

# The Montague Reporter

YEAR 20 – NO. 19

also serving Irving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

\$1

EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

MARCH 24, 2022

## Proposed Bylaw Would Slow Future Wrecking Balls

By JEFF SINGLETON

**MONTAGUE** – A proposed new bylaw, which would allow the Montague historical commission to impose a delay of up to one year on the demolition of a public or private structure of “historic significance,” could appear on the May 7 annual town meeting warrant.

The bylaw was presented to the selectboard on Monday by historical commission member Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno, and supported by town planner Walter Ramsey. Though the deadline for articles has technically passed, selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz, who expressed strong reservations about the bylaw, said he was “inclined” to put the proposal on the

warrant if the commission can approve it by early April.

This puts the commission on a “tight timeline,” in the words of town administrator Steve Ellis. It has called a public hearing on a new version of the bylaw, with revisions recommended by town counsel, at its monthly meeting next Thursday, March 31 at 11 a.m. The commission has also scheduled an extra meeting for Monday, March 28 at 11 a.m. to discuss the hearing.

If passed, the measure would allow the commission to impose a delay of up to one year on the demolition of any building it considers “historically significant,” in order to encourage the owner to “seek out persons who might be willing

see **WRECKING** page A5

## Judge Orders Landlord To Fix Bed Bug Problem; Eviction Orders Dropped

By SARAH ROBERTSON

**ORANGE** – A housing court judge ordered the new owner of an apartment complex on East Main Street to immediately address a bed bug infestation during a contentious hearing on Friday in a civil case filed by the town of Orange.

The board of health first issued an emergency order to correct the

situation in July 2021, and filed a civil suit in Western Housing Court on November 9, the day Brendan Kuntz purchased the property. In December, Kuntz issued pre-eviction notices to eight tenants living in the four-unit building.

Kuntz appeared in court on Friday, where Judge Robert Fields ordered him to reimburse the tenants

see **PROBLEM** page A4



The four-unit building came to this newspaper's attention as the site of eight eviction notices served last December. The story, as it turned out, was more complicated.

### MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

## Statewide ‘Carbon Fee’ Endorsed by Montague

By JEFF SINGLETON

The Montague selectboard voted unanimously on Monday to endorse H.3292, the Massachusetts Green Futures Act, a bill in the state legislature that would impose a “carbon fee” on fuel imported into the state in the transportation and heating sectors which, according to the Energy News Network website, comprise approximately 74% of the state’s greenhouse gas emissions.

Montague energy committee member Sally Pick, who made the proposal, was joined by fellow committee member Bob Rueter and Jeff Clark of the advocacy group Climate Action Now at Monday’s meeting.

The board had been presented with a similar request on February 2, but declined to endorse the bill after member Matt Lord said a pre-

vious carbon fee proposal would have resulted in a “massive transfer of wealth from households to corporations.” Chair Rich Kuklewicz had then suggested that the benefits to Montague would be “only about five dollars.”

But prior to Monday’s meeting Lord reviewed the current bill, which includes a complex system of rebates to low-income residents and grants to cities and towns with large “environmental justice” communities, and had decided to support it. Pick cited an analysis projecting that residents whose income is in the “top 60%” in the state would see increases in their utility bills of about \$20 a month, but those in the lower brackets would “come out even or a little bit ahead,” if the bill passes.

As for Kuklewicz’ estimate of see **MONTAGUE** page A7

## FirstLight Files Flow Proposals; River Conservancy Refuses to Sign

By MIKE JACKSON

**FRANKLIN COUNTY** – Another minor milestone was reached last Friday in the now nearly decade-long process to renew the federal hydroelectric generating licenses for the Northfield Mountain and Turners Falls projects, as owner FirstLight Power Resources placed on the public docket an “agreement in principle” (AIP) concerning the volume of water it plans to leave in the river to meet habitat needs.

The AIP on “flows and fish passage” is the outcome of FirstLight’s negotiations with two state agencies (the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife and the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program), two federal ones (US Fish and Wildlife and the National Marine Fisheries Services), and two nonprofits, the Nature Conservancy and the Connecticut River Conservancy – though the latter organization has refused to sign the document, and has publicly criticized its terms.



Turners Falls Station No. 1 would be updated to automate the flow through its turbines relative to that at the dam upstream.

The AIP is one among several FirstLight hopes to stitch together into a “settlement agreement” in order

see **FLOW** page A6

### REFLECTION

## If We Sing Through These Times...



Last Friday’s sing on the Common marked the second anniversary of the daily neighborhood phenomenon.

By RICHIE DAVIS

**MONTAGUE CENTER** – “Who could have imagined such times as these?”

That’s one of hundreds of songs that have kept more than a dozen of us singers on the Montague Common company for two years. Day in and day out. Rain, shine, blizzard, sleet, or lightning storm.

As the pandemic shuttered us in our homes back in mid-March 2020, no one could have believed two joggers running into each other on Taylor Hill

would have dreamed up a get-together by a handful of neighbors the following day to share songs.

Or that some of those singers would end up saying, “Let’s do it again.” Or that it would keep going, day after day to offer hope through dark times.

“People were desperate for something,” remembers Laurie Davidson, who with Tamara Kaplan suggested the gathering that March 18.

I was in that Town Common singing circle which, without a designated leader, organizing committee or

see **SING** page A6

### GILL-MONTAGUE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

## Hillcrest Replacement Is On the Agenda

By MIKE JACKSON

**GILL-MONTAGUE** – Thanks to an unusual sequence of events, five of the nine seats on the regional school committee are up for election this spring. Gill and Montague voters will go to the polls May 16 and 17 to elect members from both towns.

Jane Oakes of Gill and Heather Katsoulis of Montague, the committee chair and secretary, have both indicated they plan to run for additional three-year terms. Three additional Montague seats currently filled by

volunteers appointed within the last year – Nick Licata, John Irminger, and Gary Turn – must also be filled by election, and are posted as one-year, two-year, and three-year terms.

Licata has informed the *Montague Reporter* that he does not intend to run; attempts to reach Irminger and Turn have received no response as of press time.

The school committee is still meeting remotely via Zoom. At its Tuesday night meeting one of the major topics of discussion was the idea of building a new elementary

school in Montague – possibly adding a new wing onto Sheffield Elementary to replace Hillcrest.

The committee voted to approve a statement of interest to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) to replace the roof on Gill Elementary School, an application that has been rejected several years running but that the administration believes is becoming gradually likelier to succeed as the Gill roof, last replaced in 1995, continues gradually to age.

see **GMRSD** page A8

**Now With Even More Ways To Help Gloss Over The Gnawing Horror**

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# The Montague Reporter

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## Behind the Curtain

*Rushing to approve a Supreme Court nominee of a president with, what, an approval rating that always seems to be hitting new lows? That, my friends, is a violation of the basic sacred duty that each and every Senator, himself or herself, has agreed to. That means every word of the oath that they took to protect and defend the US Constitution. That is an oath just as sacred as the oath that the nominees have to swear to as well.*

That's a Fox host, yesterday, probably trying not to giggle, giving the old heave-ho to the goal-posts, all the way into the opposition party executive's second year in office; might as well try, see if it sticks, sometimes the viewers take these talking points up. The chiron across the bottom of the screen: "Left Seeks to Usher In Era of Imperial Judiciary."

The Supremes are lifetime appointees, and they are partisan, and therefore the political parties in this country play for keeps – or at least certain ones do. But until recent years this was an official secret; the function of the judiciary was preserved by the same kind of kayfabe that holds together the world of professional TV wrestling.

America's inability to any longer hold together these rituals of assent is less interesting in its specific effects on this or that institution, and more in what it reflects: a very particular sort of demoral-

ization and loss of common purpose. Negative party affiliation drives nearly all the government activity – it might be temporarily jostled off track by the odd global pandemic or regional war, but the inertia sets back in quickly.

Outside, though, deprivation looms, with a major grain exporter a hellish warzone, seeds not going in the ground; in a few months those lost harvests will likely mean widening ripples of hunger.

Riots, rivalries, power blocs, fifth columns: anyone who as a youngster pointed to the Why the Great War Started chapter in their textbook and demanded *no but really why?* will feel a shock of recognition at the arbitrary but belligerent global order clumping up before our eyes.

And if these leaders in our own country decide we should join in on the war scene, over some good or bad but not yet cooked-up motive, what would happen here? Would it be the one thing that unifies us? Or would half the country disbelieve, on principle, the government line?

Short of open war: if countries are supposed to compete with each other for dominance, then just as you or I cheerlead Russian and Belarusian saboteurs today, there must be billions already with a stake in encouraging American incoherence and confusion. And maybe that's what we're swimming in, a global desire that you and I longer understand anything.



Ben Morris, behind the bar on the daytime shift at the Rendezvous in Turners Falls, where he has worked for the past year.

## Letters to the Editors

### Just When We Thought...

Silvio from *The Sopranos* shows off his Al Pacino impression using a quote from one of his favorite movies, *Godfather III*: "Just when I thought I was out, they pull me back in!"

On reading Brooke Thomas's February 17 Op-Ed on Leverett Pond, those words echoed in my head as well. Yet like the decisive politics that lately "spins" nearly every issue, Mr. Thomas, an FLP member of long standing, repeated the same talking points that have been used for years by the FLP. His Op Ed seems little to do with data and more to do with the many things that he and his next-door neighbors Tom Hankinson, Mitch Mulholland, and Tanya Cushman all want to see happen to the pond.

Mr. Thomas seeks to talk of "the long history" of a valiant fight against an invasive plant that would seek to ruin the pond for all who wish to use it for recreation. It is a pity that every time they ask for data from an outside source, the answer comes back that the pond is healthy. So instead, they cherry-pick the data and explain that they only have two options left to control the very end of the pond itself, a drawdown or herbicides... not mentioning that they hydro-raked 17 acres of pond vegetation and will continue to do so in large squares on the pond's west side. Then leaving out options that have never been tried as impossible, well, because he thinks so.

However, these days... you can find sources, previous surveys and actions, readily online. It's all there for anyone and everyone to see. In fact, I actually go as far as to make sure I have everything put in print (like the actual *Montague Reporter* newspapers).

Because it is very important to form opinions based on not your random thoughts and dreams when you are dealing with issues that can be contentious, confusing as it is in the case of freshwater science. As complicated as an entire living ecological system.

The worst thing you can do is make your capacity to reason motivational to a cause, omitting from data things you don't like to state your case, when all the data is cohesive and important to be included in the source material.

History going back to the formation of the FLP more than 20 years ago is found in a very well-researched report. Its address: [people.umass.edu/~jmfield/POND\\_1.html](http://people.umass.edu/~jmfield/POND_1.html)

Consider that it is old enough that when one Goggles "Leverett

### Hopes for Repeat of Mud Season

Kudos to The Shea Theater and the organizers of last Saturday's all day music festival, "Mud Season." It was a wonderful event with top notch acts all day long and into the evening. We hope it will happen again next year!

Tobi Sznajderman  
 Amherst

Pond," you can see it titled as an article called *Pond.html*.

All can read what it says about drawdowns and invasive plants. All can note that the pictures of the pond look no different than the ones taken last year.

One can also read this year that a new report, partially based on this old report, was championed by the FLP in your paper: only to find out that the new report's findings stated that the fisheries were healthy once again. In both cases, no data was submitted that in the future, or in the last 20 years, the efforts of the FLP have amounted to anything other than habitat destruction and hydro-raking.

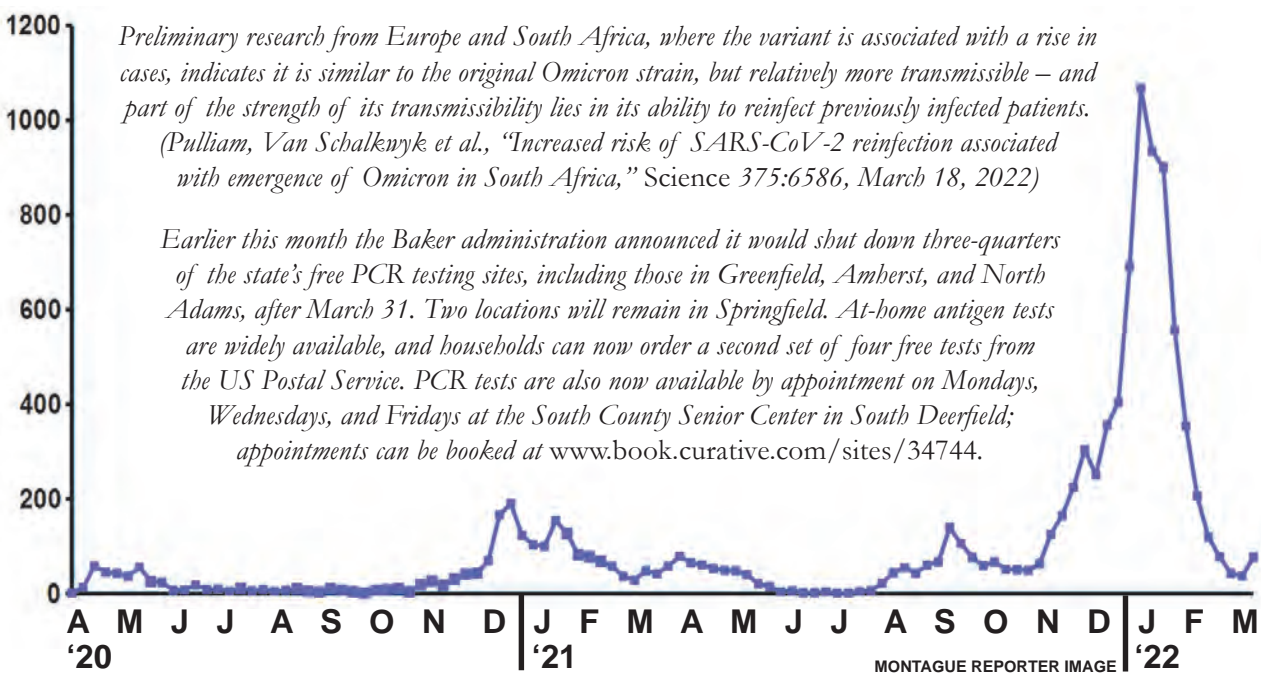
The state calls for "herbicide use" to be used on a short-term basis. I am not sure if using it for 30 years qualifies. The "Code of Leverett," banning the use in an effort to keep water supplies safe, states clearly that herbicides should not be used.

So I am drawn back into the fight, pulled back in... and hope I don't end up like Al Pacino character after he said the quote above in the movie.

Macaylla Silver  
 Leverett

## UPTICK HOPEFULLY UNREAL

After nine weeks in decline – from 1,069 all the way to 37 – Franklin County's official COVID-19 count doubled last week to 77. It could be a statistical blip. On Monday the Gill-Montague school district made masks for students optional; on Tuesday, the Centers for Disease Control reported that the fast-spreading B.A.2 subvariant now accounts for one-third of all coronavirus cases in the US.



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## LOCAL BRIEFS

Compiled by NINA ROSSI

Check out the brand new **Seed Library** at the Carnegie Library in Turners Falls. There is a variety of vegetable, herb, and flower seeds available for patrons to take home. They also have a growing guide for you, plus plenty of new garden books for inspiration.

The Franklin Regional Council of Governments wants to know **where the worst mud-clogged roads are!** Contribute to an online map by dropping location pins on those trouble spots, so the FRCOG can advocate for more funding for rural road repair and upgrades: [tinyurl.com/3ydv12d6](http://tinyurl.com/3ydv12d6).

This warm weather has prompted the sprouting of many spring bulbs, but pollinator protectors are reminding folks to **leave the dead leaves and garden debris in place** for now. There are beneficial butterflies, bees, and pollinators hiding in the leaves and stems of last year's plants. Wait until the weather is consistently above 50 degrees before you start the raking of beds and cutting back of dead plant matter.

Another **Cinestorm mystery double feature** is planned for the Shea Theater this Friday, March 25 starting at 7:30 p.m. and ending at 10:30 p.m. The theme this time is "public transit pandemonium." Admission is free, beer and snacks are for sale at the lobby, and as a plus, "there will be trivia."

Discuss **global COVID-19 vac-**

**cine inequities** in a webinar hosted by Justice is Global next Monday, March 28 at 7 p.m. Because 90% of people in low-income countries are unvaccinated, there is a need to increase vaccine access across the globe. At the current rate of vaccine production, millions will not have access to the vaccine until 2024. Find out what actions can be taken to ramp up grassroots mobilization for global access. Find out more at [www.masspeaceaction.org](http://www.masspeaceaction.org).

The Friends of the Montague Public Libraries are holding their next **book sale at the Carnegie Library** in Turners Falls next Saturday, April 2 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The sale will include hardcovers for \$1 each, DVDs and CDs for 50 cents apiece or three for a dollar; puzzles for 50 cents, and paperbacks and kids' books for a quarter apiece. We have been informed that the sale will feature hundreds of recent books. All proceeds benefit programming at the libraries.

The **Montague Dems will hold a caucus** on Tuesday, April 5 at 6:30 p.m. in the downstairs meeting room of the Montague Town Hall for the purpose of nominating Democrats for the annual town election.

The caucus is open to all registered Democrats or unenrolled voters in the town of Montague, though only registered Democrats may appear on the caucus ballot. Anyone interested in ballot placement for any seat up for election should contact Mark Wisniewski at [mpwisniewski@gmail.com](mailto:mpwisniewski@gmail.com).

Attention **renters, landlords, regional agencies** and other stakeholders: the housing payment assistance programs funded by federal Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) will stop accepting new applications on or around April 15. This includes the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP), the Subsidized Housing Emergency Rental Assistance (SHERA) program, and the ERAP-Enhanced HomeBASE program.

After April 15, you may still apply for the state-funded Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) program, subject to funding availability, and other eviction prevention programs will continue for those eligible.

Homeowners in need of assistance may be eligible for the Homeowner Assistance Fund (HAF) program if they have income at or below 150% of area median income figures. Eligible homeowners include owner-occupants of two- to four-family properties who are behind on their mortgage payments due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Anyone seeking housing help or advice can still reach out by calling 2-1-1 for information about available resources and to connect with a regional agency.

The Mass Cultural Council is launching its sixth **economic impact survey for the cultural sector**. From now until Friday, April 15 all "creative economy stakeholders" are asked to participate in either the agency's COVID-19 Economic Impact Survey for Individuals or the one for Cultural Organizations. Find both online at [www.massculturalcouncil.org](http://www.massculturalcouncil.org).

The time period this survey is collecting data for is March 2021 through February 2022. This data will be used to inform efforts to help supplement the budget for the cultural sector at the state level for FY'23, and for shaping the ARPA-supported relief spending plan and

other proposals in the legislature.

There's going to be a **Stash Bash at Our Lady of Peace Church** in Turners Falls on April 23. You might attend to scoop up some bargains for doing your favorite hobby, but you can also donate supplies or rent a table to sell your own excess craft stuff. Fabric, yarns, patterns, knitting, woodworking, stamping, cake decorating, any and all sorts of hobby stuff – just no finished crafts, this is for supplies only!

To inquire about donating items, call Bev at (413) 863-7783; to grab a table at the event, call Chris at (413) 367-3052.

The LAVA Center in Greenfield is accepting **Film Festival submissions** from Massachusetts filmmakers. Their second annual Film Festival will showcase the talents of everyone from students to professionals during the September 8 to 11 event. You may submit work between June 16 and July 14, and there is a small submission fee. Films of any style, any length, any subject are allowed, but they all must be of original creative content. Find out more at [localaccess.org](http://localaccess.org).

The Social Security Administration sent the following **reminder about social security scams**: "In a government imposter scam, someone claims to be a government employee and may ask for personal information, demand payment, or make threats, primarily over the phone, but also through email, text, social media, and mail. Social Security will never threaten, scare, or pressure you to take immediate action."

They recommend that if you receive a suspicious call, hang up. Don't trust the caller ID, don't give out personal information, and don't believe them or send money. Report these calls online at [oig.ssa.gov](http://oig.ssa.gov).

Send your local briefs to [editor@montaguereporter.org](mailto:editor@montaguereporter.org).

### NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

## Annual Town Meeting Date; Fish & Game Transfer

By JOSH HEINEMANN

The Wendell selectboard began their March 16 meeting by setting the date of the annual town meeting for Saturday, June 4, at 10 a.m. outside on the common. If the day is rainy, the meeting will be held in the town hall.

They also approved a draft warrant for the next special town meeting, scheduled Wednesday, April 6 at 7 p.m. inside the town hall. (See sidebar on page A4.) The warrant for that meeting has 12 articles, two of which would create an 18-page amendment to the wetlands protection bylaw passed in 2017.

There was some discussion of how to fit the entire wetlands protection warrant on the office building entryway and how to make paper copies available at the town meeting. Selectboard chair Dan Keller said it is large, but "not a record." Finance committee chair Doug Tanner suggested printing two pages on each page and providing magnifying lenses.

### Off-Schedule

When Glenn Johnson-Mussad was hired as town coordinator, the selectboard agreed he could continue his commitment to the Greenfield school committee, which meets the second Wednesday of every month. In April, May, and June that would conflict with the board's alternate-week meeting schedule, and at the March 2 meeting the selectboard agreed to change their schedule to the first, third, and if needed fifth Wednesday of every month.

April's first Wednesday, April 6, will have the special town meeting, and no selectboard meeting. Board members agreed to meet not on Wednesday April 13, which would conflict with Johnson-Mussad's school committee meeting, but on Thursday, April 14.

### Aid Criteria

Johnson-Mussad and Tanner made an attempt to clarify where Wendell stands with three sources of COVID relief funding: the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act; the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA); and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Selectboard member Gillian Budine said that she and former coordinator Alisha Brouillet had gone over and over the FEMA requirements, and kept coming up that Wendell is not eligible for reimbursement. Johnson-Mussad said that FEMA allows reimbursement for nursing staff and supplies, a subset of what CARES allows.

While ARPA money has restrictions, it is possible that Wendell's entire allotment is less than the maximum allowed to be reimbursed simply for "lost revenue." Besides that, ARPA specifically allows spending necessary to bring computers, backup, and IT development up to levels that meet current needs.

Tanner said the town's remaining ARPA money is not going anywhere, so there is no need to use it quickly. He said he supported using money from the building rehabilitation fund, which can be replenished, for two items

on the special town meeting warrant: painting the town hall and grant-matching for solar installation at the highway garage.

Keller said he thought that eventually there will be a mechanism for moving the ARPA money into stabilization, where a town meeting vote can spend it.

### Public Parcel

The board authorized Keller to sign a letter supporting the state Department of Fish and Game acquiring a parcel of town-owned land east of Jenkinson Road, near Cooleyville Road. The property is between two other parcels owned by state agencies, and has standing water and wetlands.

While the transfer would take the land off the tax roll, Fish and Game would pay off the back taxes on the property and allow public access for hiking, hunting, trapping, and fishing.

Selectboard member Laurie DiDonato said the open space committee should be notified, and contacted if other similar transfers happen.

### Other Business

The selectboard gave interim appointments to Seal LaMadeleine and Mary Thomas to fill vacancies on the planning board. Planning board positions are elected, and both appointments are only until the town election in May.

Budine reported that a meeting of area towns interested in IT cooperation showed a large spread among towns' needs. Wendell needs to upgrade its hardware and software, and consultation with the UMass Collins Center can help guide that.

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**PAPER**  
Week of March 28  
in Montague



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### PROBLEM from page A1

for costs associated with the upcoming extermination, including cleaning and hotel fees. Kuntz announced that he was not pursuing the evictions.

"I understand complications can happen, but Mr. Kuntz hasn't conveyed to me a persuasive argument as to why there hasn't been sufficient treatment to eradicate these bed bugs," Judge Fields said during the hearing. "It has to end. And if you're not able to accomplish that, I'm going to entertain the town's motion to briefly appoint a receiver."

Under Massachusetts law, the court can appoint a receiver to take over the property, remedy the problem, and then charge Kuntz via a tax lien for the work done.

"I don't want to do that, especially because you just bought into this building, and obviously you bought into a health disaster with these bed bugs," Fields said.

Two residents of the building, Brenda and Raymond Abrams, attended the hearing to address the bed bug issue, as well as the emergency eviction orders Kuntz filed against them on December 10 on the grounds of unsanitary living conditions and lack of rent payments.

The couple's personal care assistant, Elizabeth Cardona, spoke on their behalf, and explained to the judge the couple's frustration with living with a bed bug problem for almost a year now.

"They're eaten up. Their doctors refuse to see them, because they're scared they're going to get bed bugs," Cardona said. "We have gone through everything. The only thing holding this up is the defendant, and I feel horrible that they have to live like that."

### Preexisting Conditions

In an interview with the *Reporter*, the Abramses said they first informed David Giampa, the former owner of the property, about the bed bug problem between May and June of 2021.

The board of health issued its first emergency order in July, and another on November 4 after Giampa failed to eradicate the insects. The sale came five days later.

The couple, who are both disabled and breathe with oxygen tanks, said they have been withholding rent payments until the bed bug issue is remedied. They showed this reporter scabs on their arms from what Brenda said are bed bug bites.

The Abramses believe Kuntz was aware of the bed bug issue prior to the sale. "Raymond asked the broker if the new landlord knew about the bed bugs, and that broker said that he did know," Cardona wrote to the *Reporter*.

Cardona said Kuntz gave her unclear and confusing instructions to prepare the Abrams' apartment for chemical spraying of the building he arranged in late November, resulting in the apartment being skipped for treatment; the eviction notice came after that.

"Any interactions with David were mostly pleasant," Cardona said. "He tried to be a good landlord, but they feel he didn't know the laws on renting. With Brendan now owning, they are under more stress. He is not a nice person and has done things out of spite. He slams doors when here, and has locked us from access to the basement."



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Raymond and Brenda Abrams' personal care assistant shared a number of photographs with evidence of a bedbug infestation in the couple's apartment.

### Several Disagreements

Kuntz told the *Reporter* after the hearing that he believes the severity of the bed bug problem is being exaggerated.

"I honestly think they can't afford the \$750 rent," he said. "That's why they created this problem. I don't think it's as bad as they make it seem.... I think the PCA personally is bringing the crap in."

Kuntz said he was unaware about the bed bug issue prior to purchasing the building, and that he issued the eviction notices after none of the tenants paid him rent in the first month.

Kuntz also told the *Reporter* that Giampa has not yet transferred the property title to him, and used the \$297,000 Kuntz paid him in money borrowed from a New York-based private equity firm to pay off debts associated with the property.

Records available on the Franklin County Registry of Deeds and Secretary of State websites indicate that the property was transferred to 199 E. Main Street Inc., a company Kuntz registered last October.

"The previous owner thinks he still owns the building, because he thinks he never passed the title to me, which is bull, but that's what it is," Kuntz said. "He decided to submit a bunch of documents under my name.... He had taken out multiple mortgage notes. He paid all those off to clean up the title. And now he's trying to get paid twice on the same piece of property."

Attempts to reach Mr. Giampa were unsuccessful as of press time. The *Reporter* was unable to locate mortgages associated with his ownership of the property on the Registry database.

Kuntz additionally alleged to the *Reporter* that Giampa is "colluding" with the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority (FCRHRA) in a scheme to benefit from a low-income housing tax credit.

"There's a whole bunch of money that's going to get released by the town of Orange soon, and none of it's going to me," Kuntz said, citing community development block grants available from the US De-

partment of Housing and Urban Development, and related programs. "My understanding is whatever benefit I was going to derive from putting a 15-year modification on it... is no longer available to me.

"I've only been stuck with the management end of it, and the problems that go along with it, and none of the benefits."

FCRHRA executive director Gina Govoni said that no such arrangement exists.

"FCRHRA has not agreed to (or even discussed) any terms with the owner of this property or the former owner of this property," Govoni wrote to the *Reporter*. "Brendan has reached out to multiple departments within FCRHRA with different concerns, but nothing about the subject you mention."

### Only Trying to Help

In response to the civil case filed against him by the town, Kuntz filed an order against Orange health agent Matt Fortier in January claiming the department's negligence left him to deal with the bed bug problem, which preceded his ownership of the building. In the order

Kuntz wrote that he has been "very aggressive" in treating the building for the insects, and requested the matter be settled out of court.

"Mr. Fortier cannot simply erase his neglect," he wrote.

"He's a nice kid, and I know he's trying to do a good job," Kuntz told the *Reporter*, "but this should have been dealt with back in July, but it was dragged out until November and it wasn't handled.... I don't know what [Fortier's] background is, but it's certainly not in public health administration."

Neither the Orange board of health nor the town's attorney, Donna MacNicol, responded by press time to requests for comment.

The business that now owns the Orange building is one of four registered in Massachusetts to Kuntz, who said he works in affordable housing as a profession.

"Way Finders solicited me for a newly created position in their organization, Asset Manager," Kuntz wrote. Attempts to reach the Springfield-based provider of housing and support services to confirm his employment were unsuccessful as of press time.

Kuntz said the Orange property is his first "test run in rehabbing a place" on his own.

"I wanted to come in and fix the place up, and put the 15-year lien on the property," he said. "I wasn't looking to make money on this, because you really don't, if you make affordable housing right."

"I feel bad for Brenda and Raymond, I really do," he told Judge Fields during Friday's hearing, which had been postponed from December due to snowstorms. "I am willing to drop the eviction stuff.... I'd just like to work with them to get money to afford the place, because I think \$750 is a big burden right now for them."

Judge Fields told Kuntz he had gotten "as many things wrong about how it works in a courtroom as possible," and said he must hire an attorney, as the building is operating under the ownership of a corporation.

"I called a dozen law firms, and I got a dozen declines," Kuntz replied. "I don't know how much more time and how many more hours I can waste."

The next hearing is scheduled for Friday, April 22 at 11 a.m., by which time the building is expected to have been treated for bed bugs.



## Special Town Meeting Preview: Tractor, Wetlands, Solar Panels

By JOSH HEINEMANN

**WENDELL** - There are 12 articles on the Wednesday, April 6 town meeting warrant.

**Article 1** would transfer \$637,656 from free cash to the stabilization fund.

**Article 2** would spend \$30,000 for an increase to road crew pay and to allow for paving that was deferred at the 2021 annual town meeting. **Article 4** would put \$35,000 toward a new highway department tractor.

**Article 3** would pull \$20,000 from the building rehab payback fund to pay for painting the town hall. Wendell has received two bids for that job, one at \$18,000 and the other \$25,000; Keller said at this March 16 meeting that he

was expecting a third to come in the next day.

**Articles 5, 6, and 7** would transfer \$40,000, \$30,000, and \$8,728 from municipal light plant (MLP) retainer earnings into, respectively, an MLP emergency repair fund, the broadband stabilization fund, and the town's general fund to pay the debt service on broadband construction.

**Article 8** would take \$20,000 from the building rehab fund for a grant match to install solar panels and a battery system on the highway garage.

**Article 9** would make the town website an alternate site for public postings.

**Article 10** would amend the wetlands protection bylaw by adding the text in **Article 11**.

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## NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

## Erving Board Authorizes Part-Time Cops

By KEITH WATERS

The Erving selectboard held a brief, hour-and-ten-minute meeting on Monday to discuss police staffing issues, as well as a grant application to the state Department of Mental Health (DMH) for a police-adjacent “co-responder” program that would be shared by several towns.

According to police chief Robert Holst, Erving just recently had a police officer leave the force, and now another has announced he is leaving in a couple weeks; yet another plans to leave in a month or so. This is causing Holst some trouble in scheduling. The police force is currently at six full-time officers.

To alleviate this, the chief asked the selectboard to consider hiring four to six part-time officers, starting

with the one who is leaving in two weeks, as he would like to continue in that capacity. The board approved.

Two candidates have been recommended from the recent search after the previous officer’s departure, and both were approved for part-time positions, pending state screening.

Officer retention has been an issue for the town.

Selectboard member William Bembury asked if officer pay should be raised, and Holst answered that he thought it should. Chair Jacob Smith pointed out that the town’s pay is in line with many neighboring towns.

The board also discussed and then approved a grant application the chief wrote to DMH for a “Jail/Arrest Diversion Co-Responder” program. This co-responder, a mental health clinician who would respond

to calls alongside police, would be an employee of the community-based non-profit Clinical and Support Options out of Greenfield, and shared with several neighboring towns.

The grant would pay for CSO to assign a clinician to Erving. CSO already has a candidate in mind for the Erving position, anticipating the award of the grant; the organization is planning to hire the clinician in April, train them for a month, and facilitate training with the Erving police beginning in May.

Holst said he has talked with a number of other chiefs in the area, and they are all enthusiastic about this prospect. Greenfield already has a similar program up and running in conjunction with Deerfield and Montague.

## WRECKING from page A1

to purchase and to preserve, rehabilitate, or restore such buildings rather than demolish them, to alert residents of the Town to impending demolitions of Significant Buildings, and by furthering these purposes to promote the public welfare, to preserve the resources of the Town, and to make the Town a more attractive and desirable place to live.”

The criteria for determining “historical significance” include being on either the state or national historic register, meeting “eligibility requirements” for being on the national register, or the historical commission itself determining the structure significant for a wide range of reasons. These could include that the structure is “on the site of an historic event,” is “identified with a person or group of persons who had some influence on society,” or “exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historic heritage of the community.”

The bylaw mentions an age of 100 years as another criteria, but it does not appear to be required.

Sawyer-Lauçanno said he felt the bylaw, similar to measures in place in over 150 cities and towns in the commonwealth, is “long overdue.” He pointed out that the measure would allow the building inspector, fire chief, or public health director to order a demolition if they believed at any point that a historic structure is deemed “a nuisance or unsafe.”

While the proposed bylaw makes no mention of the need for a “redevelopment study” as part of the demolition delay process, it appears to require that town officials, including the building inspector, consider the condition of a building to determine risk and viability.

A fact sheet on the delay process published by the state historical commission advises that “[q]uite often, an independent evaluation of the condition of the property is needed, one that does not rely on the applicant. The decision could be based on the structural analysis of the building, likelihood for rehabilitation and future plans for the property.”

Kuklewicz asked Sawyer-Lauçanno if residents could petition the town historical commission to declare a building historically significant if it is not officially listed as such on a state or national register. Sawyer-Lauçanno said the commission can deem any building to be of historical significance, “but it has to meet the criteria – it can’t be applied willy-nilly.”

Last October the Greenfield historical commission, at a meeting the *Greenfield Recorder* called “contentious and at times profanity laden,” voted unanimously not to approve a delay of the planned demolition of the town fire station on Main Street in order to build a new library. The state had declared the station historically significant in 2017, but supporters of the demolition said that was because the fire station had been improperly placed within the boundaries of the library.

Montague’s delay proposal follows the wording of its counterpart in Greenfield as to its purpose, which is to encourage an owner to seek a buyer that can rehabilitate the structure. However, Greenfield provides for only a six-month delay, and does not mention age as one of the criteria for determining a structure’s significance.

A demolition delay bylaw in Northampton, on the other hand, potentially protects any building constructed before 1945, and the historical commission there can order a delay for “up to twelve months.” Sawyer-Lauçanno portrayed the Northampton commission as a particularly aggressive group which sought “to pro-

tect every historic building in town.”

But Sarah LaValley, who is the chief preservation officer in that city and the liaison with its historical commission, told this reporter that of approximately 100 buildings reviewed by the commission since 2005, only 20 met the criteria for preservation, and not all of those have been subject to a demolition delay.

At Monday’s meeting in Montague, Ramsey said that while he felt there were “positives and negatives” to the proposed bylaw, it would be “a useful tool for the town” on balance.

There ensued a discussion by the board of the bylaw’s pros and cons. While selectboard members Chris Boutwell and Matt Lord did not comment on the proposal, Kuklewicz said he did “not feel very good about this – maybe because I feel there are other motives why it was generated.”

He added that he was concerned that a building might be sold to an “unqualified owner,” as has happened with several former factory buildings in recent years.

Although Kuklewicz was vague about the precedents that generated his concerns, recent examples include the former Strathmore paper mill complex and the former Griswold cotton mill, both decaying nineteenth-century factories located between the Turners Falls power canal and Connecticut River.

In 2002 the Strathmore was purchased by a businessman named Jerry Jones, who worked with the town on a 2005 redevelopment study but also filled the complex with recycled paper and stripped it of its copper wiring. In 2007 a disgruntled former employee set a fire which destroyed one of the structures in the complex, later explaining that he was nearly electrocuted while removing copper for Jones.

Jones then sold the complex to another developer, who proposed to locate a film school at the former mill. The town took ownership in 2010 for non-payment of back taxes.

The former Griswold cotton mill, after reuse as a discount store called Railroad Salvage, was purchased in 2001 by a Florida-based entrepreneur named Gary Kosuda, who allowed or caused the building to deteriorate to the point that it was considered a hazard to residents attempting to access “the Patch” neighborhood to the southwest.

Under subsequent owners, a 2016 fire destroyed most of the structure, but recently the remains of the building have been removed by the Environmental Protection Agency and the property is being slated for new development.

This history appears to have caused town leaders to back away from a demand that the current owners of the former Farren hospital building, Trinity Health Senior Communities of New England, fund a “redevelopment study” in collaboration with the town. Trinity has not provided the details of an in-house assessment of the building, but have tentatively offered to demolish the building at no cost to the town, clean up the property, and donate the land to the public.

At Monday’s discussion, Sawyer-Lauçanno said the proposed bylaw would probably not have an impact on the Farren, “unless Trinity drags its feet” on the planned demolition, because the bylaw would not immediately go into effect if passed.

According to state law, if it is approved at the May 7 annual town meeting, the town has 30 days to send the bylaw to the state attorney general for approval, who then has 90 days to respond.

TOWN OF ERVING RECREATION COMMISSION  
HIRING for SUMMER PARK DIRECTOR

Are you looking for a fulfilling summer job? Do you enjoy interacting with children? Then look no further, the ERVING SUMMER PARK PROGRAM is the place for you! We are currently seeking a Summer Park Director to lead our 2022 team. The Director coordinates with the Recreation Commission to plan and implement a 5-week summer parks program in Erving for 40 children entering grades 1-7. A full job description is available at: [www.erving-ma.gov/employment](http://www.erving-ma.gov/employment).

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This position is a seasonal employment opportunity. This position and the Town’s ability to operate the Summer Park Program are subject to restrictions of any State of Emergency issued by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as well as the Town of Erving related to COVID-19. The employment application and position description are available by visiting [www.erving-ma.gov/employment](http://www.erving-ma.gov/employment). Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Preference is given to applications received by April 15, 2022.

Applications can be completed online [www.erving-ma.gov/employment](http://www.erving-ma.gov/employment) or mailed to: Town of Erving, Attn: Recreation Commission, 12 East Main Street, Erving, MA 01344. A CORI check will be performed on the successful candidate. The Town of Erving is a drug-free workplace, and an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

Questions can be sent to [careers@erving-ma.gov](mailto:careers@erving-ma.gov).

MONTAGUE HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING  
DEMOLITION DELAY BYLAW

The Montague Historical Commission is proposing that the Town adopt a general bylaw pertaining to the delay of the issuance of demolition permits for Historically Significant Buildings in Montague for a period of up to 12 months. The purpose of the bylaw is to protect the integrity of historic resources within the town. A public hearing on the proposed bylaw will occur on Thursday March 31 at 11:00 a.m.

The meeting will be held at Montague Town Hall Second Floor Conference Room One Avenue A Turners Falls with a remote participation option. The draft bylaw and meeting login information at [www.montague-ma.gov/calendar](http://www.montague-ma.gov/calendar). All interested parties will be allowed to speak. Written comments can be sent to [csl@mit.edu](mailto:csl@mit.edu) prior to the hearing.

## LIBRARY ANNOUNCEMENT

## Make Your Own Catapult

**GREENFIELD** – Stop by the Greenfield Public Library Children’s Room to pick up the latest Take & Make kit, and make your own catapult!

When kids build their own catapult they are building their skills in design, engineering, physics, and math; and most importantly to them, they can fling pom poms across the room!

This STEM Take & Make includes everything kids will need for

their catapult, including an alternative design idea to test and compare to the original. Kits will be available, in limited supply, in the Children’s Room starting Monday, March 21.

For more information, contact Children’s Librarian Ellen Lavoie at [ellen.lavoie@greenfield-ma.gov](mailto:ellen.lavoie@greenfield-ma.gov), or call (413) 772-1544 x. 5104.

This program, generously funded by the Friends of the Greenfield Library, is free and intended for ages 5 to 12.

## Montague Community Television News

## What Can the Drone Film?

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

**TURNERS FALLS** – Learn about drone technology, and how it is used to create detailed digital replications of architecture, in a recently-uploaded video by Chris Clawson of *MontagueArchive.org*. In this eight-minute lesson, we see how the Montague Paper Mill may have looked in the year 1900.

Mr. Clawson is generous with his drone, and invites his viewers to request his videographic assistance. MCTV should really take him up on that! What would you like to see captured by the drone?

MCTV has also uploaded the most recent Gill-Montague Regional School Committee meeting, the selectboard meetings for both Gill and Montague, and a Montague finance committee meeting. The recording of “Storypalooza,” a storytelling event which took place at the Shea Theater on February 18, is also up and ready for viewing.

If you can’t catch any of

MCTV’s videos on TV, then be sure to find them online! All videos are available on our Vimeo page, which can be found linked to [montaguetelevision.org](http://montaguetelevision.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.

MCTV is still looking for board members, so if you would like to stop in for a meeting, even just to check the vibe, email [infomontaguetelevision@gmail.com](mailto:infomontaguetelevision@gmail.com) for a link to the Zoom!

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 [infomontaguetelevision@gmail.com](mailto:infomontaguetelevision@gmail.com).

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**FLOW** from page A1

to provide federal regulators with a plan that satisfies all stakeholders in new 30- to 50-year licenses to run the facilities.

The company's previous license expired and is now being automatically extended during the process, and extra time has been granted this year while FirstLight attempts to negotiate a settlement.

A large section of the new AIP details commitments to allow certain amounts of water to flow over the Turners Falls dam, or to rejoin the river at the Station No. 1 plant, at various times of the year; to "ramp" the flow out of the Cabot Station plant up and down in an effort to protect endangered sturgeon habitat; and, after the license's third year, to engage in "flow stabilization" for the benefit of shad spawning and downstream tiger beetle habitat.

During the first three years, FirstLight would improve Station No. 1 so that the flow of water into the river's so-called bypass stretch could be automatically "split" between it and the dam.

At Year 7, the company would install a "barrier net" to prevent eels and shad from being sucked into the intake at the Northfield Mountain pumped-storage project, and at Year 9, it would replace the fish ladder by

which spawning fish climb past the Turners Falls Dam with a "spillway lift."

"Those concessions were granted, from our perspective, predominantly if not solely based on financial considerations," Andy Fisk, executive director of the Connecticut River Conservancy (CRC), told the *Reporter*. "There's not a valid technical case to say they need seven years to install the net at Northfield, or nine years to build the elevator at Turners. It is simply and solely for FirstLight to defer that expense."

In a press release last week, CRC river steward Andrea Donlon argued that under the new agreement, Northfield Mountain's impacts on the river would actually increase. CRC has advocated for a commitment to a certain elevation of water to be left in the river above the Turners Falls dam, particularly after an incident last summer when pumping water to the top of the storage facility left the river so low boats parked at Barton Cove ran aground.

"There's no restriction in this current agreement that prevents that from happening again," Fisk said. "We're astonished that has not been dealt with by the state or federal agencies."

Fisk also criticized the AIP for omitting any discussion of the projected impacts of the changes in the Turners Falls project on

the company's revenue.

"They bought this facility in 2016," Fisk argued. "They did their due diligence.... They booked the estimated costs of those things. And now they'll have seven-plus years, by the time these licenses come out, of that money sitting around."

Asked to comment on the proposed seven- and nine-year delays in installing technology to protect fish, FirstLight sent a generic written statement on the AIP.

"[W]hat has been filed with FERC is the result of significant collaboration with dozens of stakeholder organizations, and it encompasses many perspectives," wrote Leonard Greene, the company's head of government affairs. "We are very grateful to all the engaged parties for their considerable investment of time, insight and valuable dialogue."

Greene's statement also included a reminder that "the parties have agreed not to comment publicly on the specific details of the proposals or the process by which we came to each AIP..."

Katie Kennedy, a river scientist who signed the AIP on behalf the Nature Conservancy, told the *Reporter* that it "indicates progress toward some pretty exciting outcomes," citing increased flows and fish-pas-

sage and habitat improvements.

Kennedy added that the company "will continue to be able to provide needed stability to the New England energy grid, which is becoming increasingly important as we move closer to our regional renewable energy goals."

One question the new AIP opens, rather than closes, pertains to a direct contradiction between the amount of water that would flow over the Turners Falls dam. An AIP released last month pertaining to whitewater and other recreation indicated that from July through March the company would allow 500 cubic feet per second (cfs) of water over the dam, or 300 cfs during the first three years when the river is lower.

The new AIP, however, would limit the flow during those months to 250 cfs, with the option to increase it to 400 cfs if "[t]he entity conducting the inspection of rare plants" signs off.

According to Fisk, the figures were "dialed way back" in response to concerns brought by the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program about plants on the state's protected species list that are now growing under the dam, which might be impacted by restoring more of the river's flow.

"This is a very challenging relicensing," Fisk said.

**SING** from page A1

any semblance of a plan, continued showing up with anywhere from two or three to 15 or 20 members standing at least six feet apart, as we ran through the gamut of tunes: everything from "Can't Take My Eyes Off You" and "From a Distance" to "Hard Times Come Again No More" and "So Long It's Been Good to Know You."

Will Quale, a veteran of pub sings, created a website, *TownCommonSongs.Org*, which now lists about 375 titles.

"Everything was getting canceled," Quale told a reporter. "One of the local choirs' rehearsals got canceled. Several of the people... were like, 'We've got to sing! And they sent word out to neighbors and friends and said 'We don't know what's going on.... Just show up.' And we just sang."

The website was meant as much as anything to spread the word and offer resources to communities that might want to try the same. Quale also included copious information about COVID safety procedures and research contrasting the risks of singing indoors and outside.

But mostly, the site offered lyrics singers could use from their cell-phones, along with historical annotations and performance links.

Instead of fretting about where we could meet, who would come, or what we should sing, Quale explained, "We said, 'We're a community, we're going to find each other and figure out what we do, rather than coming with some agenda, some pre-pandemic [chorus] plan that we'll try to continue. I think that was accidental genius on our part.'"

Because the sing sprang spontaneously, and songs get picked in the moment by whoever shows up without anyone setting an agenda, this is mostly Montague musical magic.

"Maybe that's why it's worked," said 15-year-old member Solina Davidson-Carroll, a former member of Amandla chorus, who attends regularly with her mother, Laurie Davidson. "Nobody can go every single day, and this wouldn't have lasted like this if we'd had a leader."

Davidson, who arranged for the very first sing after meeting her jogging neighbor Tamara Kaplan, said, "No one knew we would be here two years later. It was just something we started and said, 'This is pretty fun.'"



Laurie Davidson (left) didn't know she would be helping create a daily institution when she and a neighbor called together the first sing back in early quarantine days of March 2020.

And then, 'Let's do it again!'"

Quale, who has a knack for finding obscure songs on any topic from tractors to mud, said the daily sings have been exactly what he's needed to extract himself from the doldrums into sunshine – especially immediately after the death last year of his friend, fiddle master David Kaynor, for whom he was a caretaker.

Even now, he said, "I love that we're just right there in the middle of the village, and we never know who else might come."

And that's been true for other singers who grew tired of COVID's ongoing indoor Zoom sessions.

Making sure singing did continue daily, especially on "extreme weather" days or those when it seemed everyone was away, meant singers checking in ahead of time to assure someone would show up.

At what we believe is the only daily outdoor community singing ritual anywhere, anyone can join in, or just listen. We're not performing for anyone as much as sharing songs – songs of any kind that anyone chooses to lead and sing as simply an emotional release that gets us out and moving, expressing ourselves and connecting with the group.

What gets sung might be about nature – frogs, skunks, worms, trees, maple sap – or a Broadway or classic song like Irving Berlin's "Won't You Play a Simple Melody." Often, it's a song someone remembers from camp, or a favorite folk song, or an anthem offering hope through our troubled times.

*Who could have imagined such times as these?*

*But if we sing through these times, We might just make it to the other side.*

And then there are the songs that celebrate Montague – often because we've adapted the lyrics – "The Bells of Montague" or "Here is my Home."

My own personal favorites are these, as well as songs that capture just how glorious it is to be out singing *al fresco*, day after day, surrounded by friends and neighbors who not only seem to appreciate how lucky we are but who also respect the sanctity of a circle where no one dominates and everyone's top priority is kindness.

The good vibes spill over to those cycling or walking or driving

by – even the school bus kids and truck drivers, often waving.

Or to neighbors, like the one who told us, "I have a direct view of the common from my home office, and have more or less set my watch to 2 o'clock when the gathering begins. Every day it has acted as a touchstone for my afternoon to know that people will be gathering, rain or shine, snow or sleet, zero degrees or 96 degrees. Your constant gathering has provided a stable presence when so much of the world feels unstable, uncertain, and unpredictable.... What a balm to the heart and soul!"

Why does this unique ritual seem to work so well in Montague, we ask ourselves? One reason may be that we have in our midst an unusual number of capable song leaders, like Quale and Davidson, but also Tim Von Egmond and Kristen Planeaux.

And yet everyone is encouraged to lead whatever songs they bring. The sessions aren't about performing, nor are they limited to what some people call "good singers."

"A lot of people in American culture have the sense that singing isn't anything they can do except when in the shower, in the car, or at church,"

said Quale. "When they encounter something like us, some approach cautiously and curiously, and eventually begin to sing unconsciously. Sometimes, it awakens something."

Even in our competitive American Idol / The Voice age, the Montague circle has tried to make clear that singing can be for everybody, that all singers are good, simply because they dare to sing. And along the way, as we sing, we're building community.

"This has been like bonding without a lot of pressure because we're just bonding over the music," said Nell Wright, a core singer since the beginning.

And so, we've come to share birthdays and sing for each other's losses and celebrations, while also marking special occasions and events like presidential inaugurations, the Black Lives Matter protests, the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the invasion of Ukraine. Or even a local milestone, like the transition from retiring Montague Center librarian Anna Green to her replacement Kate Martineau with an October 2020 performance on the library steps.

What's most special, said Davidson, are "our connections through song, and how much we've learned about each other and relate from that hour, and what gets passed around the circle in that hour about people's lives.... As people share a song, it's never just the song. There's always a little bit of something of them."

The daily Common gathering has even led to monthly full-moon sings as well as special solstice events and occasional evening fire-side sings, all for the love of connecting in these isolating times.

Though it seems amazing to people we run into that we're still gathering, or that we've managed to be out there every single day, Montague's sing has become such a big part of our lives that Von Egmond asked, "Why wouldn't anyone else want to do that? It does seem strange: You'd think this would be popping up all over."

That contagion could be starting, with a first Leverett sing-along planned for Saturday at noon on the town field.

And as for Montague?

As Davidson said, "I don't think we have any plan of stopping."



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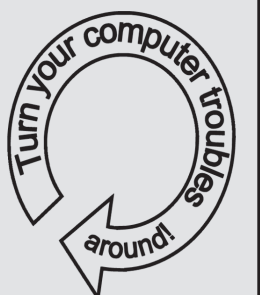
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**MONTAGUE** from page A1

benefits to Montague, Pick said a group called Climate Exchange had given a “rough estimate” of \$2.7 million from 2023 to 2030, or approximately \$385,700 per year, for the town. “That’s not chump change,” she said.

“Well, it’s more than five dollars,” said Kuklewicz.

Pick and her colleagues did not use the term “carbon tax” to describe the bill’s funding mechanisms, and did not stress reducing greenhouse gas emissions by raising the price of fossil fuels; instead, they emphasized the rebates to those in the lower income brackets and the local programs the fee would finance.

Pick told the *Reporter* that unlike a tax, the fee would not be a revenue source that flows into the state general fund, but rather would directly finance programs specified in H.3292 such as a Green Infrastructure Fund.

Another provision in the bill would create a Household Green Dividend Fund, which would finance rebates for low-income residents, although it is not entirely clear whether they would need to apply for relief. According to the draft law,

“In providing payments, the revenue commissioner shall coordinate with officials of the executive office of energy and environmental affairs, the executive office of health and human services, the executive office of housing and economic development and other agencies in making all reasonable efforts to identify the names and location of residency of all residents, with special attention to the names and locations of low-income, homeless, and undocumented residents so that they can receive payments expeditiously.”

The law also states that these residents should receive their payments prior to the heating season.

Town administrator Steve Ellis,

noting that some of these questions could be resolved during the “rule-making process” after the bill is passed, asked “how strong the legs are on this bill” in the legislature.

Clark said the House Telecommunications, Utility and Energy Committee, where the bill now sits, is “talking about doing one more big climate bill in this session, so this is one of the pieces.” He also mentioned a “Next Generation Climate Road Map” and an offshore wind power bill.

“As is typical, it will go into the sausage-making machine,” Clark said. “We’re trying to give it momentum so it goes unscathed through that machine.”

**Indoor Town Meeting?**

In the absence of the town’s public health director, the weekly task of reviewing COVID case counts fell to Ellis. The weekly number of new positive tests leading up to March 19 was a mere three, and the two-week count was 10.

Ellis said the number of hospitalizations and people in critical care had also “trended off into the low single digits,” and that overall, the state was “in a place where we were last summer before the Delta wave kicked in.”

Ellis initiated a discussion of the “logistics” for the May 7 annual town meeting – chiefly whether it should take place outdoors, as it has in the past two years, or virtually, or indoors at the Turners Falls High School. The selectboard, despite recently expressing a certain fondness for outdoor meetings, tentatively decided to hold the meeting at the high school if the COVID case counts remain low.

The selectboard delayed placing a demolition delay bylaw, which would delay issuing demolition permits to the owners of historic structures by up to a year, on the annual

town meeting warrant until after the Montague historical commission has held a hearing and endorsed a version recently revised by town counsel. (See article, page A1.)

**So Many Grants**

Brian McHugh of the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority, which administers the town’s Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), came before the board with several requests. The board approved a \$788,174 contract with the Department of Housing and Community Development for the next annual round of CDBG funding, and executed a \$172,800 construction contract with H.M. Nunes and Sons for Avenue A streetscape improvements.

A request by town planner Walter Ramsey to approve an \$80,750 grant award from the Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts was approved by the board. Some of the money will fund “upgrades” to the Peskeomskut Park bandshell, and the rest will finance a reuse study of the town hall annex.

Ramsey showed a “mock-up” of a large sign that will be constructed on the western edge of the park. In response to a question from Kuklewicz, he said the sign would not interfere with the weekly farmers market near the same location.

The board then approved a petition from the planning board to amend the zoning bylaws to include a Chapter 40R zoning district under state law. The proposal, which is designed to incentivize the construction of affordable housing, will now return to the planning board for a “formal public hearing” on April 12.

Ramsey said he was “hopeful” the bylaw could be brought before the May annual town meeting, but that the “worst-case scenar-

io” would place it on a fall special town meeting warrant.

Ellis then reviewed a grant award from the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for a study of the town sewer system, including issues with its combined sewer overflow and with inflow and infiltration in the Millers Falls system, which feeds a treatment plant in Erving. He said the DEP has indicated it will award the town \$150,000, and that the remainder of the project’s costs will be financed by a combination of ARPA federal emergency funding and funds already allocated by town meeting.

The board also executed a contract with the firm Wright-Pierce for engineering services for the sewer project.

**Other Business**

The selectboard discussed whether to hold another public discussion of Ellis’ proposal to expand town hall staff by adding an assistant town administrator, and an assistant to the executive assistant. Board members said they did not have strong opinions on the issue, and Kuklewicz said the board had already talked about the proposal “a lot” and the discussion had been “very open,” although some people did not think so.

The board informally decided to continue the discussion between 6 and 7 p.m. at a Monday selectboard meeting in mid-April.

The board executed a contract with the state Department of Elder Affairs for grant funding for the Montague-Gill Council on Aging, and designated Ellis as the “signatory authority” for the sale of a parcel of town land on Federal Street (Route 63) to be auctioned on April 21. A lengthy discussion about whether the town should set a minimum price for the parcel was inconclusive.

Ellis gave an update on his communication with the Eversource electric company on its efforts to reduce the number of redundant telephone poles in town, a perennial selectboard concern. Eversource, which owns the poles, has apparently been waiting for the ground to thaw, and has informed both Comcast and Verizon they must transfer their lines to the newer poles, the main cause of the problem.

Ellis estimated the number of purportedly unsightly “double poles” at “as many as 152,” but said he was “optimistic that we will see progress this spring.”

The next selectboard meeting will be held March 28.



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

Here’s the way it was on March 22, 2012: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

**Montague to Consider Restructuring Gill-Montague School Committee**

Montague school committee members Jeff Singleton and Marge Levenson have gathered the necessary signatures to place an article on the warrant for the May 5, 2012 annual town meeting regarding the structure of the Gill-Montague regional school committee.

Article 26 will read as follows: “That the Montague town meeting moderator appoint a committee to investigate revising the regional agreement between member towns creating the Gill-Montague Regional School District (GMRSD) in order to change the composition and method of selecting the school committee of GMRSD. The appointed committee will report to the next town meeting, whether special or annual.”

Singleton explained his reasons for taking this step:

“It is widely held that the current school committee doesn’t work. ‘Dysfunctional’ is the word often used to describe the school committee. In my opinion, a nine-member elected committee in a two-town district may be part of the problem.

“Very few people want to serve on the committee, so it attracts those who have close connections to staff and support the traditional internal culture of the district. It also attracts those, like myself, to

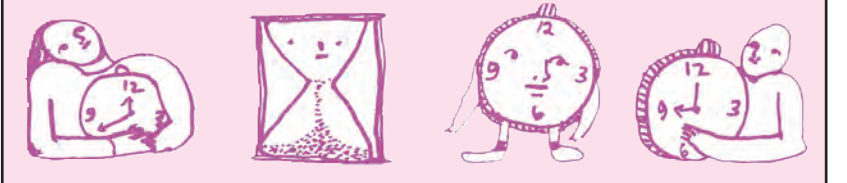
be honest, who want to reform the situation. Of course, not everyone is in a ‘faction’. However the dynamic tends to produce conflict on key issues, and personal animosity as well.”

**Volunteers Save Money and Energy at Montague Center Library**

What was once a drafty corner has been transformed into a cozy sitting area in the children’s book section of the Montague Center Library. There’s even a bright yellow rocking chair, with a stuffed animal tucked into the seat, making this spot an invitation for young readers. That homely touch, along with a number of energy saving and aesthetic improvements, have transformed the library this winter.

Volunteers from the Montague energy committee helped seal cracks and crevices in doors and windows and install a new programmable thermostat. The Friends of the Montague Public Libraries raised money over several years to help pay for a professional painter and other costs associated with the renovation.

“The efforts of many volunteers and professionals made all of this possible,” said branch librarian Anna Greene, “and it has made a big difference.” Greene added that this mild winter has made it hard to compare heating costs to previous years, but when another harsh one hits the area, the library will be a much more comfortable place to work and browse in.



Going somewhere? Send photos to editor@montagureporter.org!

**MONTAGUE REPORTER  
ON THE ROAD**

**GREENFIELD** – Reader Jen Holmes recently visited the College of Applied Sciences at the University of Ghana to assist with the Accra Student Health & Environment Study (ASHES), led by

UMass School of Public Health professor Raphael Arku. This study is exploring how school-age children’s neurodevelopment may be impacted by air and noise pollution in the country’s rapidly expanding

capital, Accra.

“The research team in Ghana have been collecting data on air and noise pollution for a year now,” Jen explains. “They have these very cool weatherproof boxes they set in different neighborhoods [which] contain different tools to measure air pollutants and neighborhood noise....”

“Most of these neighborhoods have elementary schools, and we’re curious how kids 8 to 10 years old in different neighborhoods might be impacted by these different levels of ‘environmental exposures.’”

“We’ll be tracking their cognitive development using the NIH Toolbox, which is a battery of tests to measure executive functions like memory, processing speed, and attention. We’re also going to have some kids wear our Actigraph watches to track their sleep and activity levels across three weeks, and likely reassessing them every six months or so along with the environmental measures.

“Since sleep can impact cognitive development, and poor air quality/noisy household contexts can impact sleep, it will be interesting to see how these factors interact.”



HOLMES PHOTO

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**GMRS** from page A1

Hillcrest will also need a roof soon – along with new floors, facade work, and a new boiler, according to a recent assessment – and since MSBA reimburses towns on the expectation that a school will remain open, the question is becoming more pertinent: “Do we want to assume that building will be open for the next 20 years?” business manager Joanne Blier asked.

Blier and superintendent Brian Beck shared a presentation of the district’s educational needs at the elementary level, where “bubble” classes occasionally challenge capacity.

“We wanted to be prepared to begin to build an educational picture of how it could be better in a new building, because that’s part of the argument we need to bring to MSBA,” said Beck.

Hillcrest, according to the slideshow, does not have a library, storage space, a conference room, or fire doors; Sheffield lacks a music room and sinks in classrooms; and there is a general need for conference rooms, elective classrooms, space for family engagement and community resources, and breakout rooms for therapeutic programming.

“Education today looks different than education looked in the ‘50s,” Blier said.

“Students really benefit from having breakout, small-group learning spaces,” added pupil services director Dianne Ellis. “Some of the spaces that are currently being utilized at Hillcrest aren’t well-designed for the purpose in which we’re trying to use them.”

Montague member Jennifer Waryas asked whether the idea would be for the district to “get rid of” Hillcrest, or reuse it as an outdoor or indoor space.

“The town owns the building,” said Blier. “The idea would be to stop using it as a school.... It took a long time, but the Montague Center School, once that was closed, was sold and then changed into condos – as was one in Millers Falls – so perhaps that’s where it would go.”

MSBA’s reimbursement formula is based primarily on the town’s poverty rate, and Blier estimated that Montague would be reimbursed 76% for new building; she used an estimate of \$55 million, which would leave \$13.2 as Montague’s share.

Gill member Bill Tomb asked why the original section of Sheffield would not be replaced, as it is

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an older building.

“Bill, I think that we’re suggesting Sheffield [remain] because we already have that MSBA window project there, so we can’t leave that building,” Katsoulis replied, and Blier nodded in agreement.

Irminger asked what would happen if Montague approves the new construction, and the towns then decide to form a new six-town district with Leyden, Bernardston, Northfield, and Warwick, a proposal currently undergoing a formal review.

Oakes told him that the six-town process was looking at combined middle and high schools, and would not be expected to impact decisions around elementary schools.

No vote was taken on the matter, but a timeline was discussed, and Oakes agreed to keep the topic on meeting agendas. Blier said that if the district were to submit a statement of interest to MSBA it would require the support of both the school committee and town of Montague. The deadline is the end of April.

“It could take five years,” Blier said. “It could take five tries of submitting this application before MSBA approves it, and then five

years to build – it could be ten years from now before we get a building.”

**Teaching & Learning**

Jeanne Powers, the district’s director of teaching and learning, sought the committee’s approval for a raft of changes to the program of studies at Turners Falls High School.

This included some new courses, such as Medical Terminology and Introduction to Engineering Design, associated with the school’s Innovation Pathways programs, which place students on job-readiness tracks in local growth industries. An Acting 2 class was added in the theater department, and several STEM courses under the school’s virtual program.

Other changes included merging, rotating, or renaming various classes; the last remaining business class, Personal Finance, was recategorized as a math class, marking an end to the business program. Two years of Biology will henceforth be squished into 9<sup>th</sup> grade and made a requirement of graduation, with the Biology MCAS standardized test taken at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade year rather than 10<sup>th</sup>.

Eliminated classes include Embodied Leadership, Trades Math, Creative Writing, and Journalism. (Students are invited to contact this newspaper for hands-on training. If you are reading this article and you are in elementary, middle, or high school, you are qualified to work with us as a journalist.)

The committee approved all the requested changes, and heard a presentation from Powers and Ellis about school programs planned for the summer.

**Other Business**

No vote was taken on a proposal, first discussed on March 7, for the district to buy into a new solar farm in Lanesborough, Massachusetts, which may have saved on the order of \$4,000 a year in energy costs. The plan offered 10% savings on the first 52,000 kilowatt-hours (kWh), and Blier calculated that the district’s schools use nearly 1.7 million kWh per year.

“It’s not something that I’m really terribly comfortable with, but I wanted to bring it back with a little more information,” Blier said. In response to a question, she said

the district did not ask the energy committees of Gill or Montague for their input.

“Once upon a time, we had a proposal to put our own solar panels over our parking lots at the schools, and that just went away,” Oakes mused. “Somebody said, ‘Why don’t you have those?’ I went, ‘I don’t remember.’”

“I’ll have to go back and look, too,” Blier replied.

Blier reported that the state Group Insurance Commission, which covers district staff’s healthcare plans, has announced its rates for next year. Active employees’ rates will increase by 6%, higher than calculated in the approved budget, but retirees’ plans will only rise by 1%, and Blier said she would “expect that we’ll break even” between the increase and decrease.

Student representative Syna Katsoulis was not in attendance. Beck attributed this to her participation in the upcoming middle and high school musical, *Mary Poppins*. (See article, page B1.)

The committee’s next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 5.

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Above: In neighboring Greenfield, photo correspondent Joe R. Parzych captured this moment of a new library's construction.

## One More Story from the New Clairvaux Community – Part II

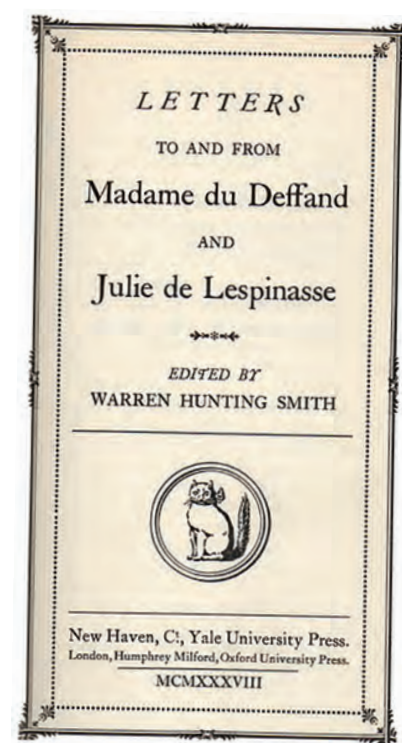
We continue with the story of printer and designer Carl Rollins, who came to Montague in 1903 to do some printing at the Arts and Crafts community known as New Clairvaux, and left an enduring mark.

By JERI MORAN

**MONTAGUE CENTER** – It was in 1908 that Edward Pressey and New Clairvaux began a steep decline. Mrs. Grace Pressey, considered by many to be his practical inspiration, died in the winter of 1907. And an article had come out in *New England Magazine* ba-

sically echoing Rollins' estimation of Pressey, pointing out that the visions and the fulfillment of New Clairvaux were far apart.

However, in this article, Rollins was singled out: "Rollins is a Harvard graduate" – not exactly true – "and also is a socialist and a believer in the vision of a life beautiful at Montague... In obedience to the vision he refused cheap job work and common printing and did only the work which he could conscientiously recommend as artistic in design and finish.... Samples of his work show him to have been artistic and painstaking... he seems to



me to have come nearer the success of the ideal of the community than any one else." (Winthrop Packard, "Country College Settlements: Will They Succeed?," *New England Magazine*, January 1906)

As Pressey was heading towards his nadir, Rollins was setting up shop independently, and he chose to move to a "most picturesque group of buildings in Montague." At least this was the description he used to solicit funds from his mother to buy the Dyke (alternately spelled "Dike") Mill, contents and all, on Center Street, called Central Street at the time. Rollins called it "the Heaven of Heavens in my imagination."

The Mill came with an "interesting" history, one Rollins probably did not share in its entirety with his mother. It was reported, at least in the taverns, that a portion of the property "had belonged to two notorious early 19th century see **CLAIRVAUX** page B5



Above: Carl Rollins at the press in Montague, circa 1903. Top right: Rollins designed and printed this book at Yale in 1938. (Carl Purington Rollins Papers, Special Collections, Robert B. Haas Family Arts Library, Yale University.)

### THEATER PREVIEW

## The Magic Is Real – and Here – in *Mary Poppins*

By K. CAMARA

**TURNERS FALLS** – The sweetness of a taste of warmth on a mid-March Friday afternoon was just the "spoonful of sugar" I needed to soar to the rooftops and rise above the sometimes hard to swallow truths of the touch-and-go nature of early spring in New England. Up the hill from where I live, at the Turners Falls High School, a dose of *Mary Poppins* spilled out of the auditorium doors as cast members left their fifth rehearsal of the week, the last one before dress rehearsals and a final week of preparation.

Into the warm afternoon they came, moving quickly to parents in waiting cars, clutching backpacks and jackets – some greeting me as they passed, and some trailing

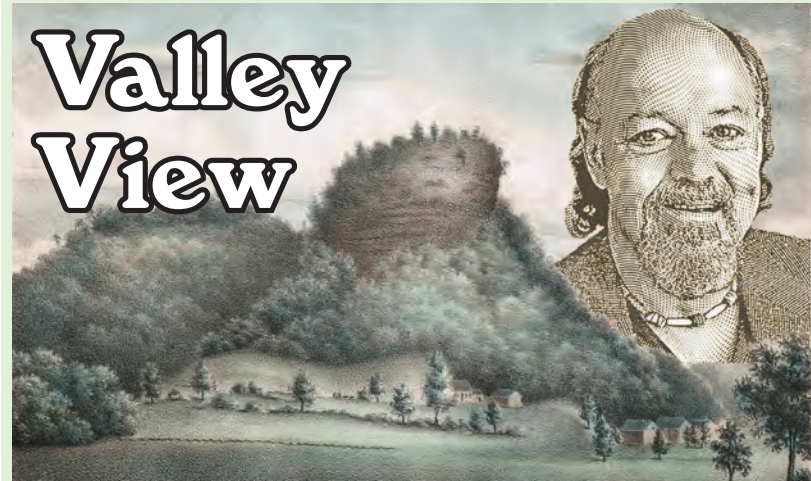
snippets of song as they flew. Inside the theater, sprinkled amongst the darkened seats, some of the cast remained. They stood chatting and twittering, demonstrating palpable excitement.

On the stage play director Kimberly Rose was bent over a stack of t-shirts, calling out names as she dispensed them to some of the remaining cast. A bustle of activity see **POPPINS** page B8



NINA ROSSI PHOTO

Statues in the park, played by Olivia Wolbach, Grayson Bowse, and Mickey Kempner.



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## Valley View

By GARY SANDERSON

**GREENFIELD** – I was on the road around 7:30 a.m. for an hour's drive up Interstate 91 to Claremont, New Hampshire, a Connecticut River mill town south of Cornish and Windsor, Vermont – Mount Ascutney looming large on the northwestern horizon.

There I would for the first time meet Avis Dodge Rogers, a dignified 92-year-old bundle of historical curiosity and youthful South Deerfield memories, and maybe even a glint of girlish mischief in her light-blue Yankee eyes.

I know them, the eyes of my late father.

A wife, mother, and librarian who dabbled in local history and genealogy in her spare time, Ms. Rogers was born in 1929 to Charles Mason and Dora May (Clark) Dodge. Hers was a youth of cows and horses in the barn, chickens in the coop, and jumping up and down on the hay-wagon to compress loads for transit at her family's 50-acre farm on the corner of North Main Street and Jackson Road, formerly the road to Whitmore's Ferry.

When her grandfather lived there during the first half of the 20th century, the farm encompassed about 130 acres split by North Hill-side Road, with 80 wooded acres extending all the way to Clapp's Pond on the upland east side.

I know the acreage on both sides of the road. I often hunted there and knew Ms. Rogers' father, Charlie Dodge, a well-known South Deerfield character and Oliver Smith Will elector who died in 1980. He was slightly younger than my grandfather, and I can't imagine they didn't know each other in passing. It was a small town in their day.

Ms. Rogers graduated Deerfield High School in 1947 and stuck around for a couple of years before marrying Albert H. Rogers, a friend of Deerfield veterinarian Charles Belford, and moving to Claremont, where he and a partner purchased Claremont Paper Mill. The couple remained there long enough to celebrate their 70th wedding anniversary in 2019, two months before Mr. Rogers' December death. He had been retired for 25 years, having sold his factory to

Ashuelot Paper Company in 1994.

Avis weathered the loss and is still going strong, her memory, mobility, and communication skills remarkable.

I learned of Ms. Rogers last summer from a friend who bought her South Deerfield property about 20 years ago. He provided her phone number and encouraged me to contact her, promising I'd tap into a wealth of South Deerfield knowledge. I called promptly and have been picking her brain ever since, trying my best not to be a pest.

Always engaging and enthusiastic during our discussions, she had on many occasions encouraged me to visit. So, with winter fading into joyous spring – notwithstanding three inches of inconvenient snow that had fallen the previous day – the time was finally right.

I arrived at Ms. Rogers' secluded, tidy ranch on a peaceful hill before 9 a.m. The gracious hostess was neatly yet comfortably dressed and ready to share information, with photos and records stacked on her dining-room table for the visit.

### Tracing the Links

For me, the most pressing topic was the 18th-century gambrel-roofed dwelling that came with the farm bought by her family long ago. Not sure who bought it or precisely when, she knew it was either her grandfather or great-grandfather around the dawning of the 20th century.

The circa-1780 homestead that stood there at the time was identified by George Sheldon, author of the *History of Deerfield* (1895), as "the old Wright place." By the time the Dodges bought it, the building was getting old and worn. "I don't think people painted their homes as often back then," she explained.

Ms. Rogers believes that in about 1905 her grandfather, Edward Mason Dodge, was faced with the decision of either replacing or repairing the deteriorating building and chose the latter. Why not? He was a carpenter, and likely had a hand in disassembling the old structure and building a new home that's still standing there.

My primary interest was in the 18th-century building that was removed, a dwelling that would, if extant, be one of South Deerfield's see **VALLEY VIEW** page B4

# Pet of the Week



CARMODY COLLAGE

## “TOBY”

Meet Toby, a big kitty with a big heart. Toby is a calm, quiet kitty who loves to lounge on the couch, thinking kitty thoughts and dreaming kitty dreams. He's probably dreaming about catnip, treats and how much fun it is to play with strings.

Toby is accustomed to living indoors with adults, children and another cat. However, as his family suddenly grew and there were more children zipping around the household, he became overwhelmed.

Toby likes visitors, checking them out and then soliciting pets. He doesn't mind being picked up, but you may need some muscle since he is a big boy.

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

## Senior Center Activities MARCH 28 TO APRIL 1

### 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. Coffee and tea is available during open hours.

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 3/28

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

### Tuesday 3/29

12 p.m. Tuesday Morning Knitters  
1 p.m. Chair Yoga

### 3 p.m. Tai Chi

### Wednesday 3/30

1 p.m. Bingo  
**Thursday 3/31**  
1 p.m. Cards & Games  
**Friday 4/1**  
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.

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 3/28

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

### Tuesday 3/29

9 a.m. Good for YOU  
10 a.m. Line Dancing

### Wednesday 3/30

9 a.m. Strength & Conditioning  
10 a.m. New Chair Yoga

### 12:30 p.m. Bingo

### Thursday 3/31

9 a.m. Re-Store & Re-Emerge  
10 a.m. Stretch & Balance

### Friday 4/1

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](mailto:coa@leverett.ma.us).

## FROM A KID'S POINT OF VIEW The Game of Badminton

By FINTAN ANDREW JONES

**MONTAGUE** – Hello, my name is Fintan Andrew Jones. I have previously written for the *Montague Reporter* back in 2018, but I have started middle school, and I will be writing about that, definitely. Back in 2018 my column was called “From A Kid’s Point Of View,” and I am still going to be calling it that, because I will be writing about things from my perspective. I am twelve years old, so almost a teenager, but not yet.

Now without further ado, I present to you “From A Kid’s Point of View.” Today, in my tenth column, I will be talking about badminton.

Badminton is a game played by two teams. There can be teams of two each, or even one! With long tennis-like rackets you hit a birdie over a net.

At the YMCA where I go to exercise and play sports, they have a badminton class. The first class was on March 11, and it was super fun. I have loved badminton for about two years, but this is the first proper badminton class I have been in. I can't wait to play more and get better.

Now a quick history on badminton. From my research on Wikipedia, badminton was officially created in 1873, although it is a mix of two games, Battledore and Shuttlecock, which date back to around 2,000 years ago. The name *badminton* came from the Duke of

Beaufort's “Badminton House” in Gloucestershire.

Badminton was a full-medal sport in the Olympics by 1992, and it is still in the summer games today! Badminton is the world's fastest sport – even faster than professional car racing! When professionals smash the birdie it can reach incredible speeds of up to 200 mph. That is twice as fast as a bald eagle dives at full speed. I find it amazing that people even see the birdie at that speed. Of course, since I am just starting out playing badminton, I can't hit it that fast, but hopefully in time I can get that fast.

Lin Dan, the world's best badminton player, was born on October 14, 1983 in China. He has the nickname of Super Dan, because, well, he is Super. Lin Dan is left-handed, just like me, and he has 33 gold, eight silver, and eight bronze medals. He retired in July 2020 after a long 20-year career.

I was talking to my badminton instructor on Friday, and she said that there might be kids' tournaments that I can go to. Who knows, maybe one day I can be in the Olympics, just like Lin Dan.

Badminton is a game with a lot of different rules, and there are different rule sets for singles and doubles. Singles are when one person plays one other person. In this rule set, the court is skinnier, but it extends further back. For doubles,

the court is wider because there are two people on each side, but it does not go as far back as singles.

My personal favorite is singles. What I like about it is that I don't have to worry about hitting my teammate with my racket, and I feel more focused.

In a professional badminton game you have to serve below the waist. After the serve you can hit the birdie in two ways, forehand and backhand. They are pretty similar to each other, but they basically help make your wrist more comfortable hitting on both sides of your body.

The one big rule of badminton is *DON'T TOUCH THE NET*. Okay, that was a little dramatic, but seriously don't, because regardless of whether it was on purpose or an accident the other team gets a point. There are many other complicated rules that I won't go into, but you can find them online or in a book.

Well, this is it. I really enjoy playing badminton, and it is my favorite sport. My favorite aspect is that it is a non-contact sport that relies on reflexes. I have never really liked contact sports. I think it can also be a great sport for people who like teamwork, too, because if you are playing doubles, you have to communicate.

Anyways, thanks for listening, and please look out for my next column, which will be about my interest in Rubik's Cubes.



## Surviving Breast Cancer

By Julie Cunningham

### Part 21: Small Moments

**AMHERST** – It wasn't until recently that I started to think about the rhythm of everyday life and the moments that make our lives worth living. I'm not talking about the big things, I'm talking about the moments we take for granted on a day-to-day basis.

I started to think about these moments when I needed a bit of a pick-me-up, but I didn't have much to hold on to at that moment. I believe it was a cold, snowy February day and my mind was racing, as it tends to do. I needed something to bring it down to earth, so to speak. So I sat down and started to focus on the little things, and I tried to pay more attention to the small moments that brought joy. As I went through my day, I realized just how much I take for granted.

What is it that makes each day special? I think the first special moment would be the first smell of coffee. Not the first sip, but the moment I open the can of coffee grounds and the smell fills the kitchen. That is the moment when I feel the warmth of the morning sun on my face and I take a larger breath in to breathe in more of the coffee.

Since my morning routine also includes a smoothie, I think the next best moment is the moment I take my first sip of my smoothie and can feel my insides taking a sigh of relief, the hunger I woke up with dissipating with every sip. As a busy mom, I often drink my coffee and my smoothie as I get ready for work. I usually drink my smoothie as I make my bed and my son's bed, feed the cats, and clean up a bit. By the time I jump in the shower, my smoothie is usually gone and I'm moving on to my coffee. The coffee is warm by that point, not hot anymore, but it's OK because I drink it quickly.

I'm usually done with my coffee by the time I'm dressed and putting on makeup. Since I'm on hormone blockers now as part of my cancer prevention treatment, I tend to gain weight a little more easily, so I stick to a lighter breakfast. When I say “more easily,” I mean it's basically a given that I will gain some weight due to this medication.

Which brings me to my next moment of joy. After

the workday is over I usually run at the local gym. I love running. I love running outside, but in the cold and ice, inside will do.

There are two moments when I am running that fill my heart with happiness: the moment I start to run and I put my favorite song on, which gives me a little more energy and makes the run go faster, and the moment I finish running and I can look at how much I accomplished.

I'm adjusting to how the hormone blockers impact my metabolism and how my body breaks down fat. It's an interesting adjustment because it's a bit more of a battle, although it may level out soon. If my doctor could write a prescription for exercise he would have, since it also helps my heart, which is also impacted by the medications I am currently taking.

Knowing this, I tend to praise myself a little more than I used to at the end of a workout, because it is even more important now. I feel a sense of power over my cancer diagnosis each time I finish running.

After I run I'm usually hungry, so the last small moment of my day that brings me joy is that first bite of food when I get home. It feels like the best meal I've ever had, every single time, because I'm usually starving. My food is always gluten-free because I am allergic, but lately it's dairy-free and vegan due to my stomach sensitivities. I am limited to certain foods; for example, fish and eggs don't hurt my stomach. Again, it's part of the medications they are giving me, and it won't last long – just until November, when I end immunotherapy.

Despite these restrictions, I'm usually really happy to be able to relax for a moment after a full day of work and a long workout. It's a wonderful feeling, being able to put my feet up for a moment and relax, one which might not last long with an active son and two young cats. Even if I just have enough time to scarf down whatever I made for myself, I feel lucky.

I feel a sense of gratitude in that moment, too, because now I am always aware of how I spend my time. Time has become so important. Who I am with and what I am doing is even more important after a cancer diagnosis.

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TV REVIEW

# Star Trek: Picard, Season 2

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

**GREENFIELD** – It seems a while back someone decided to bring Patrick Stewart back to the Star Trek universe through a new TV series called *Star Trek: Picard*.

I didn't really have much of an interest in watching that show during its first season, so I don't really know much about the new characters involved in this project; I only know that they are still part of it when the series came back for a second season, which premiered on March 2 online. I also know that Jeri Ryan, who played Seven of Nine in *Star Trek: Voyager*, is still a part of this. Also, a connection to the history of Data, played by Brent Spiner was Season One's main storyline.

The reason I had a mild interest in the second season is that the character of Q from *Star Trek: The Next Generation* is a huge part of Season Two. I loved the appearances this character made on *Next Generation*. Given what ends up happening in the season's first episode, it makes sense that this being would be involved.

The opening scene finds Picard and his new crew in a certain space battle, and then explains to the audience how they got to this point, which includes showing people how everyone has been since the last season. This includes the group being reasonably all right when it comes to their lives at the moment.

I should mention that starship they are on during this space battle is called the USS Stargazer. If anyone knows *Star Trek* history, that is the first ship that Picard was captain of, so that is a cool idea to do. The first episode resembles one where it looks both like a Borg episode and one featuring Q.

I won't say how the Borg show up here, but they request that Picard be present for a talk, and then things appear to go like they do whenever there is an episode involving the Borg. But I like to point out again the second season involves Q.

This character has been so popular that it was decided he should appear on both *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* and the *Voyager* one. Those episodes were enjoyable for me to watch as well; they had fun storylines as part of the package. Due to a preview I saw of the second season, I believe this will not be any different when it comes to *Star Trek: Picard*. Just wait till the end of the first episode, and this will start to look more like a Q episode.

According to the preview, the second episode will start to explain what has happened, and why this will fit the bill when it comes to the kind of storylines Q is usually involved in. Who knows – I might even watch all of this season!

I will give you one hint about what is going on: The word is *time travel*.



John de Lancie returns as Q, nearly 35 years after his first encounter.

MOVIE REVIEW

# Uncharted (dir. Ruben Fleisher, 2022)

By SEAMUS TURNER-GLENNON

**CHARLEMONT** – Whatever happened to the blockbuster? What happened to the great blockbuster auteur – the likes of a Spielberg, a Cameron, even a Sommers?

Well, the new adaptation of hit video game *Uncharted*, directed by Ruben Fleischer (*Zombieland*, *Venom*), is as good an argument as I've ever seen that that particular mode of filmmaking is dead.

It isn't, obviously; as long as we have the likes of James Wan still working and projects like a new *Avatar* sequel on the horizon, we'll probably be all right for the future. It's hard not to see things like *Uncharted* and feel like the blockbuster is at least stagnant, if not wholly dead in the water for the moment.

Diagnose the problem as thou wilt, but I personally blame the Marvel Cinematic Universe's cookie-cutter mentality and weightless CG action. It's undeniable that the form of the blockbuster feels like it just kind of stopped somewhere recently down the line, and has been awkwardly standing at this low point for a few years.

Look back to the highest grossing movies of 1999. You'll see titles like *The Sixth Sense*, *Toy Story 2*, *Star Wars: Episode 1 – The Phantom Menace*, *The Matrix*, *The Mummy*, and *Notting Hill*. Compare those to the highest-grossing films of 2022 thus far, a list that includes the likes of *The Batman*, *Spider-Man: No Way Home*, *Marry Me*, *The King's Man*, and our dear aforementioned *Uncharted*.

Watch all those movies (you don't actually have to do this, but go along with me for the sake

of the point): not only was there more thematic and generic variety to the titles from '99, but the movies just actually feel different. The idea of distinct premises and plots now just feels pointless – genre and premise now just feel like veneers to put over a stock movie.

This year's two efforts starring British actor and dimwit Tom Holland, *Spider-Man: No Way Home* and *Uncharted*, feel basically like the same movie (to borrow a phrase from the children on TikTok) in different fonts. The craft of image-making in the blockbuster feels lost, too. Gone is the pure style of films like *The Abyss* or *The Matrix*, replaced by a landscape of overly-cluttered set pieces and Ford-commercial-tier visual language.

When people criticize the modern blockbuster, and the MCU in particular, the intellectually lazy response is to fire back that they are clearly just looking down on pop filmmaking or "entertainment" movies. Yet the defenders reveal their own snobbishness through this response, ignoring the very real and obvious capacity for artistry that the format holds, and that films like *Uncharted* just lack.

So did I like *Uncharted*?

No, obviously not. It's inert, clunky, ugly, and stagnant, lacking any kinetics or real sense of drive to its core adventure plot. If you want a good modern take on the adventure genre, look no further than Spielberg's *The Adventures of Tintin* (2011). But in a landscape as polluted with films with the same myriad issues as it, *Uncharted* feels too generic to be too opinionated about as an individual film without it becoming embarrassing – and maybe that's even worse.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

## Walking Test Fails; Lots of Fights; A Large Dead Bird; Guests Accused of Adderall Theft; Pit Bulls; Noisy Retreat

**Monday, 3/14**

10:17 a.m. Officer patrolling Fourth Street area for multiple reports of a vehicle possibly involved in drug activity. Unable to locate.

2:35 p.m. A 42-year-old Turners Falls woman was arrested on two default warrants.

**Tuesday, 3/15**

12:01 a.m. Officer advises that the fire department advised him of two people possibly fighting down at Unity Park. Upon investigation, the two individuals were mock fighting, and were advised to move along due to the hours of the park. No further issues.

12:15 a.m. Abandoned 911 call; attempted to call number back three times with no answer. Officer advises that upon arrival the TV was turned up to max volume; he was unable to get the attention of the involved male, who had his eyes closed. Male party was eventually woken up and spoken to. Officer also spoke to involved male's wife, who acknowledged the phone issue.

3:26 p.m. Caller reporting two male parties riding a dirt bike up and down Randall Road. Officer advises no dirt bikes in area.

3:46 p.m. Caller reporting two little kids, approximately five and eight years old, walking in Turners Falls Road; cars are having to go around them, and no one is with them. Officer advises he made contact with the kids on Turnpike Road by the high school.

The kids stated that they were walking home from Hillcrest and they live on Turnpike Road. Officer staying in area to make sure they get home safely. Officer made contact with kids' mother, who stated this was a test to see if they could walk home by themselves.

5:21 p.m. 911 caller reporting a group of about 10 boys and girls near the Unity Park basketball courts trying to start a fight with another girl. Officer spoke to involved female and advises that the school resource officer is aware of the situation. One of the kids had a video of the incident, and it was a verbal argument. Investigated.

8:32 p.m. 911 caller states that her neighbor is harassing her and taking pictures of her vehicle. Second caller reported that her neighbor was yelling at her and threatening her. She was bringing her daughter and food inside and then came out to move her car and kicked a piece of metal. She took out her phone to use its flashlight, and her neighbor (the first caller) came out and accused her of taking pictures. Officer advises that both parties have been advised of their options regarding harassment orders and obtaining public records.

8:47 p.m. 911 caller reporting that his 14-year-old son was hit in the face by a male party and is bleeding. Medical response declined. Son is home now and safe. Caller looking to speak to an officer to report the incident. Officer advises they do not want to press charges but do not want this to continue. Advised of options.

**Wednesday, 3/16**

12:23 p.m. 911 caller advising he is behind a vehicle that appears to be smoking and has front-end damage. Vehicle located and stopped on Turners Falls Road/Griswold Street. Vehicle does have some front end damage. Officer requesting TFFD respond to check on the smoke and Gill PD check area around Barton Cove for any damage to guardrails that the vehicle may have struck. Tow requested. Officer located gate the operator struck on Greenfield Road, just south of Hatchery Road. Officer transporting operator to station. Immediate threat notification submitted.

2 p.m. Caller states that the adult son of one of her neighbors keeps harassing her by yelling things, pulling into her driveway, and blowing his horn. Advised of complaint.

5:04 p.m. Caller reporting that a male has been stalking her two daughters.

He follows them home from the bus stop, and today he followed them to the Creemee and started screaming at them on the way back. Caller also stated that she has him on video stealing bikes out of the yard. Officer advises he spoke to the caller and advised her of her options. Officer will attempt to make contact with the involved male.

**Thursday, 3/17**

12:06 a.m. Caller from Randall Road reporting noise disturbance upstairs; would like on record. Officer advised.

6:05 a.m. Caller from Randall Road reporting suspicious activity. Officer checked area; no signs of anyone being there.

1:25 p.m. Report from the White Bridge of a male and female yelling at each other. Officers spoke with a male in the area who reports that a male and female were exchanging words after a minor accident. White SUV with front-end damage involved. Both vehicles left the area before officers arrived. Area checked; unable to locate.

2:45 p.m. Caller from Fourth Street reports that since last Tuesday, people have been "selling dope." Ongoing issue. White vehicle allegedly involved; no other specifics. Referred to an officer.

3:25 p.m. Multiple 911 calls reporting a two-vehicle accident at Unity and Prospect Streets. Officer advises there is one confirmed injury. Tow requested for both vehicles. Road reopened.

7:57 p.m. 911 caller from Randall Road reporting that his neighbor threatened him and yelled at him regarding reporting the fireworks to the PD. Caller states that the male party stepped on top of a picnic table to yell at him over the fence. Officer advises situation mediated.

11:45 p.m. Caller from Randall Road reporting suspicious activity. Unfounded.

**Friday, 3/18**

11:07 a.m. Greenfield PD took a report of a large dead bird in the road by Keith Apartments. Area checked; unable to locate.

3:12 p.m. Caller from East Main Street states there are seven motorcycles parked on the sidewalk blocking handicapped access, and they have been riding up and down the sidewalk in front of her store. Officer advised. Parties are moving to appropriate parking.

10:20 p.m. Caller from Central Street states the guy downstairs is playing music and has now decided to do his laundry. Caller states it is an ongoing issue that he purposely

makes noise starting at 6 p.m. and going all night. Officers advised. Caller reports noise from second floor is bothersome to her and wants the male "contained." Female caller sounded highly intoxicated. Officer advises contact made with second floor tenant; he will be turning off the dryer for the night.

**Saturday, 3/19**

1:15 a.m. Caller from Randall Road reporting suspicious activity. Services rendered.

12:04 p.m. Caller from Third Street states that a female who has a restraining order against him entered his business sometime last night, stole some property, and messed up the business. Advised of options.

1:40 p.m. Caller from Third Street states she had company recently and they stole her Adderall, and she would like to press charges.

3:51 p.m. Greenfield PD advising to be on lookout for runaway juvenile, an 11-year-old female with strawberry blonde hair.

8:14 p.m. Caller states they were out for a walk with their dog and a loose dog ran after them and attacked their dog, causing injuries.

Caller states loose dog was a dark-colored pit bull/boxer, possibly from the Marshall Street area. Officer spoke with people at house near where attack occurred; they did hear it but are not familiar with the involved dogs. Copy of call left for animal control officer.

9:48 p.m. Caller states there is a lot of noise coming from the Montague Retreat; requesting noise monitor be brought to scene. Officer advised owner of complaint; owner states they are about done anyway, but will tone it down.

11:35 p.m. Two reports of suspicious activity from Randall Road. Officer advises he checked the area; nobody in vicinity.

**Sunday, 3/20**

12:16 a.m. 911 caller states that he got into a car accident and hit a tree on East Mineral Road; he has a few people with him who are injured. Caller states one female hit her head off the dash. Everyone is out of the vehicle at this time. Tow requested. Officer advises field sobriety test given; no signs of impairment.

11:17 a.m. Caller from Randall Road reporting suspicious activity. Referred to an officer.

1:39 p.m. Report of female walking pit bull off leash at the skate park; dog has been chasing people as well as chasing a remote control car a child was playing with. Area checked thoroughly; unable to locate.

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## VALLEY VIEW from page B1

oldest. In fact, it was probably one of the first dozen or so homes built in Bloody Brook village.

My curiosity had been piqued over the winter after examining two circa-1900 photos of the old building – one from the Pioneer Valley Memorial Association's Howes Brothers collection and another a lithographic, pre-1909 postcard. My interest only intensified after learning that the farmstead's first occupant had been the Joseph Wright family, literally giving me skin in the game.

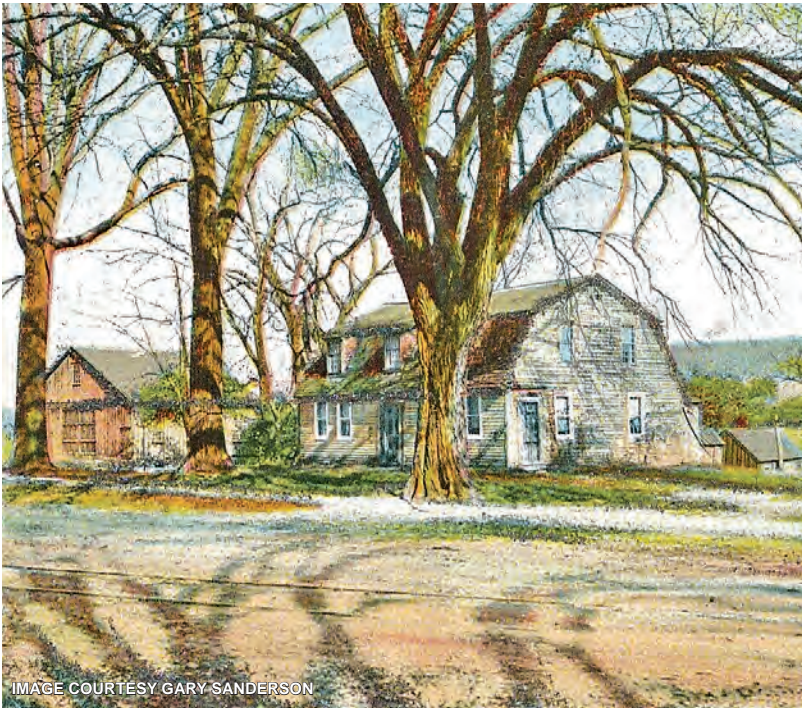
Although I knew that cooper Joseph Wright and his daughter Miriam Wright Arms were great-grandparents of mine, I knew little else about them, and had no idea where they lived. I knew much more about my Asahel Wright line through Deerfield's Wapping village. More than likely, the two men were from the same bolt of early Springfield cloth.

There is good reason for my lack of knowledge about Joseph Wright, considered by Sheldon as a "late comer" to town. The Deerfield historian tells us he had resided in Ware and Hadley before arriving in Bloody Brook around 1779, the patriarch then nearing 60. It doesn't help that Sheldon chose to introduce the "old Wright place" not in his Joseph Wright profile, but rather in that of a Baldwin family I had no previous impetus to examine. But Avis Dodge led me to the Baldwins, and they led me to Sheldon's mention of the Wright place, which I was able to pinpoint.

### Chasing the Goose

I then had ample reason to probe deeper into the Wrights and their farm, and was soon snagged in vexing complications created by what would turn out to be a misidentification on the aforementioned color postcard depicting an historic South Deerfield house. Chalk it up as a classic example illustrating how a published mistake can wreak havoc on a research mission.

This one set me off on a wild



Left: The postcard of the historic South Deerfield house acquired by the author on eBay, mislabeled as the "Old Bartlett House".  
Right: The barn now standing in the background helped confirm that it was really the former Baldwin house.



goose chase that was difficult to resolve. I found the vertical postcard of the antique, gambrel-roofed structure on eBay. Identified across the bottom left as the "Old Bartlett House in South Deerfield," it sure looked like the same building my friend Peter Thomas had shown me on the black-and-white Howes Brothers photo with an elderly woman standing in front. Both photos showed the same front and side doors, same center chimney, same front and gable-side windows, and even what appeared to be the same mature trees standing between the home and the street.

Thomas was of the opinion, but not certain, that the photos depicted the same building – specifically the one removed by the Dodge family at the corner of North Main Street and Jackson Road.

I was immediately interested in the Howes Brothers photo for two reasons. First, maybe someone could identify the elderly woman standing in front. Second, the structure closely resembled a distinctive Deerfield homestead known in National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) records as the Locke/Fuller House at

The Bars, now the home of octogenarian widow Mary Arms Marsh. The NRHP profile describes that home's architectural style as unique among Deerfield structures. Although that may well have been the case when it was accepted as a Register building, it would not have been so before the old Dodge place, just three miles south, was demolished.

Despite having different chimneys – central in South Deerfield, dual at The Bars – the two contemporaneous buildings otherwise displayed remarkably similar, gambrel-roofed architecture styles, suggesting that master builder Jonas Locke, owner of The Bars place, could well have had a hand in both. Locke built his home around 1790 and would have known – and possibly even worked with – Joseph Wright's oldest son Westwood Cook Wright, a joiner who was hired in 1787 to build a new Old Deerfield schoolhouse where Hall Tavern now stands.

Most confusing about the postcard showing what appeared to be the same decaying building as the Howes Brothers photo was seeing the Bartlett name attached. The

1858 Walling and 1971 Beers maps of South Deerfield both show "F. Bartlett" residing on the east side of North Main Street, about a quarter-mile south of the Wright-Baldwin-Dodge place.

Though my deed research has produced no evidence that the property on the corner of Jackson Road ever belonged to a Bartlett, there was a caveat: Avis Dodge Roger's great-grandfather and great-uncle, Hawley brothers Mason and Alonzo Dodge, moved to South Deerfield in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and married Franklin Bartlett's daughters.

Nonetheless, when shown the Howes photo, Ms. Rogers could not identify the elderly standing woman. She was certain the woman was not from her Jackson Road gene pool.

Hmmmm?

Perhaps the mystery could be solved in probate records, because by that point, I had still been unable to document a Dodge purchase of the Jackson Road property. My wheels were spinning. Could there have been two *nearly identical* homes – one belonging to a Bartlett, the other to a Baldwin – in the same North Main Street neighborhood? Was there a hidden Dodge-Baldwin connection that would appear in probate? Though if so, wouldn't Ms. Rogers know of it?

### One and the Same

Perplexed, I fired off a detailed email explaining my dilemma to Thomas, a sophisticated researcher and friend with whom I often share such snags. Maybe he would offer helpful suggestions.

Well, not quite – but he did take a short trip in cyberspace that ultimately solved my mystery. Using Google Street View, he went to the Dodge place now owned by Robert Decker, viewed it from the same perspective as the postcard, and noticed an identical barn in the background. Bingo! Same site, different homestead.

To illustrate the point, he took a screen shot and emailed it to me overnight while I slept. There to greet me in my inbox early the next morning, I realized that my first im-

pression had been correct: the postcard depicted the old Wright-Baldwin-Dodge place.

In dim morning light, I reached for a notepad within reach on my desk. I remembered jotting down notes for future reference on a list of Franklin County Registry of Deeds plans. Noted was a 1968 plan mapping a couple of Dodge building lots to be sold on Jackson Road; on the face was a list of deeds I hadn't cross-referenced with others I had reviewed.

The first one of these I opened documented a 1901 transfer of the Baldwin property to Edward Mason Dodge, through court-appointed estate administrator Pharcellus Bridges.

The transaction occurred about two years after the death of Joseph A. Baldwin, and two years before the death of his elderly widow and sole survivor, Mary Porter Baldwin.

Joseph A. was the third-generation Baldwin to own the farm. His grandfather John Baldwin was the first, buying the property and moving to Bloody Brook village from Connecticut in 1804. John's son and Joseph's father, Augustus Baldwin, was next, followed by Joseph, whose son James G. Baldwin lived next door and likely helped with the farm.

That elderly standing woman displayed in the Howes Brothers photo was widow Mary. Likely starting to fail in old age, the administration of her estate had been transferred to Bridges. She died in 1903 at 81.

So, there you have it – a splendid outcome to a chaotic, helter-skelter chase. Not only had I unraveled an annoying historical rats' nest tangled by in published transcription error, but in the process, I uncovered a direct genealogical link to the place.

It had been the home of Joseph Wright, whose daughter Miriam in 1779 married my fourth great-grandfather, Eliphaz Arms. That couple had nine children, and lived on the same Bloody Brook Corner lot my widowed, 92-year-old mother calls home to this day.



## 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." Through March 30.

**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.

**Hawks & Reed Ballroom, Greenfield:** Amherst Regional Middle School Youth Activist Art Show. Through April 2.

**Leverett Crafts & Arts, Leverett:** *In the Moment,* pastel paintings by Ruth Rinar. Also, *Imaginary Worlds* by Elsie Sturtevant, pastel images. April 1 to 26. Reception for both shows on Sunday, April 10, 3 p.m.

**Fiddleheads Gallery, Northfield:** *From Fields to Table II,* an exhibit celebrating farms, farmers, and the food they produce. Through April 24, with a reception 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.

**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. Through April 2.

**Anchor House of Artists, Northampton:** *Realizing Landino* and *Realizing Westbrook:* two shows celebrating the work of artists and friends

John Landino and Ben Westbrook, who recently passed. *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. *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. All exhibits through March.

**Brattleboro Museum & Art Center, Brattleboro:** Seven new exhibits with work by M. Carmen Lane, Roberto Visani, Yvette Molina, Mildred Beltré Martinez, Sachiko Akiyama, Louisa Chase, and Anne Spalter. Information at [www.brattleboromuseum.org](http://www.brattleboromuseum.org).

**PULP Gallery, Holyoke:** *Amy "Bannerqueen" Johnquest* and *Stacy Waldman.* Johnquest creates in a wide variety of disciplines including installations, murals, and set designs. Waldman specializes in 20th century photo albums, snapshots and ephemera. Through April 3.

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The Montague Reporter Podcast

**CLAIRVAUX** from page B1

highwaymen,” Captain Lightfoot & Captain Thunderbolt – although Pressey in his own *History of Montague* rightfully questioned whether the two men really used the Dyke Mill as their “hideout.”

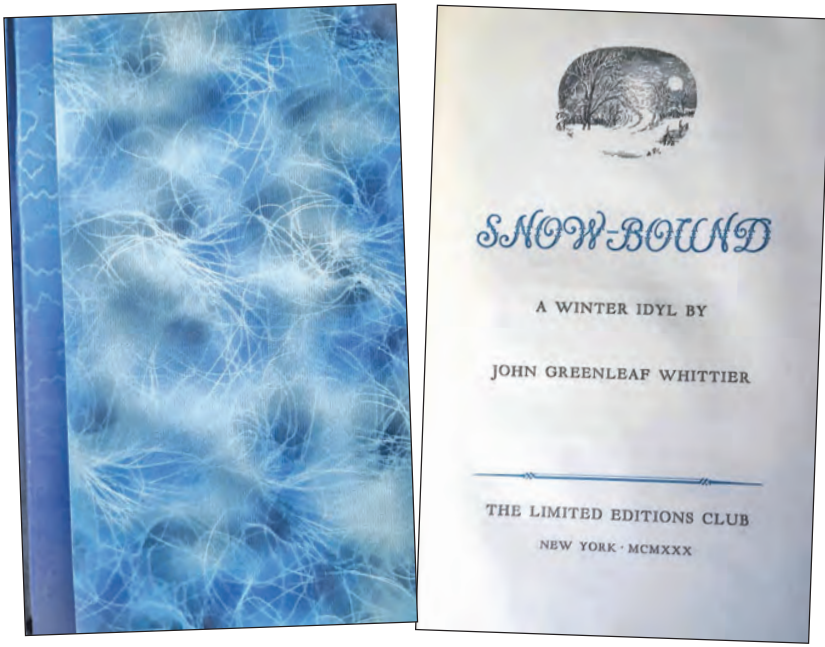
A fascinating 1926 book called *Captain Lightfoot, the Last of the New England Highwaymen* is available online, and if it is to be believed, neither Lightfoot nor Thunderbolt spent any time in Montague.

However, again according to Pressey, “during the Revolutionary period, Montague had several bands of real counterfeiters. One of these harbored in the Dike’s Mill [around 1755] where traces of their work in coin have been found.... a trip-hammer and bad half-dollars, ‘half struck,’ the other side being unfinished, were found years ago.”

It is known that around 1810, the Mill was used by Elihu Root as a blacksmith shop; Joseph Kilburn was going to set up a cotton mill there in 1832, but abandoned the plans amid much opposition by locals. Furniture was being manufactured at the Mill by George B. Richardson in 1854, and Augustus Dike later had a grist mill there.

The Mill had stood idle for a long time, however, and had begun to decay, when Rollins got money from his mother and bought it. He undertook major repairs and re-fitted the main structure to operate as a printing shop. The east wall of the Mill had full-length windows running from the ceiling down to the typesetting table in order for as much natural light as possible to enter to help Rollins, with his poor eyesight, be able to pick out type for printing jobs.

Other small industries from New Clairvaux’s Village Shop moved into the space as well, including cabinet- and chair-making, rug dyeing, and producing bayberry dip candles. Rollins’ wife Margaret remarked years later that the candlemaking was the only business to consistently show a profit, and that Rollins was the only one in the



*The cover and title page designed by Rollins for a limited-edition 1930 printing of J. G. Whittier’s poem, “Snow-Bound.” This was Rollins’ first work for the Limited Editions Club.*

group with a truly professional attitude towards the work.

His wife also recalled that after a short time, it “became expedient to liquidate everything but the printing so the other small industries disappeared and he was not entirely sorry.” His daughter was known to quote him years later that “everyone else was having a good time and I was doing all the work!”

Rollins installed more type and presses, and changed the name of his business to The Montague Press.

He built a house behind the Mill, again with his mother’s financial help, and was married in 1915. His reputation as a fine printer became established outside of Montague as well – work came in from national journals, and writers wanting their works published started seeking him out – but business-wise, he was often in the red.

In 1918, with monies for fine printing drying up during the war years, and Rollins and his wife now with a child, the lack of a steady stream of income came to an ugly head. Rollins was approached by George Day of the Yale University Press, who wanted him to head their manufacturing department at the press, and Rollins somewhat

reluctantly accepted the position. “I am off to fresh fields,” he wrote to a friend. “There is no need to talk or think of the Mill and all it means and has meant.... however, some sort of a new life begins here and I have a rather detached curiosity as to its form.”

Part of Rollins’ Yale contract allowed him to take all his own type and presses with him to the new workplace. He blossomed there. His title became “Printer to the University,” and in his over 25-year career with Yale, he produced over 8,000 pieces of ephemera and 2,000 volumes. He created a modern design for bibliographies and footnotes, and established the Bibliographical Press in the University library for student and librarians’ use.

Rollins went on to teach courses at Yale, and gave many lectures. He wrote books, among them *The Physiology of the Book* (1946), *American Type Designers and Their Work* (1947), and with three other authors, *Graphic Forms: The Arts as Related to the Book* (1949). He won the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA) Medal in 1941 for his printing excellence.

His awards and accolades were not just for the printing itself, but the

entire graphic design of the books and ephemera. He became known as the “face” of the Yale University Press, the person most responsible for its “look” in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In 1948, upon retiring, Rollins was named the Printer Emeritus. The then-president of Yale, Dr. Charles Seymour, said at the time that his achievements had “placed him in the top rank of America’s typographical artists.”

The American Institute of Graphic Arts and the Grolier Club of New York, the oldest and largest society of bibliophiles in America, put on a joint exhibit of his work in 1949, and he received the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters from Yale. The Carl Purington Rollins papers are kept in the archives at Yale, and exhibits covering his life and work have been staged as recently as 2013.

A nice tribute to a guy who just came out to Montague as a young man to see if he could do a little printing in a nice country setting.

But Rollins’ connection to Montague did not end when he moved to New Haven in 1918; he liked it too well here. He held on to the Dyke Mill, and his family came here for summer holidays for decades.

Even after Rollins’ death in 1960, his daughter Caroline, affectionately known as Callie, kept the Mill. By then elderly herself, she reluctantly sold it into private hands in the early 1990s, saying that trying to maintain two residences “just became too much!” as she still lived in her family’s home in New Haven.

When the whole family was at the Mill, the summers were times of ongoing parties, and trips to visit friends at Old Deerfield and throughout western Massachusetts. Small events added to the Mill lore, including Callie’s sister startling the delivery men – rather deliberately, Callie said – by sunbathing nude by the millpond. In later years a ship’s bell would ring out at noon to announce that the time for drinking – preferably straight gin or bourbon – had begun for the day.

If one was lucky enough to be invited for dinner, one found that Callie kept to the traditions her family had at the Mill. One was asked to sign the guestbook upon arrival, and could be astonished when browsing the bookshelf to find that most of the books moldering on the shelves were signed first editions. That’s what the Rollins family’s life was all about, after all – publishing and literature – and Callie wanted her guests who often stayed for a prolonged time to have “good things” to read, despite the old Mill’s humidity.

The food for dinner arrived from an ancient, barebones kitchen already plated up on Callie’s parents’ dinnerware. The chairs guests sat on for dinner were the very chairs made there during the New Clairvaux period, and there were always those bayberry-scented candles in lovely boxes which Carl Rollins had designed with artful script and decoration.

To come full circle, let’s finish with a quote from a letter Rollins wrote to the *Greenfield Courier-Gazette* as he was leaving for New Haven about his time with New Clairvaux:

“New Clairvaux was a very tiny dot on the earth’s surface and the sum total of its testimony infinitely less than that of its larger progenitors – the mediaeval abbeys, the Shaker settlements, the communistic communities. But in its small way it did stand for idealism in a world, as ever, needful to be reminded of the holiness of living an ideal life; and a proof of the difficulty of it!”

*Much of the information and quotation for this article comes from an unpublished booklet Margaret Dick-ey Rollins wrote called Carl Rollins At Montague, 1903-1918, which she had prepared for a talk. Her daughter Caroline gave a copy to this author, and there is a copy in the Montague Historical Society papers.*

*For a greater treatment of what New Clairvaux was producing, please refer to our three-part series in December 2015.*



# Winner Emerges from Lake Pleasant Melt Down

By DAVID JAMES

**LAKE PLEASANT** – Through almost half-a-century as Winter prepares to end its royal reign on the calendar and place the sovereign season scepter in the waiting willing hands of Spring, this community’s namesake lake has often teased the citizens of this youngest (1874) and smallest (166 US Census souls) of the five villages of the Town of Montague.

During such times the streets and avenues of “downtown” Lake Pleasant are especially abuzz with such queries as “On what date shall the lake become iceless?” And “Who will be king – or queen – of the Ice Off the Lake contest this year?”

Since 1977 the event has been a community rite of passage. Participants pay a dollar and draw a slip of paper from a former pretzel jar containing dates between February 22, the earliest recorded ice melt in 2012, and April 19, the latest recorded departure date in 1978.

As Judgment Day approaches, contest judges typically convene

at 5 p.m. at the Raisin Rosen picket near the midpoint of the Bridge of Names, the wooden walkway connecting two sides of the community, separated by a ravine left behind during the retreat of the last North American Ice Age more than 10,000 years or so ago.

Only one month before the Ides of mid-March this year, people large and small routinely sat on the trunk of a fallen oak frozen into the lake and laced their skates prior to whizzing in ovals and figure-eights, indulging in visions of Olympic gold medals for speed, or grace, or participating in jocularly with teammates endlessly circling the practice rink of the NHL’s Boston Bruins.

But by the first Saturday of March this year, it seemed imminent that open water was about to reclaim the surface of the lake. A string of sunny days and moderate nights had caused the thick sheet of ice to grow skinny and recede a proverbial “country mile” from most of the shore. Then a string of bitter cold nights and moderate days followed, allowing the ice to recover,

so to speak, its lost “frozen ground.”

The see-saw Battle of the Lake Pleasant Bulge was to last one day short of two more weeks. One judge, retired Montague building inspector David Jensen, had to withdraw from judicial duties because the delay inflicted by the ice’s refusal to melt conflicted with a preplanned California trip. The other judge – this writer – had to recuse himself because of potential perception of a conflict of interest. Two of his tickets appeared more and more likely, in the final days, to be possible winners.

Fortunately for the cause of justice and Ice Off equity, Kara Kharmah, a six-month resident with her family at the Montague Avenue building housing the Lake Pleasant Post Office, stepped into the proverbial breach and agreed to don abandoned judicial robes. After surveying the visible surface of the lake March 18 with traditional high-powered bird-watching binoculars and seeing nary one cube of ice, Ms. Kharmah brought the curtain down on the 46th Annual Ice Off the Lake Contest.



The winner this year is this writer’s imaginary fraternal twin brother, Burton Simon James, also known as BS James and Furry Burry (because of the clumps of hair on his fictional back), a life-long friend and valued companion, whose essence is factual, but whose physicality, alas, is definitely not. He thus becomes the first Winnie-the-Pooh-like being to win an Ice Off contest and joins a trio of other unusual and uncouth winners, such as two dead people and a then-living pet dog.

Two of 57 eligible dates had passed unsold this year, so the always slim pickin’s pot was \$55.

Had the contest ended one day earlier, March 17, the winner would

have been Josh Emond of Vermont, son of Linda and Bob Emond, Sr. of Lake Pleasant and older brother of last year’s winner, Bob Emond, Jr. Had the contest concluded one day later, March 19, the winner would have been Emma Emond, daughter of Josh.

Had the contest ended two days earlier, March 16, the winner would have been Jackie Stein, the Lake Pleasant Village Association treasurer. And finally, if the contest had ended two days later, March 20, the winner would have been the Spirit of Samuela Florinda (Sammy) James, a dead tri-color cat, and the first non-living non-human being winner in contest history.

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It is difficult  
to get the news from poems  
yet men die miserably every day  
for lack  
of what is found there.

– William Carlos Williams

edited by Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno  
Readers are invited to send poems to the  
*Montague Reporter* at: 177 Avenue A  
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# March Poetry Page

## All That Will Be New in the World

### The Amherst Mystery Box

is one hasty stop on an interstellar voyage.  
Dynamic starbursts trebuchet into multiverses,  
quantum decay, dark matter, and worm holes.  
We settle into carbon, planets, seaweed and membrane.  
Leptons, bottles in the sea, knock about,  
washing up as humans and things.  
Sun flakes scatter here and there.

Serrated leaves, rubber figurines, and  
pink plastic cocktail mermaids –  
buttoned-up stardust remnants.  
pine cones, toothpicks, pennies,  
broken clocks, buttons, rocks.  
All caught in the Mystery Box.

Bartering electrons for dimes,  
we trade time for ambrosia,  
money for star stuff,  
keyboard clicks for swords.  
Everything urges the exchange of materials –  
human and galactic, objects recycle,  
letters and deeds repeat:  
everyone's superpower,  
given by a supernova.

– Stephanie Baird  
Northampton

### The Joys of Picking

1.  
The joy of picking  
low-bush blueberries  
outweighs the ache  
of back bending work.

Some day unskinned berries  
will melt down gelato.

2.  
The joy of picking  
a Les Paul guitar  
outweighs the fear:  
not playing it well.

Some day those practiced notes  
will bend back a blues song.

– Michael Bosworth  
Brattleboro, VT

### The Trip Through Mass. Hams and Mouths

It was Ashburnham Wednesday and we began our trip to Framingham.

There was so much upbeat Chatham in the car we were pretty well Dedham by the time we got to Hingham so we turned Eastham because we Needhammed a rest from it.

We were comPelhammed to stop by the water and saw Petersham resting in the sun, and we noted he was somewhat Oakhammed likely he was fishing. It began to Raynham, we missed a few turns (as well as stoplights). When we were pulled over we were asked "Wareham are you going" by a rather pleasant and relaxed Officer Wilbraham. Witham was Officer Dog K-9 Falmouth, drooling a bit because this might be his (I presume Falmouth was a guy) big chance to see if any of us were Stonehammed. I hated to throw a Wrentham into his day, but none of us were by a Weymouth. We stopped in Plymouth and just sat in the car and Yarmouthed. After all that hullabaloo we see a cat Dartmouth across the road in front of us so we said "ok we had had enough finally" and settled for some Sandwichham.

– Edna French  
SomeWare  
(Credit goes also to the Massachusetts Municipal Association.)

will be anti-Puritan, Williams insisted, in one of his best prose pieces, his admiration for Père Sebastian Rasles spilling out as if confessing. Larbaud the Frenchman began reading from a copy of Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana*

on the Mosaic-like manifest destiny of New England. But Williams wouldn't have it. No, they were not the ones to lead, those strong-willed Puritans who saw only dark savages around them. Better to learn from that Jesuit priest come down

from Quebec to live with his Abenakis, to eat their dried seal and boiled wood if it came to that, and who in the end would die with them. No, not Mather, with his map in hand, but the man who stayed in constant contact with his "cher troupeau."

How Williams got it so right still moves me all these years on. Unlike those who raged against the natives, Rasles saw that "the head of logic" must be relegated to its proper place, which was in heaven, residing with the mystery of the Logos.

There was someone who could confirm what a Jersey doctor, half Brit himself, and half Puerto Rican, someone who saw each day all of life and death with its attendant sufferings. Someone who came to see in all its scintillant beauty a new world naked.

Rasles too saw what the poet too must come to see. That "every tree, every vein in every leaf" was part of "God's mysterious flower." That somehow it was the "worldly flower of Rome whose perfume might still draw all bees," even here in the mud of the Passaic.

How Williams came to despise the dry and splitting logic that cut each flower from the glazed rain water we all need to survive and flourish. Both legs fractured as a youth, Rasles knew what suffering was as he hobbled on with his people,

marveling the more as he learned their incandescent words and ways. What warriors they were, with those brilliant guerrilla tactics they used against those bent on robbing them of what was theirs with rum or a strand of pretty red ribbon, or logic's words... or nothing.

Rasles knew in time the Englishmen would find and kill him. Still, not even death would keep him from his flock. Back in Boston, his bloody scalp garnered his killers a hundred pounds But you too know the places, don't you? You who've lived here now for fifty years? Deerfield,

Hatfield, Hadley, the Abenaki and Pocumtuck names long gone. Still, something lingers in the spray that tumbles to this day at Turners Falls, named for the one who killed the Peskeompskut while they fished for salmon there, then died himself, that sad history that lingers in the river's mist.

– Paul Mariani  
Montague

### Contributors' Notes

Stephanie Baird ([stephaniebairdmlhc.wordpress.com](http://stephaniebairdmlhc.wordpress.com)) lives in Western Massachusetts and is an EMDR and Sexual Health consultant and psychotherapist. Her writing has been published in many poetry journals, multiple issues of our local *Meat for Tea* (also publishing her linocuts and photography), plus two honorable mentions in *The Orchard Street Press* (2018 and 2019). Her first poetry chapbook *Ducts: Love Poems and Prayers* was released in 2020 and can be purchased at [www.orchpress.com/index.php/en/catalog?start=8](http://www.orchpress.com/index.php/en/catalog?start=8) She writes a monthly sexual health column for the *Montague Reporter*, "Sex Matters," and has most recently published the professional book *EMDR Therapy and Sexual Health: A Clinician's Guide* (Springer, 2023). When she isn't working, writing, or raising her spirited daughter with her spouse, she voluntarily teaches OWL sex education classes through the Northampton UU Society, socializes, travels, watches and reads sci-fi, and bicycles.

After a gap of almost 50 years, retiree Michael Bosworth has returned to creative writing with renewed enthusiasm. He had poems published in two collections in 2021, *A 21st Century Plague* and *Poems in the Time of Covid*.

Edna French was Bourne in Padanarum to Leicester and Shirley Spencer she was educated at Ms. Dalton school and that was that, it was all she needed to know. Fondness for smelts, fresh from Buzzards Bay (and cooked on a stick), and Walpole dancing has kept her busy. She lives in Ware part of the Ayer with her beloved Frenchy.

From 1968 until 2000, Paul Mariani taught poetry at the UMass Amherst and was the University Professor of English at Boston College from 2000 until his retirement in 2016. He has published over 250 essays as well as 21 books, among them six biographies, including William Carlos Williams, Hart Crane, Robert Lowell, John Berryman, Gerard Manley Hopkins and Wallace Stevens, and eight volumes of poetry, most recently *Ordinary Time: Poems* (2020). He earned fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the NEA, and the NEH, and was awarded the John Ciardi Lifetime Achievement Award and the Flannery O'Connor Lifetime Achievement Award. His ninth poetry collection, *All That Will Be New in the World*, will be published in April 2021 by Slant Publishers.

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# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



## 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

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *CINEMASTORM*, movie double feature. Free. 7:30 p.m.

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, Bartees Strange*. \$ 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Bluegrass and Beyond*. 9:30 p.m.

## SATURDAY, MARCH 26

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

Integrative Learning Center, Amherst: *Perennial, Les Derailleurs, Poolfire*. \$ 7 p.m.

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

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

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Wooly Bully, soul/etc DJ night*. \$ 8 p.m.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *Lorkin O'Reilly, Melanie MacLaren*. \$ 8 p.m.

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

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Masala Jazz*. 9:30 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.

## WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30

Pioneer Brewery, Turners Falls: *Comedy Pun Slam Night*. 7 p.m.

## THURSDAY, MARCH 31

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Magrugada, Nighttime, Alexia Avina, Hoonah*. \$ 7 p.m.

## FRIDAY, APRIL 1

Four Star Farms, Northfield: *Moon Hollow*. 6 p.m.

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

10 Forward, Greenfield: *C. Lavender Suarez/Jake Meginsky Duo, Brompt Foam Sweetness, Miners*. \$ 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Bella's Bartok, Melatonin*. \$ 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.

## TUESDAY, APRIL 5

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Zurich Cloud Motors, Death Spiral, Puh'Darree Dzerryo*. \$ 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: *Lido Pimienta, Combo Chimbata, Les Filles de Illighadad, Alash Ensemble, and Garth Stevenson*. \$ See [www.bombyx.live/collid-erfest](http://www.bombyx.live/collid-erfest) for more information.

## FRIDAY, APRIL 8

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

Stone Church, Brattleboro: Parlor Room, Northampton:

*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, Zoe Lemos*. \$ 8 p.m.

## WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13

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

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

## THURSDAY, APRIL 14

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *Glenn Jones, Vic Rawlings*. \$ 8 p.m.

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

## FRIDAY, APRIL 15

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

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Thus Love, Guy Ferrari, Roost*. \$ 8 p.m.

## SATURDAY, APRIL 16

Mt. Toby Friends Meetinghouse, Leverett: *Jesse Palidosky, Ben Tousley*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

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

Parlor Room, Northampton:

*Cloudbelly*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

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

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

## MONDAY, APRIL 18

Nova Arts, Keene: *Come, J. Mascis*. \$ 7 p.m.

## TUESDAY, APRIL 19

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

## FRIDAY, APRIL 22

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Echoes of Floyd. Pink Floyd tribute*. \$ 8 p.m.

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

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Onyx*. \$ 6:30 p.m.

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

## SAT-SUN, APRIL 23-24

Franklin County Fairgrounds, Greenfield: *Mas Grass festival feat. Leon Trout, Mila Baby, 3 The Hard Way, Rhythm Incorporated, Tuff Riddim, and many more*. \$ See [kotvibes.com](http://kotvibes.com) for lineup and info.

## SUNDAY, APRIL 24

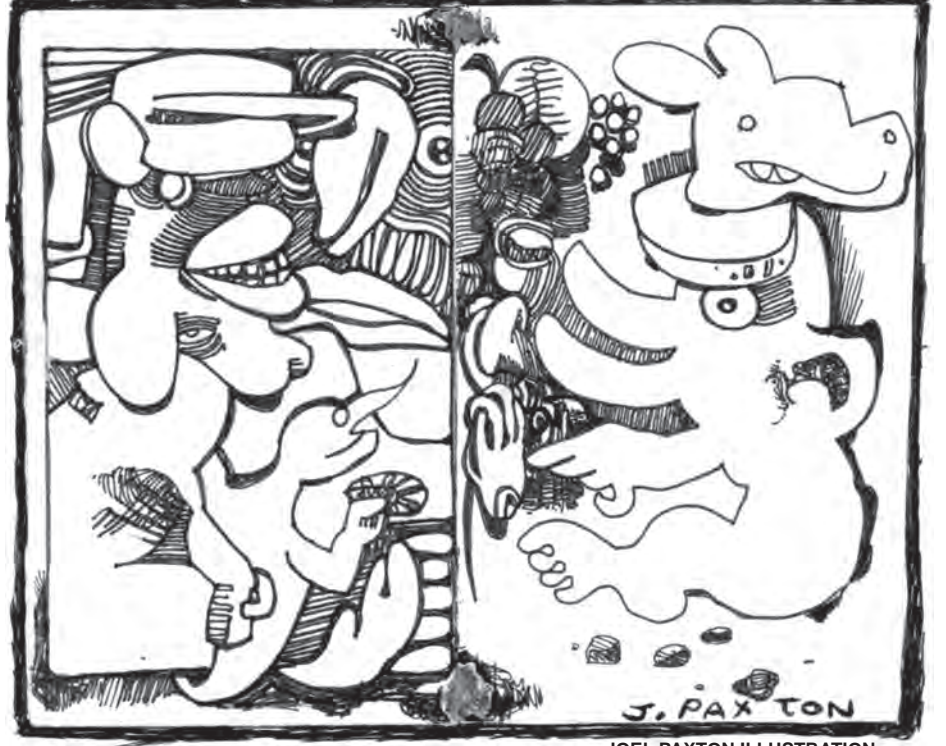
Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Janis Ian*. \$ 8 p.m.

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

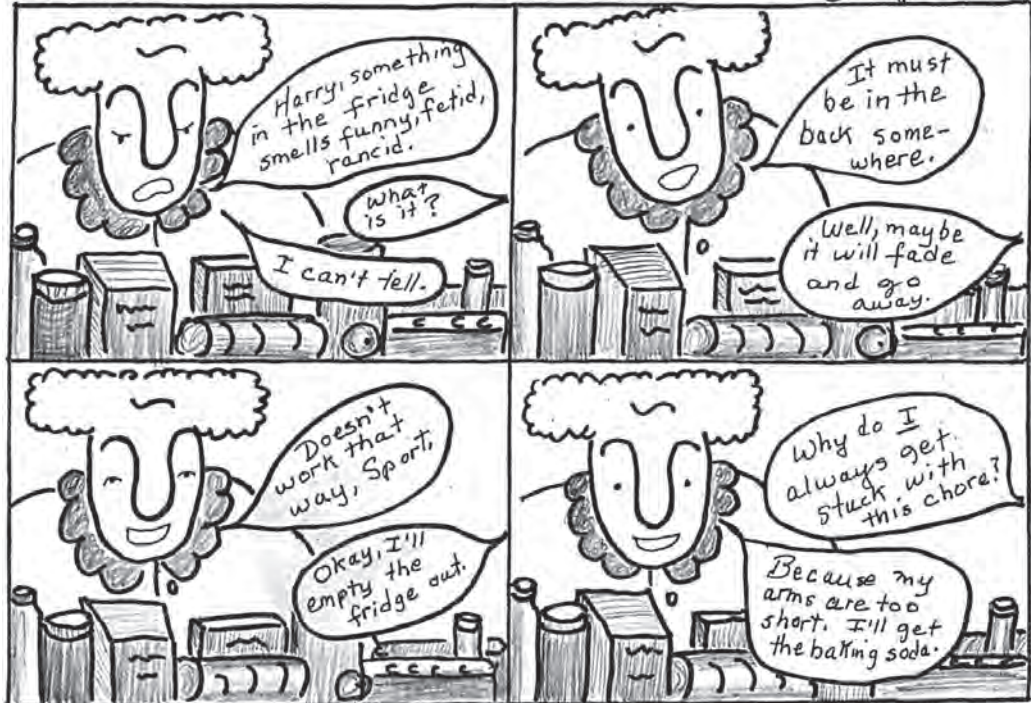


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# FACES & PLACES



Anchor House of Artists founding director Michael Tillyer with a painting and a sculpture by John Landino, part of an exhibit of the late Montague artist's work at the Northampton gallery. See Exhibits listing on Page B4 for details.

## POPPINS from page B1

continued around her as stagehands cleared the props. She deftly called out names and directions, smoothly managing the distribution of shirts while shifting to include me and respond to my questions, and introduce me to musical director Alyssa Comeau.

This was my second visit to the school in a week. I had spoken with Rose, and was happy to meet Comeau, and hopeful that among the remaining students will be key cast members that I might also meet. We were masked on this, the last day of the mask requirement at the school, and we chatted briefly regarding COVID protocol and its impact.

January marked the beginning of play preparations as well as the start of an increase in Omicron cases in the region. Unforeseeable conditions for an opening performance scheduled in late March led to a decision to proceed with a pre-recorded musical, the second both for the department and for Comeau's two-year tenure at the school.

"Mary Poppins will be singing her songs live," Comeau told me. "Other characters will lip-sync, and the ensemble pieces will feature a combination of the two."

And now we find that conditions allow for a mask-free performance.

This theater department, including Mandy Oliver as assistant director and Brian Lamore as set designer and builder, has shown tremendous resolve and resilience, and Comeau was quick to include students as a key component to enabling their success.

Sitting myself amongst the contagion of excitement still permeating the atmosphere of the room, I nodded to acknowledge her statement, agreeing that it does indeed seem to be the students who make the difference, and asked for more details about choreography and dance within the play. I was impressed to learn that each of the 32



Bert (David Stowe) and Mary Poppins (Izzy Vachula-Curtis) execute lively stage moves during a rehearsal of Mary Poppins, soon to premiere at Great Falls Middle and Turners Falls High School.

cast members will don tap shoes and participate in dance moves choreographed entirely by one of their peers.

At once curious about potential blocks to any student's participation, I asked of Rose, "Were all students required to purchase their own shoes or was there a budget that covered the cost?" She assured me that although those who could were asked to supply the shoes, no one was barred from participating and shoes were provided.

Both Comeau and Rose spoke about including the students in all aspects of the performance, and I moved on to speak to Kiley Palmquist, a senior at the school. In addition to playing her role as Winifred Banks, a key character in the play, she has also served as the choreographer of the production.

"It's my first musical performance here at the school, and I have been able to put years of dance experience to use in its production," Palmquist said. "Although the character I portray is a

bit out of my comfort zone... she is far too timid and does everything her husband tells her to do... I have grown as an actor and in my singing, and as a vocal coach."

Another student named Nova Shipley, who wears the shoes of Michael Banks in the performance, told me, "The cast feels like family."

And Bella Trinqué, a middle schooler for whom this is a first production, exclaimed excitedly to me, "Absolutely wonderful!! You know how Mary Poppins is all about magic? Well, this has been like that magic, being in this play!"

The community is welcomed and encouraged to join in the magic this weekend at the Turners Falls High School, 222 Turnpike Road, Turners Falls, this Friday and Saturday, March 25 and 26 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, March 27, for a matinee at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$12 for adults, \$10 for students and seniors, and \$5 for children five and under.

They are on sale online and at the door.



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