had a sharp mind and great curiosity for learning.

John was predeceased by his wife, Dorothy (Foley) Janek and his daughter Caroline Janek.

He is survived by two daughters, Susan Clark of Devens, Jennifer Whitman and her husband William of North Attleboro, his son Steven Janek and Dr. Lindsey Bazzone of Worcester and Annette Janek of Virginia Beach, grandchildren, Katherine, Elizabeth and Zachary Clark, Timothy and Jeffrey Whitman, and Joshua, Nicole, Sarah, and Ceili Janek as well as great grandchildren, Madison Landine, Dexter Janek, Shelby Whitman, and Mason Davini.

A wake will be held at the Bedford Funeral Home, 167 The Great Rd., Bedford, from 6:30 to 8:30 in the evening on Friday, March 11.

Funeral Mass at St. Michael Catholic Church, 90 Concord Rd., Bedford, on Saturday, March 12, at 11 in the morning.

Burial will be held privately.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions are encouraged to be made in John's memory to the Disabled American Veterans, State House, Room 546, Boston, MA 02133.

EXHIBITS

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Canal Series: Recent Paintings* by Allen Fowler. Fowler's work is "at the crossroads of abstract expressionism and form and structure." March 4 through 13, and March 23 through 30. Reception this Saturday, March 12 at 1 p.m.

Artspace, Greenfield: *A Study of Disorder: The Art of Steve Roth*. Roth is a self-taught artist who began painting in 2020 with the aim of raising awareness for both the deaf and the CMT communities. Through March.

Looky Here, Greenfield: *Community Art Show*, with over 30 local artists. Through March.

Fiddleheads Gallery, Northfield: *From Fields to Table II*, an exhibit celebrating farms, farmers, and the food they produce. March 11 through April 24, with a reception on Sunday, April 3 from 1 to 4 p.m.

Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne Falls: *Redemption*, daguerreotypes of enslaved people re-imagined in enamel and compassion by Jennifer Davis Carey. Through May 2. Reception this Saturday, March 12 at 2 p.m.

Shelburne Arts Coop Gallery, Shelburne Falls: *Thaw*, group show of artisan members' work focusing on a theme of warming up to spring. Through March.

Local Art Gallery, Mill District, North Amherst: *Kamil Peters*. Peters' paintings are featured in the window gallery at this exhibit space and art supply store.

Gallery A3, Amherst: *Interwoven: Words and Images*, a collaboration of six women artists. Online artists' discussion and

reading on Thursday, March 17 at 7:30 p.m.

Anchor House of Artists, Northampton: *Healing, Awakening, Resolution: Reawakening of Peter Knapp*. Knapp fills three galleries with wall and floor artwork and woodblock prints, created after a cardiac event in 2012. Through March. Reception this Friday, March 11, at 6 p.m. *Deep Space and The Sun Spots*, by Charles Miller. Part three of a year-long revolving exhibition to celebrate the artist's 90th year. The paintings are primed with pop and rhythm. The exhibit will fill the museum space at this wandering venue. Through March. Reception this Friday, March 11, 6 p.m. Concert with woodwinds on March 13 at 5 p.m.

Brattleboro Museum & Art Center, Brattleboro: Seven new exhibits open this Saturday, March 12 with work by M. Carmen Lane, Roberto Visani, Yvette Molina, Mildred Beltré Martínez, Sachiko Akiyama, Louisa Chase, and Anne Spalter. Information at www.brattleboromuseum.org.

FESTIVALS

FRI-SUN, APRIL 8-10
Bombyx Center, Florence: **ColliderFest!** feat. *Lido Pimienta, Combo Chimbita, Les Filles de l'Ilhigadad, Alash Ensemble, and Garth Stevenson*. \$. See www.bombyx.live/colliderfest for more information.

SAT-SUN, APRIL 23-34
Franklin County Fairgrounds, Greenfield: **Mas Grass** feat. *Leon Trout, 3 The Hard Way, Rhythm Incorporated*, and many more \$. See kotvibes.com for lineup and information.

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 information.

THURS-SUN, MAY 19-22
Nova Arts, Keene: **The Thing in the Spring** feat. *Sammus, Lee Rinaldo, Nat Baldwin & Stella Silbert, Jeff Parker, Myriam Gendron, Kimaya Diggs, Tashi Dorji, The Huntress and Holder of Hands* and many more. \$. See novaarts.org for lineup and information.

FRI-SUN, MAY 27-29
Camp Keewanee, Greenfield: **StrangeCreek Campout** feat. *Dumpstaphunk, Max Creek, Badfish, Prince/Bowie, Consider the Source, Bella's Bartok, Adam Ezra Group*, and many more. \$. See strangecreekcampout.com for lineup and information.

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 information.

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 information.

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.

TV REVIEW

The Porter (CBC, 2022)

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – I found a TV series online that has just premiered out of Canada on February 21. Alfre Woodard, a well-known African American actress I have seen in several films, is involved as one of the producers.

The Porter is about the story of African Americans who were railroad workers in the 1920s known as porters. From some other information I read about it, this was a coveted job – it's hard for me to understand why, because those individuals had next to nothing in the way of rights back then. My best guess as to why is that it gave what resembled good pay.

At one point in the episode, there is a need for somebody to pay the bill for a porter's uniform. That sounds like a really nice thing to be done. This all leads me to point out that this will apparently be the story of the first black workers' union.

The first episode does a good job of capturing how the 1920s were. It involves jazz music and bootleg whiskey being around, and these porters all being called "George." I do not know why that was done, but I guess that is how these individuals were treated back then. I



already know they were called this due to seeing them in *Roots: The Next Generation*.

So this show is at least historically accurate when it comes to the history happening then. I don't really know any of the actors in this, but like I said I know Alfre Woodard, and that is some good indication that this as a whole will be a good series.

Also, I know how things went down for those individuals in *Roots*, but I wonder how it will be for what is going to be focus on here. That is a reason for someone to go online to check out this series – if that is not any kind of ringing endorsement, then I do not know what is. I have personally found I have liked a lot of movies and films about Black history.

A Letter to the World 4



Last Week's Locations:

6: The Waterfall at Puffer's Pond, Amherst

7: In the planter by the Shea Theater, Turners Falls, looking across to the northwest side of Avenue A.

PHOTOS AND GNOME BY JAN ATAMIAN

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

Bestie the gnome patiently waits, as the wind whistles through the pines, and the blue ice gives way to the light of spring. She longs to hear the tap, tap, tapping of the pileated woodpecker, flashing its red top for all to see.

Do you recognize any of these locations?



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REMINDER

There's Still Free Sand For Seniors!

MONTAGUE – Sand, for icy steps and sidewalks, is still available for free to senior Montague residents who might be confined indoors. The Turners Falls Fire Department, the Montague Department of Public Works, and Greenfield Savings Bank have joined together to deliver sand to home-bound seniors.

Feel free to contact any of the folks listed below for arrangements:

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Greenfield Savings Bank: Linda Ackerman, (413) 775-8261

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MONTV / MUSIK / MOUNTAIN



xlvi: Leigh Gregory

By J. BURKETT

TURNERS FALLS – Hi everyone! Here is another interview. Leigh Gregory is a yet another cool, overlooked musician, at least in Massachusetts. He used to live in Connecticut in the 1980s and now lives in San Francisco.

I met him back in the old days, and we have kept in touch a bit over the years. He even appeared on one of the Mystra compilations, *F/G: Filigree-FrogGoth*. He continues to play his songs, and finally has his first solo LP coming out soon. Solo CDs are still available, as are releases by his old bands including Mellow Drunk, the Products, and White Sails.

Hopefully he will come east sometime soon, and we can all see him live somewhere in the valley!

MMM: So I know you from the late '80s UConn... the *Dispossessed* days. What was that scene like for you? Did you tour at all? And were you influenced by other stuff?

LG: Great that you knew about the *Dispossessed*, and very cool if you got to see the band.

I had moved from London back to So. Cal for a couple of weeks summer of '85 when my old bandmates from the San Diego band The

Products offered me an open invitation to come to Connecticut to hang out for a bit. I took them up on the offer, then stayed for six years!

My first year in CT was spent partying, working for Strawberries Records, and thinking about getting a band together. Since I'd spent quite a bit of time in London, my musical tastes were quite shaped by what was going on between 1982 and 1985 in the UK, plus I was a big radio listener to Janice Long and John Peel. I got to know bands such as Felt and the Go-Betweens, two bands I still reference all the time in my songs, from Janice, and then stuff like The Fall, Bad Seeds, Triffids and many others from John Peel.

I was lucky in that I met Jeremy and Charles Dube within the first week of moving to CT. Jeremy was a fantastic guitar player who could easily reference Jimmy Page and other hard rock guitar players, but he was also a huge Church fan, while Charles knew his music very, very well and was a big Joy Division and the Damned guy, and he knew all the punk stuff having done time behind the kit with Jack Tragic and Chronic Disorder.

So, I originally brought along my lyrics and some of the music and from me had influences coming from The Only Ones, Joy Division,

Bad Seeds, Triffids... stuff like that. The Church, Bauhaus, Cure, Chameleons, Killing Joke... all were in there somewhere amongst all of us.

We never made it out of Connecticut, surprisingly. I moved back for a spell to So. Cali winter of '88, and it was around that time we had a promising letter regarding the band from Enigma Records, so I was trying to get the guys to move to So Cal. We also had "The Being for the Benefit of Mr. Kite" single out on Lee Joseph's Dionysus Records based in LA. So it made much more sense for everyone to relocate with the music we were doing, but everyone in the band at that point were all kinda Connecticut homebodies, so that never happened.

Plus Jeremy departed, so there was no point in doing the band any longer.

MMM: It's so sad Jeremy passed away. And so young too. Am I correct that *The Dispossessed* only had one LP, *Sister Mary*? Was that the only album you are on, and were you happy with it?

LG: Yeah, that was the only *Dispossessed* full-length LP, and unfortunately *Sister Mary* came out after Jeremy left us. We did have the "Mr. Kite" single out during the time we were active.

The good thing about the LP is that Di Di Records in Greece picked it up right away and re-issued it, so it really got it out into the world, and it still occasionally shows up here and there – a friend at Amoeba Records here in SF mentioned to me not long ago that one of the clerks in the store was playing the record and really diggin' it! Hearing stuff like that always makes it worth it after all these years.

MMM: It's a great and overlooked LP! Was *The Dispossessed* named after the *Ursula Le Guin* novel?

LG: That's always been asked about the name, but I took the name directly from a short John Berryman poem called, yes, "The *Dispossessed*."

Same sort of thing has been hap-

pening with the first song on the new record, "Allison's Not Happenin' Anymore" – where folks think it's a reference to the Lemonheads, where it's actually a reference to Michael Head's first band The Pale Fountains and their song "Jean's Not Happening."

MMM: Are there other authors you like? Do you ever write stuff that's not lyrics? Also, do you believe in astrology or the paranormal?

LG: Yes, I'd like to think I'm a big reader of fiction and poetry, and I'd say around a good portion of the time I'm writing a lyric around a character or plot that I've read about in a novel or short story. The best thing about being a songwriter for me is creating fictional stories in my lyrics.

One quick example would be the song "Everything and Nothing" from *One Thousand Lights* [the third LP by Mellow Drunk, reissued on Tip Top Recordings] which retold the story of the girl who falls to her death at the beginning of Ali Smith's *Hotel World*.

I used to write short stories many years ago, but they take a lot of time and work. I write poetry all the time, but pretty much all of the poetic ideas get transformed into lyrics as I only have time for one or the other. Lyrics can be tricky in that you have to trim back your prose or poetry to fit a melody, and the song is in control of that, so you have to bend quite a bit with your words sometimes.

I haven't followed astrology for quite some time, though I'm an Aquarius and share a birthday with Tim Buckley and Sylvain Sylvain, who are sadly both departed. I'd recommend the Collins poem "Horoscopes for the Dead" if you haven't read it. I'm open to paranormal experiences. Maybe had a couple myself, but that's for another time.

MMM: Do you usually write lyrics or music first?

LG: It depends upon whatever strikes me. One big advantage with cell phones, amongst all the drawbacks, is that it's easy to wake up with a song idea one morning and

before it disappears be able to record it quickly so you remember it.

I probably come up with a lot of the music very randomly, then match what will become a song to a rough lyrical idea – but as I mentioned, the lyric has to be tied to a melody, so once I figure that out I'll complete the lyric.

MMM: What was the recording process like for you when recording the new album [Sun Salt & Air on Tip Top Recordings]? Was this in a studio you had used before?

LG: With the prohibitive cost of recording studios, I've done lots of work from home for many years now. I set up a basic home recording studio back in the late '90s, so pretty much everything I've done, from the Mellow Drunk records, to the solo folk recordings (*Rest Your Weary Head* and *Rainy Season Never Ends*), to the electric solo recordings (*1973* and the most recent *Sun Salt & Air*) have many tracks that were done from my simple home studio.

The trick is to get the tracks mixed properly, so I've been lucky to know Damien Rasmussen, whom I've worked with on the mixes for many years.

MMM: Anything else? New recording plans for 2022?

LG: I've been working on a new record that I hope to finish up by the end of the year. Right now I've been going through lots of new demos, and my philosophy this time around is to finish as many new songs as possible, then see which songs stand out once I have a good collection.

I was going to play a couple of shows in London back in April 2020, but those were canceled due to the pandemic, so I'm hoping sometime this year to get back and play again. Everything is still way up in the air but I hope by the spring to at least have some tentative plans.

Also, the new Leigh Gregory record *Sun Salt & Air* is delayed due to the shortage of vinyl, so fingers crossed once that's released (late spring or early summer 2022) that might open a few more doors – one never knows!

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



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.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Karen Zanes, Allysen Callery, Frozen Corn, Stella Kola*. \$ 8 p.m.

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

Race Street Live, Holyoke: *Iceage, Sloppy Jane*. \$ 8 p.m.

Shutesbury Athletic Club: *Adam S.Z*. \$ 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.

Next Stage Arts, Putney VT: *Gamelan Galak Tika*, Balinese gamelan, directed by *Gusti Komin*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Black Nash, The Musical Chairs, Goldsetter*. \$ 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *The Big Takeover*. \$ 8 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

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

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

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16

Race Street Live, Holyoke: *Sheer Mag, Landowner, Topsy*. \$ 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 18

Shutesbury Athletic Club: *Aida O'Brien*. \$, benefit for Transhealth Northampton and the Okra Project. 6 p.m.

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.

Mount Toby Friends Meeting-

house, Leverett: *Magpie*. \$ 7:30 p.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 Burt*. 9 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 24

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

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

FRIDAY, MARCH 25

10 Forward, Greenfield: *The Greys, Hedge Witch, Anjali Rose, Oli D Remembers*. \$ 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Fennario, Grateful Dead tribute*. \$ 8 p.m.

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

SATURDAY, MARCH 26

Brewery at Four Star Farms, Northfield: *Erin Harpe Country Blues Duo*. 6:30 p.m.

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

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro:

Lorkin O'Reilly, Melanie MacLaren. \$ 8 p.m.

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

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Dead Man's Waltz*. \$ 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, MARCH 27

Race Street Live, Holyoke: *Thao, Why Bonnie*. \$ 8 p.m.

TUESDAY, MARCH 29

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

THURSDAY, MARCH 31

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Magruga, Nighttime, Alexia Avina, hoonah*. \$ 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, APRIL 1

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

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

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *A Band of Killers, The Silks*. \$ 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

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Moon Hollow, JJ Slater, High*

Tea, Olivia Nied. \$ 6:30 p.m.

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

Palladium, Worcester: *Rise Against, Pennywise*. \$ 7 p.m.

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.

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

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13

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



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HEARTFELT from page B1 hosts. Often it's food like local jam or honey; mostly it's maple syrup. I bring enough to gift each household I visit. Naturally, I'll bring food home with me, too. Sundays in Pahoia feature a large farmers market with 150 vendors selling local goods, so I'm sure I'll find plenty to sample and buy including shaved ice, macadamia nuts, honey, and bananas.

I'm looking forward to learning about Hawaiian culture on this trip. I'm already intrigued when a message from my host is peppered with

Hawaiian: "Aloha! You'll love visiting the aina. You'll be oha-na while you're here, an antee. Mahalo!"

I had to look it up to find out it meant: "Hello! You'll love visiting the island. You'll be considered an extended family member while you're here, an auntie to the younger generation. Goodbye!" Which is perfect, as I love being an auntie to both kids and adults. It's really an honor to be welcomed into any family which fits right into my ethos of making sure all are fed, warm, and loved.

On this trip I want to be aware of cultural differences in food. What I eat may be as important as how I consume it. If I eat with my fingers, will I be encouraged or frowned at? Is burping after a meal considered a good sign or bad manners? I'd like to think I can approach dining in a new culture with respect and good intentions.

I have no problems asking questions and I'm game to eat pretty much anything. While traveling in northeastern Australia I once bit into a wriggling witchetty grub on a nature hike and gobbled down kangaroo meat pies in town. I've cooked a roadkill ptarmigan while living on the road and survived on jars of peanut butter and cream-of-soup sandwiches, so I feel confident there's not much that can cross my plate that I won't eat.

I'm very curious to taste many of the traditional Hawaiian dishes I've heard about. The ubiquitous poi, the thick paste made from taro root I think I learned about in elementary school; laulau, a green leaf similar to spinach and often cooked with meats; a scrumptious-sounding roasted-in-the-ground Kalua Pig; and poke, which is sashimi, or raw fish, marinated and served in chunks with seaweed and rice and sesame seeds.

Then there are the exotic fruits that grow there: mango, lilikoi (passionfruit), breadfruit, and lychee, and the not-so-exotic bananas, guavas, and pineapples. I am already salivating at the thought of



Above: Fiddlehead ferns, hō'i'i in Hawaiian, grow year-round on the islands. They are mostly harvested from the wild, but some are grown commercially.



Top right: A Tropical Gold pineapple grown in Hawai'i.



Lower right: Rambutan, from the Malay word rambut or hair, grows in Hawai'i in February and March. Its hairy outside holds a ball of sweet, juicy fruit inside, much like a lychee.

all that luscious, sweet fruit, some of which I grew up with in Southern California.

To get myself into the mood for my upcoming trip, I'm going to share a recipe for the Hawaiian poke bowl, which is described as a deconstructed sushi roll, customized in the poke shop much like a

sandwich from Subway. E hau 'oli i kâu 'ai (Bon Appetit)!

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.

HAWAIIAN POKE BOWL

Poke Marinade

- 2 Tbsp soy sauce
- 2 Tbsp rice vinegar
- 2 Tbsp sesame oil
- 1 Tbsp of oil and lime juice
- 1 tsp honey
- ½ cup chopped green onions

- 1 cubed mango
- 1 Tbsp sesame seeds

Marinate the fish – you can use tuna, salmon, yellowfish, or crab – for about 10 minutes in your refrigerator. Assemble the bowls, beginning with hot rice on the bottom, followed by fish, veggies, and fruit if desired.

Top with sesame seeds, dried seaweed, fried garlic or shallots, and add a sauce like the spicy aioli or a sesame vinaigrette. There are many different sauces you can make or use commercially.

Poke bowls can be a fun party food. Set up as a buffet, allowing guests to create and customize their own bowl.

Serves two.

Poke Sauce

- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 2 Tbsp of sriracha

Poke Bowl

- 12 oz. cubed sushi-grade fish
- 1 lg. cucumber, sliced
- 2 cups cooked white rice
- 1 thinly sliced avocado seaweed salad (from co-op or Asian market)
- 3 thinly sliced radishes
- ¼ cup chopped green onion

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