

The Montague Reporter

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

FEBRUARY 2, 2023

CARE WORK

Community Volunteers Make a Better Hospital



At 91, Avis Jenkins is the eldest volunteer at Baystate Franklin Medical Center.

By LEE WICKS

GREENFIELD – A friendly face to greet you at the door and direct you to a patient’s room, a warm welcome at the volunteer-run gift shop, a strong hand to wheel you through the hospital corridors – all of these tasks and more are performed at Baystate Franklin Medical Center by a cadre of volunteers. Their service is of tremendous value to the community, as well as to the hospital’s bottom line, said Becky George, manager of volunteer services at Baystate Franklin Medical Center (BFMC) in Greenfield and Baystate Medical Center in Westfield.

Before COVID-19, the two medical centers in Greenfield and Westfield had 300 volunteers, who cumulatively contributed about \$1 million worth of “in-kind services” to the hospital each year. Then came COVID and they stopped coming, but many are back now, and new ones are pitching in, too.

Avis Jenkins, from Bernardston, is the longest-serving volunteer at BFMC. After working at the hospital in an administrative position for thirty years, she retired and began volunteering in 1997. That’s twenty-five years!

“I come in now for just two mornings a week,” the energetic 91-year-old said. “I like helping people. It was hard during COVID when we couldn’t be here.”

This generosity of spirit is exactly what George is looking for when recruiting volunteers, which she is doing now. “We aren’t quite up to pre-pandemic levels yet,” she said, adding, “Volunteers affect the patient experience in countless valuable ways, and my job as the coordinator is to connect people with the right jobs.”

Bob Raymond from Greenfield is the newest volunteer. He signed up in October 2022, and he works at the desk in the new surgical wing and also wheels people out of the hospital when they’ve been released. Above his mask, his eyes are kind. Through his mask – yes, the hospital still requires them for everyone – his voice is reassuring. “In time I might like to try some other job here,” he said, “but for now I’m enjoying this!”

Waiting to go into surgery or waiting for a loved one while they are in the operating room is a tense time, and Bob Raymond is a calm and reassuring presence.

“Whatever you like to do, we see **VOLUNTEERS** page A5

Montague May Stop Electing Town Clerk, Tax Collector

By JEFF SINGLETON

The town of Montague may be heading toward an important change in its governance, according to an item near the end of the selectboard’s crowded agenda Monday night. “Plan to transition Town Clerk and Treasurer Collector from elected to appointed positions,” the item read.

Some Montague residents may not be aware that voters elect the town clerk and treasurer/collector, especially as significantly fewer people vote in spring local elections than state and national ones in the fall. When they learn that this is the practice, they may wonder why.

At Monday’s meeting, town administrator Steve Ellis suggested the proposal had partly been initiated by the two elected officials themselves. “After some ongoing conversations with both the treasurer/collector’s office and the clerk’s office,” Ellis told the board, “both Eileen Seymour and Deb Bourbeau have signaled that they think it is time for the town to consider and change the historical system we have had here, of their positions being elected, and move them to appointed positions.”

Ellis said that both jobs had become “extremely complex,” and that the town should have the “opportunity to pick from the broadest possible candidate pool.” (Elected positions require residency in the town.) In order to bring the issue to voters at the spring election, as required by state statute, the change would have to be approved at the special town meeting on March 2.

see **ELECTING** page A3

LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Blais Reports: New Governor ‘Responsive’

To Rural Lobby

By GEORGE BRACE

State representative Natalie Blais joined Leverett’s selectboard meeting Tuesday to report back on her work in the legislature and hear local concerns. The discussion focused on pending bills about rural roads and schools. The board also reviewed library and fire department budgets and heard updates on their activities, including a program which provides free smoke and carbon monoxide alarms to seniors.

Selectboard chair Tom Hankinson kicked off the questions for Blais by asking about the status of a bill she had sponsored, HD. 360, “An act relative to unpaved roads.” The bill, which is currently being reviewed by the Senate ways and means committee, seeks to “identify and evaluate the safe, efficient and environmentally sound maintenance

see **LEVERETT** page A5

ERVING SELECTBOARD

Officials Vote to Demolish International Paper Mill



TOWN OF ERVING PHOTO / CHARLES ZILINSKI

Under the new recommendations of the Erving selectboard, only the former mill complex’s pumphouse – visible in the lower right of this aerial drone photograph on the town’s website – would be spared the wrecking ball.

By KATIE NOLAN

Monday night, the Erving selectboard, capital planning committee, and finance committee recommended spending \$1.8 million to demolish all but one of the buildings at the former International Paper Mill on Papermill Road. The annual town meeting in May will decide whether to authorize spending \$1.2 million from stabilization and \$600,000 from a state grant.

Town planner Mariah Kurtz recommended that the town retain the mill’s pumphouse, “Building 8,”

because it is in reasonable condition, and located along the Millers River where new construction would not be permitted. “And it’s a really cool building,” she said.

“I want to make sure we do something with the property, other than just tear it down and leave it as grass,” said selectboard member Scott Bastarache. He recommended the town “really start honing in on future steps.”

Finance committee member Daniel Hammock agreed with demolishing most of the buildings,

see **ERVING** page A4

GILL SELECTBOARD

Should Small Towns Lead, Or Follow, on Green Energy?

By KATE SAVAGE

At Monday’s Gill selectboard meeting, the discussion of needed electrical upgrades at the public safety complex grew philosophical. Energy commission chair Vicky Jenkins submitted a letter to the selectboard stating that the commission believes the complex should have the capacity to run charging stations for electric tools, heat pumps for the offices, and also be able to charge the electric vehicles that will be used in the future to help the town achieve net-zero carbon emissions.

“The issue is not whether a particular change appears to bear more than current cost,” Jenkins wrote, “but whether, taking into account the overall climate crisis and the fact that current costs do not reflect the real costs that now must be borne going forward, the change is a reasonable step toward a future that will be enduring for our grandchildren.”

“So much of what’s running in that building 24/7 now didn’t exist when the [1989 expansion] was put on, and certainly didn’t exist when the building was built,” said town

see **GILL** page A6

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Others Grumble Once Again Over DPW’s Rainy-Day Fund

By JEFF SINGLETON

The Montague selectboard finalized its recommendations for the next fiscal year’s town budget on schedule at its January 30 meeting, but a lengthy debate erupted over one line item after it began discussing new policy for spending from the Department of Public Works (DPW) “discretionary fund.” This line would allocate \$100,000 for purchases in emergencies, or when a piece of needed equipment becomes available at a low price.

The result was one of the longer discussions at the meeting, generating amusement among some veteran officials and members of the public, who noted the persistence of

the controversy over the years.

During the segment of the meeting devoted to the operating budget, the board voted to approve stipend increases for the town meeting moderator and the board of registrars, with member Matt Lord voting in the negative because he said he wanted to hear from the finance committee first.

The library budget, with increases in staffing hours, was unanimously approved. A stipend for the director of the farmers market, which now “has its own special space” according to town administrator Steve Ellis, was also approved, as were the budgets of the town clerk, with one new staff member, and the cemetery

see **MONTAGUE** page A7

High School Sports Week: Tech Girls Lead Conference



DAVID HOIT PHOTO

Action under the net last Friday as the Turners Falls Thunder hosted the Franklin Tech Eagles. The final score: Franklin Tech 41, Turners Falls 27.

By MATT ROBINSON

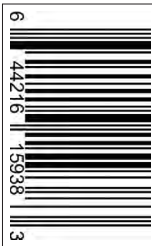
TURNERS FALLS – This week in girls’ high school basketball, the Franklin Tech Eagles and the Turners Falls Thunder battled it out for first place in the Franklin South Conference.

Going into Friday’s contest, Tech was on top of the heap with a 7–0

conference record, while Turners was 5–1. While most of the teams in the conference are in Division V, two teams, Pioneer (D-IV) and Putnam (D-III), are from larger schools. This week Turners Falls had the pleasure of playing all three FSC contenders.

Meanwhile, the boys’ teams are now playing for fun. The Tech

see **SPORTS** page A8



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The Montague Reporter

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NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION



LJ gets ready to sell a box of chocolate truffles at the new Pub General store in Millers Falls. The store has eggs and bacon, beer and wine, locally raised beef and lamb, gifts such as printed tea towels, throws, baskets, soaps, wooden bowls and spoons, and many other household goods.

Behind the Curtain

In 2020, voters of the 1st Franklin district were asked: “Shall the representative for this district be instructed to vote in favor of changes to the applicable House of Representative rules to make the results of all the votes in that body’s Legislative committees publicly available on the Legislature’s website?”

Eighty-nine percent of us voted Yes. (Montague voters voted 87% Yes overall; in Montague Center, it was 92%.)

In 2022, voters of the 2nd Franklin district were asked: “Shall the representative for this district be instructed to vote in favor of changes to the applicable House of Representative rules to make each legislator’s vote in that body’s Legislative committees publicly available on the Legislature’s website?”

Eighty percent voted Yes.

So far 36 of the 160 State House districts have weighed in, and the results have ranged from 75% to 94% in favor of this basic oversight of our representatives.

On Wednesday, according to Act On Mass, the advocacy organization leading this reform campaign, two amendments to the House rules package for the new session that would have made all committee

votes public were allowed to die without, you guessed it, a vote.

“When legislators vote in secret in committees, they are incentivised to vote with leadership,” Act On Mass organizing director Brenna Ransden argues. Senate committee votes are public, as are those of most legislatures in most states.

The issue has become a statewide flashpoint, simply because so many other campaigns over the years have found themselves mysteriously undermined behind the House committee curtain – even if the body does more good than harm, in the absence of information about how the horses are traded it’s easy to slowly develop suspicion.

“A Rep. Erika Uytterhoeven (D-Somerville) proposal seeking to publish full committee votes on the Legislature’s website was rejected on a voice vote without debate, after no representative attempted to seek a recorded vote,” *State House News Service* reported of Wednesday’s session.

The public deserves a better explanation as to how we benefit from these committees operating in secret. This ongoing brush-off is becoming a form of mass political discouragement in and of itself.

NEWSPAPER PEOPLE SEEN IN REAL LIFE

JOE M. PARZYCH PHOTO



RYNE HAGER PHOTO



MIKE JACKSON PHOTO



Joe R. Parzych of Gill and Greenfield (top left), a frequent contributor to these pages, held forth at a reception last Saturday for his exhibit in the Great Hall of the Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls.

Joe discussed his work with a crowd of about forty (bottom left). “I’m grateful to have met different people in the community who encouraged me to do what I do,” he said. The show, which collects photographs Joe has taken since his childhood apprenticeship with his grandfather, is connected with this month’s “Crossroads: Change in Rural America” exhibition.

This paper is the work of dozens of people, many volunteers. On Sunday, thirty or forty Montague Reporter writers, helpers, staff, and hangers-on met at the Rendezvous (above) for the organization’s first in-person gathering in several years. Many were meeting colleagues for the first time, and it was resolved to hold similar events regularly, perhaps quarterly.

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Letters to the Editors

Striding Collectively Forth

It has long been my intention to write about the importance of toenail clippers in the evolutionary advance of the health and well-being of the human race, and now, with the publication of the article “Much More Than a Pedicure: Expert Help for Happy Feet” (*Montague Reporter*, January 19), I see an opportunity!

As any good foot soldier knows, there are only two rules in this army, to quote Lieutenant Dan: take good care of your feet, and... oh wait, I forget the other one! Something about loving your neighbor’s feet as you love your own, maybe?

Anyway, thanks for the good work, Kate Clayton-Jones et. al.!

Mike Joyce Wendell

Thanks Sent In Multiple Directions

Many thanks to the Montague community for supporting two important fundraisers over the past few months in the lobby of Greenfield Savings Bank in Turners Falls!

The Mitten Tree was adorned with all types of mittens, hats, scarves, and blankets, all donated to local organizations to keep youngsters warm.

Our own Marie Kovalsick knitted 145 hats, as well as several baby blankets! Can Marie top her own record for 2023?

The Toys for Tots box was filled several times before the local Marine Corps picked up the final donations to be distributed prior to the Christmas holiday.

Montague definitely cares. Thanks to one and all!

Linda Ackerman
Greenfield Savings Bank
Turners Falls

Problems More Complex

As a member of Leverett’s Ad Hoc Committee: the Future of the Field Library Building, I was bothered by the dissatisfaction of Selectboard chair Tom Hankinson, as described in the January 19 article “Field Library Fact-Finding Group Warned: Clock is Ticking.”

Those of us on the committee are volunteering our time because we care about the fate of the Field Building. Our service to the town and our hard work should be appreciated. I do not feel I need to defend the committee, but I will say that you can’t put together a group of people, who have strong and varied opinions, and expect them to work cohesively from the start.

Also, the committee’s charge has been more complex than most of us expected. The Selectboard has done nothing in years to maintain or repair the Field Building, so it has been falling into disrepair. If there is fault anywhere, it is with prior Selectboards.

Maureen Ippolito
Leverett

CORRECTION

The profile of Looky Here art maven Hannah Brookman in our January 26 edition (Page B1, *The Wizard of Looky: Revealed!*) contained one very basic error.

“Her home is in Marlboro, not Putney,” reporter Jan Atamian told us the next day. “I had written down Marlboro...”

We know the feeling, Jan! Apologies to Ms. Brookman and anyone else affected by this inadvertent misdirection.

Sign Me Up!

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LOCAL BRIEFS

Compiled by NINA ROSSI

Do you know a “Local Hero”? Since 2003, CISA’s **Local Hero Awards** have recognized farmers, institutions, businesses, and everyday community members whose work helps sustain local agriculture. They want nominations from the community for the 2023 Annual Meeting. Make yours by February 3 at www.buylocalfood.org/nominate.

Getting a little squirrely and **need to get some exercise?** Join others seeking fresh air and a stretch of the legs from 1 to 2 p.m. on Fridays, February 3, 10, 17, and 24, along the bike path in Turners Falls.

It’s an easy-paced, one- to two-mile guided walk geared for seniors, but open to all ages. A DCR park interpreter will talk about local history and topics from the *Crossroads: Change in Rural America* exhibit. Dress for the weather, wear sturdy boots, and meet at the main entrance of the Great Falls Discovery Center.

Four Rivers School presents their **20th Annual Variety Show** at the Shea Theater this Friday, February 3 at 7 p.m. Talented students and faculty will be on the stage with songs, skits, comedy, and more.

Greenfield is holding its annual **Winter Carnival this weekend**, starting Friday, February 3 with live ice carving throughout the downtown. Friday includes a torch-lighting on the common at 4 p.m. and an ice bar and carnival with fire dancing at Court Square from 4 to 8 p.m. Get glow sticks for a dance party at Beacon Field at 5:30, watch a parade of lights down Main Street at 6, and fireworks from Poet’s Seat at 7 p.m.

The fun continues over the weekend with ice sculpture contests, a family Fun Fest, donuts, a laser light show, a jigsaw puzzle contest, a cribbage tournament, a fat-bike group ride, tug of war, a cardboard sled race, a K9 keg pull, a chili cook-off, sledding, ice skating, and much more than I can fit here. For the details, see www.greenfieldrecreation.com.

Sadie’s Bikes is reopening this Saturday, February 4 at its new location on the mainland side of the power canal and bike path in Turners Falls. Owner Nik Perry has been hard at work converting the garage at 83 Canal Street into a bike repair, sales, and curio shop. He plans to hold community bike repair workshops. His winter hours will be Wednesdays through Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Stop in and say Hi!

The Friends of the Montague Public Libraries hold their **monthly book sale at the Carnegie Library** this Saturday, February 4 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. This month there is a romance novel special – “buy one, get one free!”

Don’t forget about the **grand opening of the Smithsonian exhibit, Crossroads: Change in Rural**

America at the Great Falls Discovery Center from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. this Sunday, February 5. Refreshments will be available. An insert in this edition has a full schedule of events!

Hey, February is American Heart Month! Baystate Health offers a **free, virtual Heart and Vascular Health lecture series**, beginning with “From Arteries to Afib” this Sunday, February 5 at noon. Cardiac surgeon Dr. Siavash Saadat leads the lecture on the latest advances in cardiac surgery.

The second lecture, about evaluating chest pain, heart health, and disease, will be with Dr. Brian Wasserman on February 12. Dr. Hazel Marecki will talk about vascular care and surgery on February 19, and a lecture on blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, and weight will be presented by Elizabeth Jarry, CNP, on February 26. Register at baystate-health.org/heart to access sessions.

Alfred Hitchcock’s first thriller, The Lodger: A Story of London Fog, will screen at the Greenfield Garden Cinema with live music at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, February 6. The 1927 movie, described as a “creepy silent drama about killings in London,” was the famous director’s debut. Accompaniment is by Jeff Rapsis, a New Hampshire-based composer specializing in music for silent films. Rapsis’s digital synthesizer reproduces a full orchestra of sound.

This is part of a silent film series on the first Monday of each month. March’s entry, *Wings* (1927), is described as a “sweeping drama of US aviators in WWI.”

There is a program designed to help make **home-based services available to eligible seniors** who

might otherwise need care in a nursing facility. It’s called the Frail Elder Waiver (FEW), and a virtual forum about it will be held at 10 a.m. next Wednesday, February 8.

If you are an elder or work with elders, you may want to know about these services and how to qualify. Register at tinyurl.com/FEWapply.

The featured readers at the next Writers Read at the LAVA Center in Greenfield are **Edite Cunha, David Ram, and Bob Barba**. Come out next Wednesday, February 8 at 7 p.m. to have a good listen. There is a \$5 suggested donation.

Nayana LaFond will give an artist talk about her **Portraits in Red: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls**, currently showing at the Augusta Savage Gallery at UMass Amherst, in the gallery on Wednesday, February 8 at 6 p.m.

The series began in 2020 with one painting, *Lauraina in RED*, created for the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls. LaFond put out a call to paint more portraits if people sent her information about missing loved ones. She received so many she decided to dedicate herself to painting them all. Each portrait is of someone who is missing, was murdered, survived, their family member or friend, or an activist/hero fighting for the cause. LaFond continues to receive new images and stories, and has an ongoing queue of 20 to 30.

Portraits in Red is also scheduled to come to the Great Falls Discovery Center this August.

The Music at Amherst series presents its first concert, **“Welcome to Indian Country,”** next Friday, February 10 at 8 p.m. The concert features musicians and storytellers celebrating Native culture, using “witty, wise and poignant poetry to satire and honor elders and ancestors.”

Larry Spotted Crow Mann, nationally acclaimed author, citizen of the Nipmuc Nation of Massachusetts, and director of the Ohketeau Cultural Center, will provide opening words and song, and there will be a talkback after the performance.

The concert is held in the Buckley Recital Hall in the Arms Music Center at Amherst College. This is a ticketed event with general seating; parking is available on the campus.

The **Greater Commonwealth Virtual School (GCVS)** is now accepting applications for the 2023-24 school year. Several virtual open house events will provide information to interested families. The application deadline is February 10, with a lottery on the 15th.

GCVS has a capacity of 1,200 students and preference is given to students with certain needs – find out more about the school at www.gcvvs.org, and about the application process at tinyurl.com/VirSapp.

CISA calls all storytellers to register for their Field Notes event where community members share **true stories about experiences with local food and farming**. “This is a beginner-friendly event for the storyteller in all of us,” they write. “No prior experience is required – we’ll provide plenty of support and coaching.” Spanish interpretation and financial assistance are available, and the deadline for pitches is February 10. They will help you figure out a story idea if you are a bit vague about what you want to do. Email jacob@buylocalfood.org to chat.

Have you ever been on a **Cookie Walk**? No, a cookie walk is not how you crush graham cracker cookies to make pie crust! It is a fundraiser where the public is invited to buy boxes or bags, which they may then fill with cookies. The walking part is just going from table to table to get the cookies.

The First Congregational Church in Montague Center is holding a Valentine’s Day Cookie Walk on Saturday, February 11, with cookies made by the congregation. In addition, there will be Valentine-themed crafts and flowers for sale. The event runs from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and is held at the church. If you want to be a vendor, call Jean at (413) 367-9422!

Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

**Valentine’s Day
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ELECTING from page A1

Making the positions appointed, Ellis said, “would have no impact on our present town treasurer/collector or clerk,” as Seymour and Bourbeau have been elected through May 2025. He added that he was “bringing the news just as advisory,” because the proposal had not been on the table during the previous week’s discussion of the special town meeting warrant.

The announcement was met with complete silence, and the selectboard quickly moved on to discussing a contract for software that monitors the combined sewer overflow system.

Reached by the *Reporter* the next day, Ellis did not sound confident the proposal will be added to the March 2 special town meeting agenda. “I just wanted to give notice that the conversation was happening,” he said. The selectboard had previously voted to “close” the warrant on January 26, and at its January 23 meeting Ellis reviewed the preliminary warrant with no mention of any change to how the two positions are staffed.

Several Montague town meeting members and officials we spoke with said that changing the status of the treasurer and clerk has frequently been raised during the last few decades, but has never been placed on a town meeting agenda or a ballot.

A town’s ability to change a position in its government from elected to appointed is regulated under Massachusetts General Law Ch. 41 §1B, which stipulates that the change must be approved by a town meeting at least 60 days before the measure is put on a ballot. (The law

additionally stipulates the wording of the ballot measure.) Montague’s annual town meeting in May would likely not satisfy this requirement in time for the spring election.

We were unable to ascertain the precise ratio of elected to appointed officials in Massachusetts towns as of press time. The *Falmouth Enterprise* on Cape Cod, where a local town was debating the issue last year, estimated that “about half the towns in the state appoint their Town Clerks.”

Montague town clerk Deb Bourbeau, who serves as the treasurer of the Massachusetts Town Clerks Association (MTCA), said she believed towns were increasingly moving in the direction of appointment. “It’s constantly on our listserv,” she said. She later produced an MTCA roster showing 136 appointed and 196 elected clerks, including some city clerks.

Bourbeau indicated she had agreed to support the proposal in the face of new demands made on town clerks by recently updated voting laws, and the increased complexity of the job since she took the position in 2006. Her department’s proposed budget for the coming fiscal year includes a salary for a new full-time assistant.

“When I was in Steve [Ellis]’s office going over my budget, I came to the conclusion that it was time to talk about this,” Bourbeau said of the shift to an appointed position. “That was the straw that broke the camel’s back.”

“No one goes to school to become a town clerk,” Bourbeau added in a later email. “I was lucky, and served as John Zywna’s assistant – I

learned from the best. I was ready to take over when he retired.”

On the other hand Zywna, who served as the Montague clerk for over 15 years and who Bourbeau replaced, called the proposal change “a dangerous thing, if they do it.” He said the shift would grant the selectboard power over all town officials, and argued that the “wishes of the voters” would not be considered.

“I am opposed to it, but I do sympathize with the people who want to go there,” Zywna said, stressing as Bourbeau did the increased demands made on small-town clerks. “It’s not just dog licenses anymore,” he said.

Rich Kuklewicz, selectboard chair and longtime town meeting member, said that over the years he has supported appointing the treasurer/collector and clerk. Kuklewicz expressed concern that filling the positions by election does not guarantee a winning candidate would have the “skill set” necessary to meet the current job responsibilities, and said he believed the town should be able to recruit from a broader pool of candidates.

Veteran town meeting member David Jensen said he thought the election of the treasurer/collector was an “anachronism,” but that he was not so sure about the clerk position. An elected clerk living in the town, he argued, tends to be more connected to the citizenry.

Although not necessarily opposed to considering the change, Jensen said that “right now I am stuck on the idea that if it is not broken, don’t mess with it.”



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ERVING from page A1

commenting that some were interesting and historic buildings, but that the town had not been able to interest developers in the property with the structures still standing.

Kurtz told the board and committee members that making the decision about demolition would make subsequent conversations with townspeople more productive. She said the next step, after community discussions, would be issuing a request for proposals from developers.

The demolition would be the largest expenditure in a \$2.9 million capital improvement budget proposed for FY'24. Other lines include \$500,000 for work on Bridge Street and Maple Avenue, \$150,000 for ventilation at the fire station, \$125,000 for a plow truck and sander, \$100,000 for door access and security at the police station, and \$100,000 for HVAC at Erving Elementary School.

Shared-Use Path

Kurtz asked the board for a letter of support for a MassTrails grant to study "the possibility of revitalizing an abandoned trail along the Millers River into a shared-use path for recreation and bicycle/pedestrian connections between the villages of Farley, Erving Center, and Wendell Depot."

The \$37,500 grant would fund research, planning, and community engagement for the proposed trail along the south side of the Millers River, mostly through state forest in Wendell. Erving would be required to fund \$7,000 of the cost.

According to the application, the path would provide residents with accessible hiking and a safe location for bicycling, and connect New England Trail hikers to businesses in Erving Center. Visitors would also be able to park in Erving Center's park-and-ride lot and bike or walk to Farley's many trails and rock-climbing ledges.

In the future, the trail might be able to connect with a proposed shared-use trail in Orange, providing access to the center of Orange.

Checking for Lead

According to water and wastewater superintendent Peter Sanders, the federal and state governments are requiring all public water suppliers to inventory their service lines for the presence of lead, and develop replacement plans for any lead-containing pipes.

Town consultant Tighe & Bond has proposed a cost of \$21,500 for Erving's inventory and plan.

Sanders said the state is providing loans, funded by the 2022 federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, that are forgivable if the town completes the lead assessment by October 2024.

The inventory will include "basement inspections" of customer-owned connections to the

towns' water mains. According to the Tighe & Bond proposal, no inspections would be conducted without the owners' permission. Bas-tarache asked what would happen if a resident refuses access to their home.

Sanders said he didn't know, but would check. He told the board that, because Erving's water system is relatively new, "It's highly unlikely that we'll find any lead."

Selectboard member William Bembury asked whether any grant money was available to residents to replace pipes containing lead, and Sanders agreed to find out.

Master List

Kurtz, the selectboard, and the finance and capital planning committees spent over an hour discussing a list of current and proposed town projects.

Kurtz shared a spreadsheet indicating for each project the source of funding, the intensity of administrative work entailed, and a schedule for its completion. Twenty-eight projects are scheduled for the current fiscal year, including wall reconstruction on Bridge Street and feasibility planning for a new cemetery. Others, such as the IP Mill demolition and Church Street bridge reconstruction, are projected to start in 2025 or 2026.

A number of projects Kurtz characterized as "miscellaneous" are still in the idea stage, with no funding identified and no solid plans.

Special Town Meeting

The committees reviewed the ten articles on the draft warrant for a special town meeting, tentatively scheduled for March 6.

The articles include adding \$150,000 to the Erving Elementary School budget, as partial funding for out-of-school special education placements costing \$308,500; capital improvements totaling \$135,000, moved up from the FY'24 budget; \$26,000 for engineering water department equipment; adjusting the board of health budget; paying a bill from a prior year; and reorganizing the cemetery commission.

Police Officer Staying

Police chief Robert Holst read a letter commending officer Laura Gordon for her community policing and outreach work. "You have been amazing," Holst told Gordon.

The letter cited examples of her work including re-establishing the K9 program and bike patrol unit, conducting "Coffee with Cops" events at the library and senior center, giving a public presentation on scams, supporting the Quabbin House in Orange, and providing information about the police department in the *Around Town* newsletter. Holst said Gordon's efforts were

"spilling out" through the department, encouraging other officers to take initiative.

The selectboard, finance and capital planning committee members, and other attendees gave Gordon a standing ovation.

"It's an honor to be here, and to be welcomed in the community and to be able to continue doing what I love," Gordon told them. "There was a time last year when I thought that was coming to an end."

Gordon was originally appointed to the Erving police department for a one-year term while she took a leave of absence from the Greenfield police department, as it was facing budget cuts and layoffs. Holst announced that she had recently submitted her resignation to the Greenfield department, and intends to stay in Erving.

Mass Historics

The selectboard approved an application to the Massachusetts Historical Commission for a \$20,000 grant to create an inventory of historical structures in town. Erving would be required to match it with \$20,000 from town funds.

The grant would fund a "professional cultural and architectural resource survey" of "physical elements in the landscape that remain from historical patterns of human activity."

Board members wondered whether the plan to use matching funds should have been reviewed by the capital planning committee, but because that committee had already left the meeting, the application deadline is before they meet next, and the town would have the option to decline the grant, the board approved the application.

Other Business

The board decided to reorganize the insurance advisory committee, which will have eight members: three selected by the Erving Teachers Association, two by the Erving Education Association, two by the New England Police Benevolent Association, and one retiree by the selectboard.

The town's representative and alternate to the Franklin County Solid Waste District were designated as special municipal employees, to comply with state ethics guidelines.

The board reviewed a draft remote work policy, a criminal justice information policy, and a draft personnel bylaw.

Betty Lou Mallett and Theresa Dodge were appointed to the historical commission.

Selectboard chair Jacob Smith thanked the town's public works and public safety staff for their response to winter storms that have brought down trees and branches, resulting in road closures and power outages. He thanked them for working "long hours clearing the roads."



OBITUARY

Raymond Joseph Paulin (1933 – 2023)

Raymond "Ray" Joseph Paulin, 89, of Forest Park, Illinois, passed away on Monday, January 9, 2023, at Ascension St. Vincent in Kokomo, Indiana.

Ray was born to the late Isidore and Alice Auroré (Socquet) Paulin on November 28, 1933, in Montague, Massachusetts. He is survived by his wife, Janet Warner Paulin. Married June 12, 1965, they celebrated 57 years of marriage, supporting each other through all of life's trials and rewards.

Ray graduated from Turners Falls High School, where he played the flute, in 1952. He went on to proudly serve in the United States Army from 1953 to 1956, earning the rank Specialist Third Class. While he started his military career in radio repair school, the Army quickly moved him to installing and repairing Nike missiles on the east coast.

After the military, Ray worked as Clerk of Works, Plant Engineer, and Campus Police at Anna Maria College in Paxton, Massachusetts while he put himself through college, culminating with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from



Clark University in 1966.

Ray met his wife-to-be, Janet, while ballroom dancing. After he graduated from college, they said their goodbyes to Massachusetts and moved to Forest Park, Illinois, while Ray was working for Sears. He then worked for Montgomery Ward and General Electric, where he retired after a career in data processing.

As a resident of Forest Park, he served as a representative of the District 91 School Board Ad-

visory Council on the Community Education Council from its origination in 1974. Until recently, he also served on the village zoning board for 30 years.

He joined the Civil Air Patrol, a non-profit and an auxiliary of the United States Air Force, in the late '50s, and flew fire watch missions as a volunteer. Later he served as the commander of the local squadron. In addition, he and Janet were involved in the leadership of the cadet competition drill team. Many people knew him as a tall man with a "military, no-expression" approach, but his dry humor could always be expected.

Bearing the affectionate title "Mayor of Ferdinand," Ray loved his neighborhood and welcomed everyone into it, especially the dogs. The neighborhood dogs (and grand-dogs) quickly adopted him as their second-favorite person.

Family, though, was the most important thing in Ray's life. No matter how big or small, he was there, lending a helping hand. His gratitude and love shined the most for his grandchildren, proudly watching them grow up brought

even more joy and happiness to his life. There wasn't an event, birthday party, or graduation that he didn't make every effort to attend.

He is survived by his wife, Janet Paulin; his children Rand (Marjo Maisterra) Paulin, Jennifer (Dan) Powell, Julie (Lee) Fitzgerald, Justin (Sonia) Trottier, and Robert (Jane) Trombi; his grandchildren CJ, Garett, Brin, Grant, Devin, Michael, Dominic, Ethan, Eva, Zach, and Greg; his brother-in-law Larry Cadran; his nieces Anne and Linda; and his nephew David.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Isidore and Alice Paulin; his sister, Irene Cadran; and his aunt, Sister Irene Socquet. Stout & Son Funeral Home in Russia-ville, Indiana has been entrusted with cremation. Messages of condolence may be left online at www.stoutandson.com.

A Military Honors ceremony will be performed at 2 p.m., with a celebration of life to follow for family and friends from 2 to 6 p.m., at the Howard Mohr Community Center at 7640 Jackson Boulevard, Forest Park, Illinois on February 18.

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LEVERETT from page A1

and improvement of unpaved (dirt and gravel) roads and paved low volume roads (LVR) in the Commonwealth.”

Blais said rural towns often have a high percentage of unpaved roads, and that the legislation was a “direct result” of input from Leverett. She added that former state senator Adam Hinds, who sponsored the Senate version, had “taken the matter to heart,” and called him a “tremendous partner” on the issue.

Board member Melissa Colbert asked about the status of HD. 500, “An Act to provide a sustainable future for rural schools.”

Blais, also the sponsor of this bill, said that the Rural Schools Commission she and Hinds chaired last year issued a report with 36 recommendations, and that she is waiting on an omnibus spending bill to try to incorporate as many as she can. As it currently stands, Blais said, the legislature is considering raising rural school aid from \$4 million to at least \$60 million, and is now “in the process of finalizing asks.”

Once that bill is completed, Blais said, she will be reaching out to school committees, selectboards, and others for support. “We’re going to need everybody fighting for this,” she said.

Expressing support for several other bills concerned with “regional equity,” Blais said that the new governor’s administration has been “incredibly responsive” and “incredibly receptive” to her concerns during its first weeks in office.

Blais, who participated in the meeting remotely, closed her presentation by commenting that the ability to do so was one of the best things to come out of the pandemic. Resident Richard Nathhorst gave the comment a thumbs up, adding that remote participation “greatly enhances democracy,” though the town needed grant money to upgrade its equipment.

Carbon Monoxide and Chocolate

The fire department and library each presented annual budgets that contained no surprises, and that fell under the board’s requested 5% cap on departmental budget increases.

Fire chief Brian Cook said that some of the growth in his budget was due to an increase in the number of members of his department with EMT certification, adding that by the end of April, 12 of the 14 department members will be certified. While individuals pay for the certification themselves, Cook described a “ripple effect” in the budget with ongoing training and course materials.

Of the department’s 178 incident responses in 2022, he reported, 60% to 70% were medical.

Cook also reported on the department’s “Senior SAFE” program, funded by a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services (DFS). The program supports local departments in improving safety for seniors, including house visits to test smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) detectors, with free replacements where necessary.

The department visited 16 homes in the last month, and purchased 36 smoke and 24 CO detectors from local hardware stores, Cook said, noting that some of the homes had no working alarms.

He added that the department also saw a need to educate and help seniors with ice mitigation and

falling hazards, and plans to implement a similar program through DFS to address these concerns in the next month or two. (Seniors interested in any of these programs may call the department at 548-9225 for more information.)

As it currently stands, Blais said, the legislature is considering raising rural school aid from \$4 million to at least \$60 million, and is now “in the process of finalizing asks.” Once that bill is completed, she said, “we’re going to need everybody fighting for this.”

Library director Hannah Paessel also took the opportunity to highlight goings-on in her department. Paessel said the library was running a Valentine’s Day “Blind Date With a Book” program from February 1 to 14, which includes free chocolate, and will host a talk with gardener John Forti on “The Heirloom Gardener” at 1 p.m. on February 25.

2 Mile Road

Colbert’s suggestion that the board “reinstate” a previous year’s vote to install three to four speed bumps, or humps, on 2 Mile Road to address child safety concerns was met with pushback from two residents of the area, who did not identify themselves in the meeting.

A lengthy discussion of the road’s problems and its history ensued, though no consensus was reached as to exactly which of the road’s problems should be addressed, or how.

Colbert commented that a proposed comprehensive traffic study through the University of Massachusetts had not yet shed any light on the subject, and that she had been unable to contact the group involved, but would keep trying.

Hankinson proposed that the selectboard “commit to making a decision to establish a plan at the next meeting.”

Mosquitos

Colbert presented the final report from the mosquito surveillance pilot project Leverett undertook last summer in collaboration with Medzu Labs, and initiated a discussion on potential next steps the town might take.

The pilot project was entered in part to bolster the town’s ability to opt out of statewide aerial spraying for mosquitos, which remains a concern for many residents.

Colbert said the report identified seven species of mosquitos, and that no infectious diseases were detected, but she also noted that the sample size was small due to a late start and dry conditions last summer. She said that Medzu Labs felt the pilot project’s volunteer-led collection model had “worked great” and had saved the town thousands of dollars.

Colbert said Medzu has estimated the cost of a townwide surveillance program at between \$20,000 to \$30,000, but said that it might also be less expensive depending on the options available.

Board member Patricia Duffy

said she thought the pilot program was great for its educational value and helping residents make decisions, but suggested that support for a townwide program would likely come down to cost.

No decision was reached as to whether to draft an article for the spring town meeting. Colbert said she would continue conferring with Medzu on options and costs.

Other Business

The board established a financial management team to improve communication and oversight of town finances. It will consist of a selectboard member, the town administrator, the treasurer/collector, the accountant, and a staff member from the assessors’ office.

The board discussed forming a commission to help the highway department with planning and sorting out its priorities. Highway superintendent Matt Boucher was said to be in favor of the idea. Town administrator Marjorie McGinnis suggested trying an *ad hoc* group for a year before making membership an elected town position.

David Rice was appointed to the capital planning committee.

Cupcakes were served in celebration of McGinnis’s 20th anniversary of working for the town.



VOLUNTEERS from page A1

have a need,” says the volunteer section of the Baystate Health website. It also cautions: “Volunteering does not lead to employment. While some volunteers have gone on to be hired at Baystate, it should not be an expectation or reason for volunteering.”

That’s good to know, but when I visited, most of the volunteers were not looking to be hired. They were retired people connecting with their community and possibly with neighbors, strengthening bonds and feeling useful.

People are living longer, and many are staying healthy. That can mean 30 years of retirement or more. The older volunteers at BFMC are filling those years with meaning.

The opportunities for volunteers are extensive, and range from “assembling patient materials” to being the waiting room greeter and everything in between.

Pet therapy is on the list. Clarence, the beloved comfort dog belonging to the Greenfield Police Department, used to come and brighten everyone’s day before he died in the summer of 2022. So far, no dog has taken his place. A certified comfort dog might sit with a



Becky George manages the volunteer services for Baystate Health’s locations in Westfield and Greenfield.

person undergoing chemotherapy or comfort someone with dementia or cheer a frightened child. Clarence is deeply missed at the hospital and beyond – he had a national reputation – and George said she would love to find a volunteer with a certified service dog.

Being a “cuddler” is also a popular volunteer opportunity, though it comes with challenges. Cuddlers offer round-the-clock comfort to newborn babies in distress.

“Sometimes I look into the room,” George said “and the cuddlers have the most contented faces you can imagine while they rock and snuggle newborns. They glow.” However, it is not easy to predict when a baby needing a cuddler will be born, and those who

volunteer for this position must be able to respond on short notice.

Volunteers range from ages 16 to 91, George said, and in addition to the satisfaction gained from the experience, they also get one free meal per shift, free flu shots, and recognition for their service. “Some people like to be recognized,” George said. “Others would prefer to do their work quietly, without any fuss. We try to make every volunteer know how much they are valued.”

People wanting to learn more about volunteer opportunities can visit www.baystatehealth.org/about-us/volunteer, or call Becky George or her assistant Katie Caron at (413) 773-2318 or (413) 773-2204.



Bob Raymond, like many of the hospital’s volunteers, is retired.

MONTAGUE CONSERVATION COMMISSION PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE

In accordance with the Mass. Wetlands Protection Act, M.G.L. Ch. 131, Sec.40, the Montague Conservation Commission will hold a public meeting to review the following Request for Determination of Applicability at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday February 9, 2023: RDA #2023-02 filed by M. Hadyen to determine whether work to repair the existing septic system located at **409 Old Greenfield Road** (Map 42, Parcel 85) is subject to the Wetlands Protection Act. Remote meeting login information and the filing is available for review at www.montague-ma.gov/calendar.

GILL-MONTAGUE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT PUBLIC HEARING on the FY’24 BUDGET

Tuesday, February 14, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

Per Governor Healey’s orders suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. Chapter 30A Section 20, the public will not be allowed to physically access this School Committee Meeting. Notice is hereby given in accordance with Chapter 71, Sections 38N of the Massachusetts General Laws that the Gill-Montague Regional School Committee will hold a public hearing for the purpose of receiving comments on the Fiscal Year 2024 Proposed Budget on Tuesday, February 14, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom.

To access the FY’24 Budget Documents for the Public Hearing please visit our website www.gmrtd.org on or after Friday, February 3, 2023. The link to the Zoom meeting will also be available on Tuesday, February 14, 2023 by following this link: www.gmrtd.org.

The School Committee strives to meet the needs of all students while also employing sound fiscal management. The Preliminary FY’24 Gill-Montague Regional School District budget was approved by School Committee at their last January meeting. The Preliminary Budget is based on Montague’s Affordable Assessment and State Aid Revenue Estimates, but will be updated when the State Budget is released in March.

Some major factors influencing the budget include significant increases in the following areas: 1. Insurance and fixed charges; 2. Special Education Out of District Placements; and 3. Increased facilities maintenance and utility costs.

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LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here's the way it was on January 31, 2013: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

Relicensing Hearings Begin

Over 80 people showed up at the Great Hall of the Great Falls Discovery Center on Wednesday morning to hear John Howard of FirstLight Power Resources, along with spokespersons for TransCanada, whose dams on the Connecticut River, including the hydro dam at Vernon, are also up for relicensing on April 1, 2018, lay out the particulars of their project proposals.

A team of about 10 representatives from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) traveled to Turners Falls to take public testimony and begin the process of a National Energy Policy Act review, without which the relicensing of the massive hydro facilities cannot proceed.

Environmental groups and concerned citizens turned out in droves

for the opportunity to weigh in on the projects' impacts to the river, to the fish that try to spawn and live in it, and the human beings who try to keep their farmland and property stable along its banks.

Advice Amid Break-Ins

The Montague Business Association (MBA) invites businesses and community members to attend a special meeting with Montague's police chief, Charles "Chip" Dodge, Tuesday, February 12 in the community room of the Montague Public Safety Complex.

Chief Dodge will brief businesses on the recent spate of break-ins in Montague, and provide suggestions on how to better keep businesses and residences from being victimized.

MBA Steering Committee member Stephan Smith from A. H. Rist Insurance will speak about crime prevention and safeguards from an insurance perspective.

20 YEARS AGO

Here's the way it was on January 30, 2003: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

Erving Picks LaClaire

By a vote of two in favor and one abstention, the Erving selectmen approved Mickey LaClaire as the town's next fire chief during their regular meeting on Tuesday, January 28. In accordance with the law, LaClaire was appointed for a term of three years, after which the selectboard will determine whether or not to renew his contract for an additional one to three years.

Reached after the meeting, LaClaire said he felt overwhelmed to learn of his appointment. "It's really a shock," said the 20-year veteran of the department.

LaClaire has repeatedly said his top priority for the department

would be to boost morale. "Right now, a lot of townspeople still feel the town is divided into two halves, and two departments," he said. "Those feelings need to be put aside now. Everyone needs to be on the same page to bring the department into the 21st century."

New Owner, Same Name

Rau's Sunoco, in Montague Center, has a new owner, Ralph Rau. 68-year-old Ralph senior has given the station to his 39-year-old son Ralph. The younger Rau took control of the service station and store on the second day of this year.

The son has been working at his father's station for more than 22 years, and has customers who are the grandchildren of original customers. The sign on the door still says "Ralph Rau, Proprietor."

150 YEARS AGO

Here's the way it was on January 29, 1873: News from the Turners Falls Reporter's archive.

Local Matters

Excellent sleighing at present. The Cutlery is expected to run full time in a week or two.

The welcome music of the first belfry bell in Turners Falls greeted us yesterday from the school house on the hill.

F.A. Hill, watchman at the Montague Mill, got his fingers nipped on Saturday while trying to "callendar" them.

Mr. Jacob Zimmerman, an employee of the Pulp Mill, is engaged in good work. He has collected quite a class of German boys about him and is teaching them to write in German and English. His

school is at his own house, and his hours after a day's work is done.

At a special town meeting held yesterday at the Town Hall in Gill, for the purpose of considering the motion of building a free bridge from Turners Falls to Riverside, the following gentlemen were appointed to represent the town of Gill before the meeting of Commissioners at Turners Falls next week – Oliver F. Hale, Joshua D. Canning and Prentice Slade. On motion of Dr. H. Wood, it was voted to instruct the committee to encourage the building of the bridge, the town of Gill guaranteeing to meet one third of the expenses.

Anthony Fisher, an employee of the Pulp Mill, had his arm broken below the elbow, while at work, on Monday night. Dr. Coy attended him.



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GILL from page A1

administrator Ray Purington. "We need more juice," agreed selectboard member Randy Crochier. "I think we have to bring in somebody who knows electric – and has a good crystal ball. Because, what kind of charging station are we going to need for a fire truck?"

"You don't want to necessarily just cover what you've got right now," concurred selectboard member Greg Snedeker.

"There needs to be some thought given to strategic timing," said Purington. "The state has said that it wants to get us off fossil fuels. There's going to be state infrastructure money to upgrade and convert these kinds of buildings." "Yeah. It'll come right after we do it," laughed Crochier.

"I know our energy commission is very progressive, which I think is good," said Snedeker. "But also, the finances of our town often work in our favor if we're a little bit behind the curve and let the bigger, wealthier communities jump in first."

"I know it's not necessarily politically correct or politically nice to say," said Crochier, "but I liken some of this to the early days of recycling in America. It became the right thing to do, and then we went out and found a market for it – maybe. We don't even have a market for all of it now. If anybody tried to operate a business that way, they would be bankrupt in days."

"Now we're working on trying to find a way to electrify everything, but we have to figure out how to make sure to have that much power in the grid, or be producing it ourselves somewhere."

"When I teach economics, I never equate a government to a business," said Snedeker. "The reason for what we do as public entities is because the private sector is actually offshoring that cost to the public sector, and that's one of the reasons why they don't necessarily go out of business. They're offshoring that expense, calling it an 'externality.'"

Crochier nodded in agreement with Snedeker, but added: "If we were a business and we could do tax write-offs, we'd start there by saying 'okay, we're going to put a good-sized solar array there. We'll create electricity.'" Instead, Crochier said, "it really makes more sense to us to just increase what's coming in the door, and pay FirstLight for it."

"That's where the different lev-

els of government, and their ability to finance, comes in," said Snedeker. "The federal government has the biggest capacity to finance these kinds of things, and yet look at what we've got up there. We've got a bunch of people that don't want to actually get anything done."

"They're too busy fighting with each other," agreed Crochier.

The board asked Purington to see what kind of grants are currently available for increasing the electrical capacity in the building, and figure out if there are experts who could help to determine the building's long-term electrical needs.

Crumbling Roads

"Have you got any good news for us?" Crochier asked highway superintendent John Miner, with a laugh. Miner came to the meeting to bring the board's attention to a number of needed road repairs, equipment failures, and ongoing sewer woes.

The town received \$114,656 from the state's Winter Recovery Assistance Program (WRAP), which can be used for roads, pathways, and transportation improvements. "It's like a bonus to our Chapter 90 funds," Miner explained, and it must be used before June 30.

Miner proposed using the money to repair cracking and crumbling roads. He asked for \$53,204 to seal cracks on parts of Main, North Cross, Center, Lyons Hill, and Barney Hale roads, as well as Route 142. He also asked for \$76,194 for chip sealing on North Cross and Boyle roads.

Miner's estimates include an added 20% to take rising costs into account, and exceeded the available WRAP funding by nearly \$15,000. "To cover my butt, I'd like to also ask to fill out a request for Chapter 90 funds just in case, so we don't have to come back here," he said.

Crochier claimed that Chapter 90 program funds are growing at a much slower rate than the actual costs of road maintenance. Snedeker expressed hope that the project will come in under budget, as inflation slows. If so, Miner said, the extra WRAP funding could be used to purchase gravel or street signs.

The selectboard approved the request, and Miner says the repairs will be completed this spring.

Miner also requested a replacement for an aging air compressor at the public safety complex. "It's old and obsolete already, so the start-

ing motors and everything can't be replaced," he explained. The 7.5-horsepower compressor regularly trips the building's circuit breaker and dims the lights each time it is used, Miner said.

The board approved \$2,152 for a new 5-horsepower single-phase Ingersoll Rand compressor. Half of the cost will come out of the highway budget, and half from the building maintenance fund.

Clogged Sewers

Miner elicited groans from the room when he announced that flushed clothing continues to regularly clog the town's sewer pumps. "We're still having issues every week or two weeks at the pump station, just to bring it to your attention," Miner said.

Since the problem is intermittent, Miner said, it has been difficult to track down the culprit using a camera in the sewer lines. He also expressed concern that grinding pumps, which have been proposed as a solution to chew up the material, could also be more difficult and expensive to repair when they broke.

The selectboard expressed hope that upcoming improvements to the Riverside sewer system, including a new electromagnetic flow meter, might put the town in a better position to solve the problem.

"On the upside," said Crochier to Miner, "I want to say publicly what I told you in a text the other day: the roads have been really good, and I appreciate everything you and the guys have done."

"I'd like to publicly thank my guys, too," said Miner. "They've been outstanding this winter."

Other Business

Purington followed up on the previous meeting's discussion of the town's priorities for receiving technical assistance from FRCOG.

The board agreed the town's top three priorities for local technical assistance are: the FERC relicensing of the Northfield Mountain pumped-storage project and the Turners Falls dam, and the state water quality certification process it requires; zoning bylaws for recreational marijuana, especially outdoor cultivation; and regional sludge-pressing and -composting opportunities.

FRCOG uses the priorities submitted by municipalities to shape the specialized programming it offers.



MONTAGUE from page A1

commission, which included an \$18,000 increase to procure a new maintenance contract.

A budget for the town airport, which is financed without town tax revenue but depends on projected revenue from a new solar array, was endorsed, but the board did not vote on the DPW budget, which included a new “collections manager” position. In board chair Rich Kuklewicz’s words, there were too many “question marks” about this idea.

The board did not take a vote on the overall town operating budget, which contains an increase of over 5%, but passed it along to the finance committee for further review.

Slush Fund?

Talk turned to a new policy for a line popularly called the DPW “discretionary fund,” which allows the public works superintendent \$100,000 to spend in emergencies and on equipment at a reduced price. The policy was developed by the capital improvements committee, an adjunct of town meeting.

When Ellis asked if the board wanted to discuss it, Lord warned that he was “going to make this long and drawn-out, if you want to do it tonight. This one drives me nuts.”

The board moved forward and discussed the proposed policy with assistant town administrator Walter Ramsey. It would require the DPW chief to get the selectboard’s approval for any purchases over \$25,000 and provide an annual report on purchases, and the annual allocation by town meeting would include the balance in the fund as of March 1.

“I just don’t understand why we have this budget laid out this way,” said Lord. “I don’t understand why he just doesn’t say, ‘I need this much money for trucks, this much for a tractor,’ or what not...”

Finance committee member John Hanold, who emphasized that he was speaking only for himself, said that he “strongly” supported the proposed policy, and that it actually “tightens the controls on the issues that Matt was speaking of.” The superintendent, Hanold explained, could not “predict” when vehicles break down.

“I have been through literally endless hours of discussion about this at CIC meetings,” said town meeting member Ariel Elan, who said she had never seen someone criticize a purchase from the fund. “I have only been involved in town government since 2014, but during that time I have never heard anyone say ‘that was a mistake’.”

“I’ve heard lots of opinions on either side of this fund, but I won’t even offer any,” said Ellis.

In the end, although Lord expressed concern about the use of the word “discretionary,” he voted with the other members for the policy.

Block Grants

Monday’s meeting started with a public hearing on the latest Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application, although few members of the public appeared to ask questions or give input. Rather, the presentation by Brian McHugh of the Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority (FCRHRA), which administers the federal grant for the town, and comments by selectboard members took up most of the half-hour hearing.

McHugh explained that the application, targeted to benefiting low-income residents and eliminating “slum and blight,” would combine two federal fiscal years and included four components: \$490,317 to build a new playground at Hillcrest Elementary School, \$400,000 for low-income housing rehab loans, \$100,000 in grants to a number of local social-service programs, and \$60,000 on the design of further Avenue A “streetscape” improvements.

Kuklewicz asked if the Hillcrest location was “the best place” for the playground, since the school district seemed to be moving toward consolidating its elementary school buildings and abandoning Hillcrest.

Ramsey responded that the playground design preceded the proposal to consolidate the elementary schools, and that no final decision had yet been reached about the location of a consolidated school.

Later he said that the playground structures could be moved to a new location, though they are only a portion of the project.

The board delayed a vote on the application until a future meeting.

Cultural Affairs

RiverCulture director Suzanne LoManto requested a permit for the use of public property for a vintage car show on September 14, discussed at a previous meeting.

LoManto said many of the cars would be parked along First Street, which would be closed from town hall to Unity Street. Visitors would be able to drive down Second Street and use the lots near Unity Park. She also said they would be encouraged to park and eat in the downtown rather than at the car show itself. The board approved the request.

The board approved a change in the application to the state for outdoor seating at the Brick and Feather Brewery, and heard from former Hubie’s Tavern owner Shawn Hubert and his lawyer Kristi Bodin on the transfer of the bar’s all-alcohol license to the Shea Theater.

“We’ve done what we can to make it happen, and it’s in the Shea’s lap,” Bodin said. Kuklewicz reminded the board that there still needed to be a public hearing on the transfer.

Rick Smith, representing “Sheepdog: The Movie LLC,” requested the use of various public locations

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between February 14 and March 9. Smith came with a long list of potential sites in Montague and Greenfield. Locations in Montague included the “Paperlogic Factory” (the former Southworth paper mill), the Salvation Army, Gary’s Coins, and the Upper Bend. The request was approved, with the proviso that the company give a “weekly briefing” on any changes in the schedule.

The Power Brokers

Ramsey described a public hearing held by the state Department of Transportation on the South Street Bridge over the Sawmill River, near Montague Center. He said “no issues came up,” and “there were probably more DOT people than residents” in attendance. Construction will probably begin in the fall of 2024, with the “real work” in the summer of 2025.

Ramsey reviewed a variety of projects being considered for state grants through its “One Stop for Growth” portal. These included the design for demolishing the historic Strathmore complex, a long-term

plan for the combined sewer overflow, a study of the environmental history of the former Farren Hospital site, and a plan for “wayfinding” or public art downtown.

Ellis announced that the completion date of the Franklin Regional Transit Authority’s new maintenance facility has been pushed back from March until May. The bus garage will be located on Sandy Lane, near the town transfer station.

At Ellis’s request, the board approved a contract with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments for collective bidding on highway products and service, and voted to “opt in” to the latest national settlement with corporations whose products caused opioid addiction.

Other Business

Executive assistant Wendy Bogusz presented the board with a poll she had taken on the preferred venue for the March 2 special town meeting. Of the 58 respondents, 60% either preferred or strongly preferred an in-person meeting, presumably at

the high school, with 26% preferring an online meeting and the remainder expressing no preference.

Town meeting moderator Ray Godin expressed a preference for an indoor meeting, but advocated for a separate section for those who preferred social distancing and masks. The board did not take a vote on the issue, since it was assumed that the final decision is Godin’s.

Ellis announced that legislation to remove the Montague police from the civil service has been re-filed by state senator Jo Comerford and representative Natalie Blais.

He also announced a possible plan to repaint the inside of town hall this year. Kuklewicz said that he should consider more than “white or beige” colors, because “we now have a lot of creative people in town.” Lord then showed the walls of the room he was occupying, which led to suggestions that he paint town hall.

After more banter about wall painting, the board adjourned. Its next meeting will be a hybrid meeting on February 6.



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SPORTS from page A1

Boys went one-and-one against Berkshire squads, and after the Boys’ Thunder benefited from a Mohawk forfeit, Athol turned a four-point game into a 13-point Thunder loss.

Also this week, Tom Brady retired again, and a 22-year-old coach got caught playing in a middle school girls’ basketball game in Virginia.

Girls’ Basketball

FCTS 45 – Smith Academy 25
TFHS 44 – Pioneer Valley 33
FCTS 35 – TFHS 18 (JV)
FCTS 41 – TFHS 27
TFHS 44 – Putnam 38

In a preparation for Friday’s cross-town matchup, both Franklin Tech and Turners Falls won their respective games on Thursday.

At the Tech school, the Lady Birds outpaced the Purple Falcons of Smith Academy.

The first period was a low-scoring affair, simply because Tech couldn’t hit their marks. They orchestrated some wonderful full-court plays and tricky passes, but when it came time to shoot, the balls bounced harmlessly away. At the buzzer, it was 7-5 Eagles.

The second quarter was another story. Nine seconds in, Kendra Campbell hit a three-pointer to make it 10-5, and this loosened the floodgates. Franklin went on an amazing run while their defense held Purple scoreless, until the Falcons scored their only basket with only 8 seconds left in the quarter.

At the half it was 21-7, and that’s when I left for the Turners game. The Eagles went on to win 45-25.

Franklin’s handsy defense forced an amazing 16 steals. Lea Chapman led Tech in points with 11, while pulling down 11 rebounds and making five blocks. Campbell ended with 10 points, 10 rebounds, and five assists. Hannah Gilbert put up 10 points, Kaitlin Trudeau had 7, Kyra Goodell scored 5, and Lilian-

na Inman made a 2-pointer.

I arrived at the Turners-Pioneer Black Panthers game at halftime, and the Blue Thunder was up 28-19. Turners maintained a 10- or 11-point lead until halfway through the third quarter. In that period, Powertown center/forward Lily Spera went out with an ankle injury, and a combination of Pioneer hitting the long shot and Turners losing the rebound battle resulted in a 33-30 game.

Pioneer kept it close until midway through the fourth period. That’s when Blue quickly turned a four-point game into an 11 point rout, 42-31 with a minute left to play. The Cats scored to narrow it to nine. With precious little time on the clock, they were forced to intentionally foul, but Madi Liimatainen made both foul shots and the Blue D kept the Panthers away from the hoop to win the game 44-33.

Turners won this game with sharp inside shooting and accurate foul shots. They scored 11 points off free throws, 30 from inside the arc, and only hit a single 3-pointer. Taylor Greene (17), Liimatainen (14), Spera (6), Steph Peterson (4), Abbi Holloway (2), and Tatiana Williams (1) scored points in the victory.

And then, last Friday, the Eagles and the Thunder battled it out at the Turners gym. Because Turners was the home team, they wore white while the Eagles wore their navy blue jerseys.

In the JV opener, the Eagles beat the Thunder 35-18. Before the varsity tip-off, a very brave and talented eighth grader named Addi Talbot soloed the National Anthem on her clarinet from the press balcony.

I’ve seen both varsity teams compete multiple times this season, so I pretty much knew what to expect. With Spera out with an injury, coach Jim Cadran was forced to key on Chapman, Tech’s six-footer. This job went to Keira Richardson-Meattey. Keeping Chapman from pulling down rebounds is a

physical job, and Cadran had to pull Richardson-Meattey after she accumulated three early fouls.

The game was close until the two-minute mark of the quarter. With the score 11-all, the Eagles hit two 3-pointers to close out the quarter with a 17-11 point lead.

In the second period, the Blue Birds’ defense came alive. Although they only scored six points in the period, they held Turners to just two, so by the half Tech had built a 23-13 lead. White narrowed the gap to nine points in the third, but another strong finish put Franklin up 33-20 going into the final act. In the fourth, Tech slowed down the game, settling for only 8 points while holding White to 7.

Gilbert led Tech with 15 points, 12 of which came from three-point land, while Campbell also hit double figures with 10. Although Chapman was held to 8 points, she snagged 15 rebounds. Goodell led the Eagles in thievery with eight steals while scoring 6 points, and Trudeau scored 2 points and gave five assists.

Greene led Turners’s scoring with 15 points, Peterson and Richardson-Meattey netted 4 each, and Morgan Dobias and Raygan Rendriss both scored 2.

The victory gave the Eagles a 13-1 record overall, sliding them up to #1 in the MaxPreps Massachusetts D-V ratings, and improved their conference record to a perfect 8-0. Turners fell to 5-2 in the FSC, narrowing their lead over Pioneer to one full game in the race for second place in the conference.

The teams meet again next Thursday, February 9.

On Tuesday, Blue overcame a 4-point first-quarter deficit to defeat the Putnam Golden Beavers, 44-38. Eight different players scored for the Thunder, with Greene leading the pack at 16. Rendriss, Peterson, Liimatainen, Dobias, Williams, Abbi Holloway, and Richardson-Meattey also contributed in the victory.



DAVID HOITT PHOTO

Rolling Thunder: Turners Falls’s Logan Addison goes flying over the paint on a foul by Athol’s Colby Goodwin as the Thunder hosted the Athol Bears on Monday. The Bears ended up on top, 53-40.

Boys’ Basketball

TFHS 10 – Mohawk 0 (F)
Mt. Greylock 77 – FCTS 47
FCTS 63 – Lee 43
Athol 53 – TFHS 40

Sadly, Mohawk Trail can no longer field a boys’ basketball team. They do however, have a wonderful ski team. Turners benefited, and reluctantly accepted the forfeit.

Last Friday the Tech Boys went up to Mount Greylock, where they were beaten by the Mounties 77-37. Eight Eagles scored in the contest, with Ty Sadoski (21) and Robert Belval (14) leading the flock.

Then on Monday, the Lee Wildcats came to town. Franklin defeat-

ed them by ten points, 63-53, ending a two-game skid.

Across the road that same night, the Blue Thunder lost to the visiting Athol Red Bears, 53-40. In the first period Red came out shooting, outscoring Powertown 19-11. Blue came back in the second and made it a four point contest, 28-24, at the half, but Athol held them to single digits in the final two quarters and went on to win 53-40.

Logan Addison scored an incredible 22 points in the game, but he didn’t do it alone: JJ Charles (7), Jakub Lavin (4), Deven Sloan (3), and Jackson Cogswell (2) all put up points for Blue.



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POLLY FRENCH ILLUSTRATION

WEST ALONG THE RIVER
RESTLESS SPIRITS IN THE
WHITE ASH SWAMP: PT. I

“I observed on numerous occasions throughout the spring and summer of 1964, that these piles removed from the Canada Hill property and deposited by trucks on R5-23 [White Ash Swamp] contained human skulls and bones. These skeletal remains were easily recognizable as human... I observed that the human skeletal remains were often directly visible on the surface of the piles. On one occasion I decided to remove some of the remains because I observed that these piles were regularly being bulldozed into the swampy area of R5-23.”

– Affidavit of George H. Nelson, as deposed to
notary public Shawn F. Streeter on March 4, 2004.

By DAVID BRULE

WISSATINNEWAG – The entire ridgeline from the towering cliffs above the Fall River to what is now known as Poet’s Seat Tower was once a sprawling homeland to a large population of Pocumtuck Indians and their kinfolk, ancestors of the modern-day Nipmuc(k) and Abenaki peoples. Associated plateaux of glacial sand and gravel till, beyond the village camps, are the sites of extended burial grounds.

Over the 10,000 year period of Indigenous habitation in this region, those well-drained soils and sands just a slight distance from their villages and campsites were favored by Natives for burying their deceased kinfolk.

We are told that these burial grounds contain hundreds of the mortal remains of Native people. This site above the river was a place of pilgrimage, given its unique location facing east to the rising sun, and its widespread acceptance as a zone of peace and truce. Oral tradition and artifacts tell us that travelers came to this spot at the falls of Peskeompskut from as far away as the Ohio River Valley, seeking this celebrated spiritual place to spend their last days and to be buried here.

Later on, during more tragic times after the early Contact Period and the arrival of English settlers, victims of the epidemics and a massacre were buried here.

After King Philip’s War of 1675-76 and especially after the massacre of Indigenous non-combatants by the forces of Captain William Turner at the falls on May 19, 1676, the villages and camps at Wissatinnewag and the nearby region were largely abandoned. Over the succeeding centuries the subsequent generations of settlers, farmers, and businessmen expropriated and exploited this former zone of peace as part of their heritage of conquest flowing from that tragic war.

In more modern times the fine, well-drained sands of the Native burial grounds were ideal sources of building material for a local sand and gravel company. By the 1950s this construction company began exploiting the deposits of glacial materials and fine sand

from the various beach fronts and dunes of glacial Lake Hitchcock at the foot of the ridge.

Regardless of these histories of Native people – unknowing and likely uncaring – local construction companies sent bulldozers and power shovels to bite into the prized fine sands, and hauled away uncountable tons of material, and countless human remains.

As Mr. George Nelson stated in his sworn affidavit:

In 1964, the State of Massachusetts was re-routing and up-grading what is now Route 2.... Sand excavation activities were taking place on the Canada Hill property... to furnish sand for the roadbed for the new Route 2.

I observed that soil, stumps, and other non-sand materials were regularly separated from the sand and transported by the truckload across the French King Highway to the White Ash Swamp area... These piles were then left there until the following day, when they would be “bulldozed” as fill into the swampy ground.

You will note as stated above that these “non-sand materials” contained human skulls and bones. Such activities were not illegal in the 1960s. There were no protections such as the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (NAG-PRA), or even the Wetlands Protection Act of 1972, which forbids indiscriminate filling of wetlands. In 1999 and 2000 the Friends of Wissatinnewag, Inc. successfully fought the desecration of the gravesites and saved the human remains in the cemetery on Canada Hill from further spoliation. The bulldozers had been stopped, no more remains were dumped into the White Ash Swamp. The remaining graves were saved from destruction.

However, a new threat emerged: the developers of a big box corporation made an offer to the owners of the property to purchase the site and build a shopping plaza there. Through active resistance to that plan, through

see **WEST ALONG** page B3

Above: Contributor Sarah Robertson snagged this pic of a nutcracker ripping a suet nugget off her Wendell feeder.

The Saga of the General Pierce: A Montague Police Log Retrospective

Compiled by EMILY ALLING

Illustrations by NINA ROSSI

Wednesday, 9/4/13

10:18 a.m. Bicycle reported abandoned in the center of the General Pierce bridge. Bicycle moved; bent rims noted.

Thursday, 4/3/14

11:35 a.m. Report of a man playing chicken with traffic on the General Pierce bridge.

Monday, 2/16/15

7:28 a.m. Report of disabled motor vehicle on the General Pierce Bridge. Caller advises that the steering wheel came off in the operator’s hands while she was driving.

Friday, 3/13/15

1:29 p.m. Walk-in report of several large potholes on the General Pierce Bridge. MassDOT notified.

Friday, 9/11/15

12:34 p.m. Officer advises that the sidewalk on the General Pierce Bridge appears to have new “buckles” in it and may be shifting upwards; requests MassDOT be contacted. They will be sending someone



out to check on this.

Monday, 9/21/15

7:39 a.m. Report of a tractor trailer unit that isn’t moving on the Turners Falls side of the General Pierce Bridge. Traffic is backed up for a consider-

able distance.

Tuesday, 11/10/15

9:38 p.m. Caller advises that a male party with a flashlight is walking on the sidewalk of the General Pierce Bridge, possibly trying to flag people

down. Greenfield dispatch called to advise that they have units responding to their side of the bridge for a female party standing in the middle of the road with a shopping cart.

see **RETRO** page B4



Travel with Max

By Max Hartshorne

Coming: New trains, service to Canada, and more!

SOUTH DEERFIELD – It is an exciting time to be a train travel buff in the United States. After putting up with many decades of declining railroad funding and deteriorating tracks, Americans are now aware of the great trains in Europe and China, and are expect-

ing a little more from our national passenger railroad corporation, Amtrak. Thanks to the Amtrak-rider-in-the-White House Joe Biden and the giant infrastructure plan he helped pass in 2021, funds have been allocated for many significant improvements in the Northeast for

rail travel. Plus, new trains!

My column last month on my commuter train trip to New Jersey from Deerfield got more attention than most, so I think the topic of rail travel is a hot one. The front-page story about MassDOT seeking feedback on passenger service to Boston indicated that we’re closer than I thought.

But why does Greenfield need a whole new platform? I asked the DOT, and they said that plans would be unveiled soon, but that there are three or four different proposals being considered at this point.

Crossing the Border

Some time in 2023, you will be able to take trains to both Toronto and Montreal from the US, as well as dozens of small towns that lie in between. Currently the train that

see **TRAVELS** page B8



PHOTO COURTESY OF AMTRAK

Coach-class seating on Amtrak’s new Airo trains, coming out in 2024.

Pet of the Week



“CAROL”

Carol came to Dakin with three other kittens and an adult male cat. The gang had parked themselves in a local resident’s garage. We’re assuming the adult had street smarts and led the troops into the garage, knowing sooner or later someone would have to drive somewhere.

Well, they were discovered and the finder brought them to Dakin. Now they would prefer to park them-

selves in a home instead of a garage. Looking for a new companion? Maybe Carol’s the one for you!

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

Senior Center Activities FEBRUARY 6 THROUGH 10

LEVERETT Chair Yoga classes are held on Zoom on Wednesdays. Foot care clinic is held monthly. For more information, contact the Leverett COA at (413) 548-1022 x 2, or coa@leverett.ma.us .	4 p.m. Mat Yoga Thursday 2/9 9 a.m. Chair Yoga 1 p.m. Cards & Games Friday 2/10 10:15 a.m. Aerobics 11 a.m. Chair Exercise
WENDELL A foot care clinic is held the first Wednesday of each month. Call Katie Nolan at (978) 544-2306 for information or appointments. Senior Health Rides are available. Contact Jonathan von Ranson (978) 544-3758.	ERVING Open 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Mondays through Fridays. Open for cards, coffee, and snacks daily. Brown Bag lunch is the first Thursday of each month. Veterans’ Services are the first Wednesday of each month. For more information, please call (413) 423-3649.
GILL and MONTAGUE The Gill Montague Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Mondays through Fridays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information please call 863-9357.	Monday 2/6 9 a.m. Interval 10:15 a.m. Seated Workout Tuesday 2/7 9 a.m. Good For U 10 a.m. Line Dancing Wednesday 2/8 9 a.m. Cardio Low Impact 10:15 a.m. Chair Aerobics 11:30 a.m. Bingo Thursday 2/9 9 a.m. Core & Balance 10 a.m. Barre Fusion Friday 2/10 9 a.m. Quilting & Open Sew

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Montague Center (413) 367-2852
Millers Falls (413) 659-3801

Erving Public Library (413) 423-3348
Gill: Slate Library (413) 863-2591
Leverett Public Library (413) 548-9220
Northfield: Dickinson Library (413) 498-2455
Wendell Free Library (978) 544-3559

MONTAGUE

Multiple days: *Art Exhibit*, bird paintings by Tracy Vernon through February 6, then photography by Joe Parzych. Montague Center.

Multiple days: *Crossroads: Changes in Rural America*. Collaborative nationwide project led by the Smithsonian Institute. Calendar of local events at greatfallsdiscovery-center.org/crossroads

Multiple days: *Grab & Go Bags*. Science: Heart pump model. Craft: Valentine card kit. Free kits at all branch locations while supplies last.

Every Wednesday: *Story Time*. Join for stories and songs. Montague Center, 10 a.m.

Every Thursday: *Playgroup*. Guided and free play for preschoolers; older siblings welcome. Montague Center, 10 a.m.

1st Saturday: *Used Book Sale*. Fiction, paperbacks, kids’ books, DVDs, CDs, audiobooks. Hundreds of donations. Carnegie, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

2nd Monday: *Friends of MPL Meeting*. All welcome. Email vgatvalley@gmail.com for more info. Carnegie, 5:30 p.m.

2nd Thursday: *Hot Chocolate Social*. Millers Falls, 3 to 4 p.m.

Saturday, February 11: *Valentine Card Making* for all ages. Refreshments. Carnegie, drop in 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Wednesday, February 15: *Author Series*. Jennifer Acker, *The Limits of the World*. Refreshments provided. Montague Center, 6 p.m.

Thursday, February 16: *Moderated Public Library Forum*. In-person at Montague Center, with Zoom option. Visit tinyurl.com/MPLforum for info. 6 p.m.

Thursday, February 23: *Book Club*. Jess Kidd, *The Night Ship*. Montague Center, 7 p.m.

Friday, February 24: *Children’s Author Visit*. Astrid Sheckels, *Hector Fox and the Daring Flight*. Montague Center, 11 a.m.

LEVERETT

families. 5:30 p.m.

Sunday, February 19: *Craft Day*. Make a seasonal wreath. For teens and adults. Materials provided, RSVP required. 1 p.m.

Wednesday, February 22: *Button Making*. Try the library’s button-maker. Snacks. 1 to 3 p.m.

Thursday, February 23: *Book Challenge Coffee Hour*. Join the library directory in the 2023 challenge. See massbook.org/readingchallenge for more info. 5:30 p.m.

Monday, February 27: *Teen Movie Monday*. Join the youth services librarian for crafts, snacks, and a movie. 3:30 p.m.

All February: *Story Walks*. New story on the trail behind the library every Thursday.

Every Wednesday: *Playtime*. Free play, socializing, stories. For children ages 0 to 5 and their caregivers. 10:30 a.m.

Every Monday and Wednesday: *Online Qigong*. Free, all welcome. For more info see leverettlibrary.org or send an email to CommunityQigong@gmail.com. 10:30 a.m.

Every Thursday: *Play Mah-jongg*. All abilities welcome. 1:45 to 4 p.m.

Every Saturday: *Tai Chi*. Free classes, all welcome. Space limited, masks required. Call Dennis at (413) 367-9760 for info. Intermediate to advanced 10 a.m., beginners 11 a.m.

Thursday, February 9: *Library Lovers’ Valentines*. Make valentines to show our legislators how much you love your library. 3 p.m.

Wednesday, February 22: *Board & Table Games*. Drop-in gaming for ages 7 to 107. From 1 to 3 p.m.

Saturday, February 25: *The Heirloom Gardener*, with author and garden historian John Forti. 1 p.m.

Weather, etc. sometimes causes changes in library events; you may want to call ahead to confirm events.

1st Thursday: *Spice Club pickup starts*. Stop in for a sample and suggested recipes while supplies last. Look for a new spice every month.

Friday, February 3: *Understanding Alzheimer’s and Dementia*: impacts, symptoms, progression, treatment, and the latest research. 5:30 p.m.

1st Saturday: *Puzzle Swap*. Dozens of new-to-you puzzles for kids and adults. For more info email friendsofdm101360@gmail.com. 10 to 11:30 a.m.

2nd Wednesday: *Readings Group*. February 8: Alice Munro, *Family Furnishings: Selected Stories 1995–2014*. Pick up a copy at the library. 3 p.m.

2nd Thursday: *Environmental Awareness Group*. February 9: Ed Yong, *An Immense World*. Pick up a copy at the library. 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, February 16: *Where Is Northfield?* Local civil engineer Sara Campbell shows maps of Northfield’s boundaries over time. 5:30 p.m.

Thursday, February 23: *Library Trivia Night*. Four Star Farms Brewery, 6 p.m.

WENDELL

Every Tuesday: *Watercolor Art Group*. 5 to 6:30 p.m.

Every Wednesday: *Playgroup*. Email budine@erving.com for more info. 10 a.m.

Every Friday: *LEGO club*. Drop-in program for ages 5 and up with adult. 4 p.m.

Every Saturday: *StoryCraft*. Picture book read-aloud and connected craft. 10:30 a.m.

Every Saturday: *Wendell Youth Group*. Varied topics from climate change to food security. Ages 10 to 18. 1 p.m.

Every Saturday: *AA Group*. 7 p.m.

Tuesday, February 7: *Rep. Aaron Saunders office hours*. 2 p.m.

Tuesdays, February 7 and 28: *Tech Help* by appointment, 6 and 6:30 p.m.

2nd and 4th Thursdays: *Fiber Arts / Mending Circle*. Needles and thread available. 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, February 15: *Exploring Ocean Worlds in Our Solar System and Beyond*, presentation & stargazing. 6 p.m.

4th Monday: *Adult Book Group*. Registration required. Zoom, 10 a.m.

NORTHFIELD

Every Tuesday: *Drop-in Knitting*. Join fellow knitters and crocheters to chat and share projects. 6 to 8 p.m.

Every Wednesday: *Stories and Playtime* with Deb Wood, for ages 0 to 5. 10 a.m.

Every Wednesday: *Open Tech Hours*. Pop in for help on anything library-related. Bring your device. 1 to 3 p.m.

1st Wednesday: *Readers’ Choice*. February 1: Marilyn Robinson, *Gilead*. Pick up a copy at the library. 10 a.m.


ERVING

Sunday, February 12: *Puzzle Swap*. Bring a jigsaw puzzle to exchange, or we’ll give you one to get you started. 1 to 3 p.m.

Wednesday, February 15: *Afternoon Story Time*. For toddlers and their caregivers. Snacks. 1 p.m.

Thursday, February 16: *Coffee with a Cop*. Information about opioid overdoses, those at high risk, and support for

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WEST ALONG from page B1

donations and fundraising, the Friends of Wissatinnewag managed to purchase the site out from under the feet of the would-be developer, and placed stringent protections on the land there in the form of a conservation restriction.

Thwarted from developing the Wissatinnewag site, the corporation representing Walmart began looking to another desecrated and excavated burial ground that extended just beyond it. That gaping open wound in the earth is visible from the highway leading to Greenfield, and has been at the heart of recent proposals by the city of Greenfield to rezone that area either for light industrial or commercial use. That parcel has been proposed as a site for an expanded industrial park.

You must note that it is bordered by White Ash Swamp, where Native American human remains were dumped in 1964.

So now, a new battle has begun. The Nolumbeka Project, Inc., as successors to the Friends of Wissatinnewag, has taken up the challenge to assure that the reburials of Native American remains in the swamp be protected under its stewardship, in

alliance with the modern-day descendants of the Pocumtuck, the Nipmuc(k) tribes of Massachusetts and the Elnu Abenaki.

The reburial grounds, now considered a lawful cemetery under the Native American Burial Ground Ordinance of the city of Greenfield, had been repeatedly promised publicly to be deeded over to the Nolumbeka Project, as far back as 2007.

The current owner of the property reneged on that promise, and the fate of that tract remains in limbo along with the restless spirits of Native Americans interred there. We are actively seeking to protect the remains of these ancestors from further desecration, to afford them the respect and dignity that they have oftentimes been denied, both in life and in death.

The Nolumbeka Project has received assurances of collaboration from officials of the city of Greenfield to assist in the thorny issues of finding a way to resolve the ownership of White Ash Swamp once and for all.

But it’s not going to be that easy. Stay tuned for Part II.

David Brule is president of the Nolumbeka Project.



Montague Community Television News

Submit to an Interview

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

TURNERS FALLS – MCTV wants to interview you! A new interview show is starting up at MCTV. We will focus on local business owners, but are also happy to talk to anyone who has something to say.

The Gill and Montague select-board each had their meetings this past week, as did the Montague finance committee.

All community members are welcome to submit their videos to be aired on Channel 17 and featured on the MCTV Vimeo page, so think

of what you would like to make and come see how we can help. MCTV is always available to assist in local video production. Cameras, tripods, and lighting equipment are available for checkout, and filming and editing assistance can be provided. And remember, MCTV is still looking for board members!

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

TV REVIEW

Star Trek: Discovery’s Season 4

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – I last reviewed *Star Trek: Discovery* when it was in Season 2. That was the season that allowed us to learn the connection Spock has to the character of Michael Burnham, played by Sonequa Martin-Green, which is that she is Spock’s adopted sister.

In the third season of the show, she and the rest of the crew of *Discovery* deal with the fallout from traveling like 1,000 years into the future to avoid a major threat. That season introduced Michael Burnham to the character of Booker, who is familiar with the current status quo of things and helped her out during the season. We also saw a bit of focus on what is called the “sphere data,” which is now part of *Discovery*.

In Season 4, the data will come to be known as a sentient being named Zora. We also add two more characters to the list Season 3 gave us, who are called Adira Tal and Gray. All of these things will continue into Season 4.

Both Zora and Booker, played by David Ajala, are a large part of Season 4: Booker because his home planet is destroyed by something that kills worlds, and Zora due to

her becoming a sentient being like I said happens. We also see Burnham finally becoming the captain of *Discovery* in Season 4.

This season also features the crew in new uniforms, which are the original colors of uniforms that we first came to know from *Star Trek*, red, blue, and yellow.

Season 4’s main storyline is about the crew trying to figure out exactly what is destroying these planets. A lot of twists and turns go on with this storyline, and it makes for some very interesting things to watch this season. I would also like to say that Zora becoming a sentient being is the second-most interesting thing about this season.

To spell out one twist for you, when it comes to the main storyline: what’s behind these planets being killed isn’t exactly black and white; that whole deal is a bit more complex than it initially looks like. Another fair comment made about this storyline is that the exploration of new boundaries and new species, which Gene Roddenberry wanted to capture with the original *Star Trek* concept, is done magnificently with the main arc of Season 4. I think he would be very happy with this arc, and very proud that it was done.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Snow Tires See Some Use; Swears He’s Out Of The Game; Deceased Debtor; Intoxicated Male Party Lost His Phone

Monday, 1/23

8:46 a.m. First of a dozen reports of trees and wires down around town throughout the day. Shelburne Control, Eversource, and fire departments contacted as appropriate.

9:23 a.m. Officer out with vehicle in snowbank in front of 253 Farmacy attempting to get vehicle out. Vehicle was able to get out of the snowbank.

9:47 a.m. Caller states car off Turners Fall Road near Hatchery. No injuries. Officer providing operator courtesy transport home.

2:50 p.m. Caller states a car tried to make the turn from Millers Falls Road onto Lake Pleasant Road and slid into a snowbank; vehicle is stuck. Officer advises no injuries. Car mobile; officer following to make sure he makes it home safely.

3:26 p.m. Car vs. guardrail at School and Main Streets. Chief advises car is not in the guardrail as suspected. Requesting Rau’s to help get out of snow. Rau’s on scene.

6:05 p.m. Caller states a female party was harassing him when he was outside cleaning off his car; states female believes he is still addicted to drugs even though he has been clean for over a year. States today when he was coming inside, the female stopped him, pointed to his cars and then to her arms indicating he was selling drugs again, then signed she is going to call the police. Referred to an officer.

7:12 p.m. Caller reporting shoplifting incident at Connecticut River Liquor and Wine. Report taken.

Tuesday, 1/24

8:05 a.m. First of four reports throughout the day of trees/wires down around town.

8:39 a.m. Officer checking wooded area above Third Street lot for male party with a warrant. Unable to locate.

9:02 a.m. A 35-year-old man was located at FL Roberts and arrested on a straight warrant.

11:04 a.m. Caller would like it on record that a neighbor continues to harass him and make threats like looking at him and sliding her finger across her throat.

9:16 p.m. Caller from Canal Street states the people above her are having some sort of argument; she can hear a lot of yelling and banging on the walls. Second caller states her neighbor was just threatening her and is banging on her walls; states he has been arrested for the same issue in the past. Situation mediated.

10:36 p.m. 911 caller from Second Street states he just found a male in his basement; states male was looking for a pair of pliers to fix his truck that is broken down on Avenue A near the alley by the Shea Theater. When caller stated he was calling the cops, the male took off towards his truck. Investigated.

Wednesday, 1/25

10:02 a.m. Officer attempting to make contact with owners of a vehicle parked on Seventh Street; vehicle is plowed in, and he wanted to know what the owners’ plan was for removing it. Plates came back as canceled. Officer requesting

tow for vehicle.

10:01 p.m. A 38-year-old Greenfield woman was arrested on two default warrants.

Thursday, 1/26

12:59 a.m. Officer advises Montague City Road has some flooding. Road is passable as long as vehicles drive slowly. DPW advised.

5:53 a.m. Officer requesting DPW be advised of road flooding in Millers Falls Road area, possibly due to a clogged drain.

3:11 p.m. Greenfield PD requesting officer to close off Turners Falls Road due to a car on fire. Services rendered.

3:18 p.m. Notice of repossession for a vehicle on Park Street. Repossession notes debtor is deceased.

3:50 p.m. Party into station looking to make a written report of harassment; requesting assistance from the highest officer on duty. Officer advising.

Friday, 1/27

8:53 a.m. Caller advising that the traffic lights at Avenue A and Third Street are turning green on one side while still yellow in the other direction. Several cycles of lights observed; no issues with timing.

4:25 p.m. Caller states a red Corolla is in the parking lot across Warner Street setting up camp for the night; does not want her there. Officer advises woman is just rearranging things in car then will be on her way.

5:31 p.m. Officer advises heavy black smoke coming from the stacks at the water treatment plant. Shelburne Control contacted. Party who works for water

treatment plant called in requesting that officers/FD do not respond to calls about smoke, as they have a fire alarm panel in the building, so if it were a true emergency, he would call himself.

5:50 p.m. 911 call reporting fire alarm at Keith Apartments; caller states she was cooking dinner and a piece of plastic caught on fire in the house. Transferred to Shelburne Control.

5:53 p.m. 911 call reporting two-car accident south of the intersection of Route 47 and Federal Street. Both cars towed.

Saturday, 1/28

4:19 p.m. 911 caller reports young man and woman arguing near Shady Glen. He has been following her since the post office. Officer spoke to male in area who does not match description; he denies seeing or hearing anyone arguing.

8:18 p.m. 911 caller advises her boyfriend is intoxicated and won’t stop screaming; would like officers to go over and tell him he needs to be quiet. Officer advises intoxicated male party lost his phone. No domestic issue at this time.

10:20 p.m. Officer advises he received a phone report of an on-the-deck fireplace smoldering on Montague Street. Shelburne Control aware.

Sunday, 1/29

1:20 a.m. Caller from Fourth Street states there is a lot of loud noise and music in the area; unsure exactly where it is coming from. All quiet upon arrival.

talk at 6 p.m. next Wednesday, February 8.

Gallery A3, Amherst: *Showing the Unseen*, members’ group show. Reception this Thursday, February 2, from 5 to 7 p.m.

Hope and Feathers Gallery, Amherst: *Jules Jones*, collage paintings. Reception this Thursday, February 2, from 5 to 7 p.m. Through February 25.

Anchor House of Artists, Northampton: *Luke Jaeger*, kinetic sculpture and animation; *Matty Hollander*, chaos and pattern; *Vincent Frano*, plaques and banners. Through February. Reception next Friday, February 10, 6 p.m.

Brattleboro Museum & Art Center: *The New Herbarium*, fungus and plant images by Madge Evers; *We Feel Our Way Through When We Don’t Know*, group show; *The Space Between Memory and Expectation*, large-format photographic installations by Renate Aller; *Moons and Intermment Stones*, rock and moon paintings by Alison Moritsugu; and *(de) composed*, sculpture by Judith Klausner. All through February 12. www.brattleboromuseum.org.

EXHIBITS

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Crossroads: Change in Rural America*. Smithsonian on Main Street exhibit. (See calendar of related events in this edition.) Through March 18. Ribbon cutting ceremony on Sunday, February 5 at 11 a.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Montague at Work and Play: Illustrations from the Montague Reporter, 2019-2023*, fifty-two full-color illustrations by Nina Rossi of people at work and play in the villages of Montague. Reception on Sunday, February 19 at 4 p.m. Through March 18.

Sawmill River Arts, Montague Center: *Small Works Show*. Invitational exhibit of small wall art. Opening reception this Sunday, February 5, 1 to 4 p.m.

Artspace, Greenfield: *Teen Art Show*, Franklin County high-schoolers show their best work. Through February 23.

Looky Here, Greenfield: *Admin Reveal*, collection of works by Looky Here manager Hannah Brookman. Receptions on Friday,

February 24, from 5 to 8 p.m.

Von Auersberg Gallery, Deerfield Academy: *Looking Glass*, Rachel Portesi’s hair portraits. Collodion tintypes, Polaroids, ViewMaster 3D, and video exploring female identity in portraits that display hair in sculptural forms. Through March 1.

Shelburne Arts Coop Gallery, Shelburne Falls: *All You Need is Love*, members’ show. Through February.

Fiddleheads Gallery, Northfield: *Student Art Brings Literature to Life*, Franklin County students’ show. Weekends through February 19.

Montague Center Library: *Collected Works of Tracy Vernon*, paintings of birds. Through February 15.

Sunderland Library: *Spring Eternal*, mixed-media abstract landscape paintings by Sara Gately. Through February 28.

Augusta Savage Gallery, UMass Amherst: *Portraits in Red: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls*, paintings by Nayana LaFond. Through May 12. Artist

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RETRO from B1

Wednesday, 2/24/16
2:47 p.m. Report of an 8" to 9" hole in the northbound lane of the General Pierce Bridge that appears to go straight through the bridge. Alerted MassDOT. Greenfield PD, state police, TFFD, and MedCare also advised. Area coned off. MassDOT on scene and will be returning with a steel plate to cover the area, ETA 20 minutes.

Saturday, 2/27/16
4:31 p.m. Caller advised that there was a piece of "sheet metal" in the road on the General Pierce Bridge; a few people had stopped and moved the metal out of the way of traffic. Caller wanted this on record as she is aware that there was work on the bridge and this may be related to that.

Saturday, 5/14/16
5:52 p.m. Caller advising of debris on General Pierce Bridge, possibly the top to a toilet tank, possibly a piece of ceramic. Caller was able to avoid it but could not stop to move it as another vehicle was behind her.



Friday, 12/2/16
12:37 p.m. Copied via radio that Greenfield PD is responding to their side of the General Pierce Bridge for a suspicious package that appears to be duct taped to the bridge.

Friday, 6/9/17
3:15 p.m. Call reporting FRTA bus broken down on General Pierce Bridge.

Sunday, 7/2/17
8:08 p.m. Report of possible blue kayak flipped over under General Pierce Bridge; unknown if anyone is still in it. Montague and Greenfield police and fire responding. Officer advises that the object is now on the shore in Deerfield, and that it is a barrel.

Friday, 9/1/17
4:11 p.m. Traffic backups on White and Turners Falls-Gill bridges due to closure of General Pierce Bridge.

Friday, 1/12/18
5:33 p.m. Motorist reporting that safety cones blocking a piece of steel that is sticking up in the road on the General Pierce Bridge have been knocked down.

Tuesday, 4/17/18
9:41 a.m. Caller reporting

a fairly large hole on the northbound lane of the General Pierce Bridge, near the sidewalk. Rebar can be seen in the hole. MassDOT contacted; they will check it out.

Thursday, 6/14/18
9:18 a.m. Caller reports that while crossing the General Pierce Bridge, she ran over a piece of metal that popped her tire.

Wednesday, 6/20/18
2:32 p.m. Caller reports that while following a vehicle over the General Pierce Bridge, the driver of that vehicle suddenly flipped him off, and the passenger held a machete out the window while both occupants yelled at him. Officer spoke with the owner of the other vehicle, who was adamant that no one in her vehicle did what the caller stated; advised that caller was tailgating and honking his horn at her while they were on the bridge.

Friday, 6/22/18
4:12 p.m. Report of a trailer becoming detached from a Jeep that was towing it over the General Pierce bridge. Trailer removed from roadway. Bumps in the bridge had caused damage to the tow package, so the Jeep can no longer tow the trailer.

Monday, 6/24/18
3:53 p.m. Caller advising of cracking concrete in middle of General Pierce Bridge. Did not notice this spot yesterday; believes it is 8" in diameter and could spread if left unattended. Officer on scene requesting MassDOT to respond; advising of 2' by 1' hole down to the rebar with a nearby bump in the roadway. MassDOT sent an engineer to the location. Officer placed a mid-sized hazard barrel over the hole. MassDOT will get a temporary fill bag for tonight, and try to get a crew to be the location tomorrow.

Tuesday, 6/25/18
12:12 p.m. Two walk-in reports of a new hole forming in the General Pierce Bridge. Both parties advise that the hole they're reporting today is new, and is right next to the one reported yesterday that MassDOT patched last night or this morning. Officer advises the hole is 1' by 2', right next to the patched hole from yesterday. Rebar is exposed. MassDOT, TFFD, MedCare, and Shelburne Control advised.

Thursday, 7/5/18
12:15 p.m. Caller states that there are railroad spikes or something similar in the roadway on the General Pierce Bridge.

Thursday, 10/18/18
3:23 p.m. Caller states that a tractor trailer unit is trying to back up instead of crossing the General Pierce Bridge.

Saturday, 12/22/18
10:24 a.m. Message left in

general mailbox reporting rebar sticking up in one of the travel lanes on the General Pierce Bridge; vehicles are reportedly swerving into the oncoming lane to avoid it. [Redacted] observed a one-square-foot hole, which appears to be where a previous patch came out, with two pieces of rebar exposed. MassDOT, TFFD, Greenfield PD, and AMR advised. MassDOT advised they would have someone out today to look at it.

Monday, 12/24/18
11:09 a.m. Multiple callers reporting a large piece of metal sticking up from the road on the General Pierce Bridge. Bridge checked; nothing found.

Monday, 1/21/19
7:09 a.m. Report of box truck with damage on top just before the General Pierce Bridge on the Greenfield side. Conferred with GPD.

Wednesday, 1/23/19
1:55 p.m. Caller from Millers Falls Road is behind a tractor-trailer unit that hit some signs on the Greenfield side of the General Pierce Bridge. Officer stopping truck on Industrial Boulevard; has driver's info and will pass it along to Greenfield PD for follow-up re: the damage he did.

Friday, 1/25/19
9:47 a.m. Motorist flagged down an officer reporting four holes on the General Pierce Bridge with rebar sticking up. Officer observed the same; advises the holes are approximately one foot by one foot, and appear to have been patches that came out. MassDOT, Greenfield PD, TFFD, Shelburne Control, and AMR advised. MassDOT advises they will send a crew to make repairs.

Friday, 2/8/19
12:14 p.m. Report of 2' by 2' hole in the General Pierce Bridge with rebar sticking up. Closer to Greenfield side, in lane coming into Turners Falls. MassDOT, TFFD,



NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATIONS

Greenfield PD, AMR, and Shelburne Control advised.

Tuesday, 2/26/19
10:10 a.m. DPW advises that sidewalks on General Pierce Bridge appear to be buckling; unknown whether this is new or whether MassDOT knows about it. Officer sent to investigate; reports sidewalk is indeed buckling/lifting on the Montague side about halfway down the bridge. Contacted MassDOT; advised TFFD, Greenfield PD, and Chief Williams as a courtesy.

Sunday, 4/21/19
9:40 a.m. Party into station to report rebar showing on the General Pierce Bridge. MassDOT, TFFD, Greenfield dispatch, and AMR advised. Officer advises that three or four patches have come up and need to be repaired.

Saturday, 4/27/19
8:39 a.m. Caller reporting a 4' by 4' hole on the Greenfield side of the General Pierce Bridge. GPD contacted; TFFD advised.

Wednesday, 5/22/19
3:10 p.m. Caller states that a tractor-trailer unit is holding up a long line of traffic at the General Pierce Bridge.

Friday, 5/31/19
10:49 a.m. Caller reporting a white pickup truck with a trailer that has a load of refrigerators that are not tied down; no plate on trailer or lights. Truck is on Millers Falls Road heading toward Greenfield. Officer has truck on General Pierce Bridge.

Friday, 6/28/19
9:08 a.m. Caller reporting that some people are not obeying the new traffic lights installed on the General Pierce Bridge. Officer advised.

Friday, 7/5/19
2:47 p.m. Multiple calls received about lights not working properly on the General Pierce Bridge. MassDOT checking lights. Adjustments made.

Thursday, 7/11/19
4:43 p.m. Officer reporting traffic is going both ways on the General Pierce Bridge; requesting Greenfield PD to stop traffic. Officer advises party figured they could go through light because it took so long.

Thursday, 7/18/19
12:44 p.m. Truck driver requesting an officer respond to back up the cars behind him and turn him around so he does not have to wait for another light cycle at the General Pierce Bridge. Caller is next in line to cross the bridge when the light changes. Advised caller MPD cannot fill that request; advised to cross bridge when light changes.

Friday, 7/19/19
1:51 p.m. Caller reporting that someone went through the red light and had to back up off the General Pierce Bridge.

Thursday, 8/1/19
8:17 p.m. Multiple callers reporting traffic jam on General Pierce Bridge. Cars refusing to back up. People have gotten out of their vehicles

and are arguing.

Saturday, 8/10/19
3:30 p.m. Caller reporting that while they were on the Turners side of the General Pierce Bridge, someone ran the red light on the Greenfield side. Second call reporting same. Both callers will be contacting Greenfield PD to let them know as well.

Sunday, 8/11/19
10:08 p.m. Caller reporting that while on the Greenfield side of the General Pierce Bridge, someone from the Turners side of the bridge ran the red light.


Thursday, 8/15/19
5:32 p.m. Greenfield PD advising lights at the General Pierce Bridge are blinking; they will be contacting highway department directly. Received several phone calls reporting same. State police and MassDOT *en route*. Officer advising they are able to get to the light panel and get a solid red light; they are going to see if they can get the light to cycle through. For now, everything is shut down.

Wednesday, 9/11/19
5:21 p.m. Caller reporting that they were on the Turners side of the General Pierce Bridge and when the lights turned green, cars were still coming across the bridge. Caller also stated that they believe the light only stayed green for about 30 seconds. Responding officer sat through six rotations of the light cycling, timed 38 seconds to get across the bridge with a pause each time in the rotation. Traffic is flowing properly and nothing appears to be wrong with the lights. Checked with GPD, who have not received any complaints on their side.

Tuesday, 9/17/19
2:20 p.m. Walk-in reporting that lights on Greenfield side of General Pierce Bridge are

see **RETRO** next page

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RETRO from prev page

malfunctioning; states that they only stay green for approximately five seconds before cycling back to red. GPD advised.

Tuesday, 10/1/19

11:41 a.m. Report of possible disabled vehicle on General Pierce Bridge. Line of cars trying to back up, causing a traffic issue.

Friday, 10/4/19

1:56 p.m. Caller reporting that he is above the height limit for the General Pierce Bridge and needs assistance backing up the line of cars so he can turn around.

Saturday, 10/5/19

12:07 p.m. Assisting Greenfield PD with a confused male party in traffic on General Pierce Bridge. Courtesy transport provided.

Tuesday, 10/22/19

8:30 a.m. Received two calls for a short green light at the General Pierce Bridge. Officer observed several cycles of lights; advised all vehicles made it through without any vehicles being cut off.

3:48 p.m. Report of two-car collision on General Pierce Bridge.

Wednesday, 10/23/19

2:59 p.m. Third-party report of minor accident at General Pierce Bridge; no apparent injuries/smoke/fluids.

Monday, 11/25/19

4:47 p.m. Greenfield PD officer states that from the General Pierce Bridge, he can see large flames; appears to be large outside fire. TFFD responding to Kingsley Avenue; fire extinguished.

Friday, 11/29/19

7:52 a.m. Highly irate caller yelled into the phone then hung up.

Appears that a road rage incident occurred after the caller confronted and/or yelled at another driver on the bridge; another driver on bridge reportedly stopped on the bridge, flipped off and engaged back with the caller. Caller did not provide specifics re: timeframe, location, etc., but from prior calls for similar incidents from this caller, believed to be General Pierce Bridge.

Tuesday, 12/3/19

3:45 p.m. Report of icy conditions in Turners Falls and on the Greenfield side of General Pierce Bridge. DPW advised for Turners; referred caller to Greenfield PD.

Sunday, 1/26/20

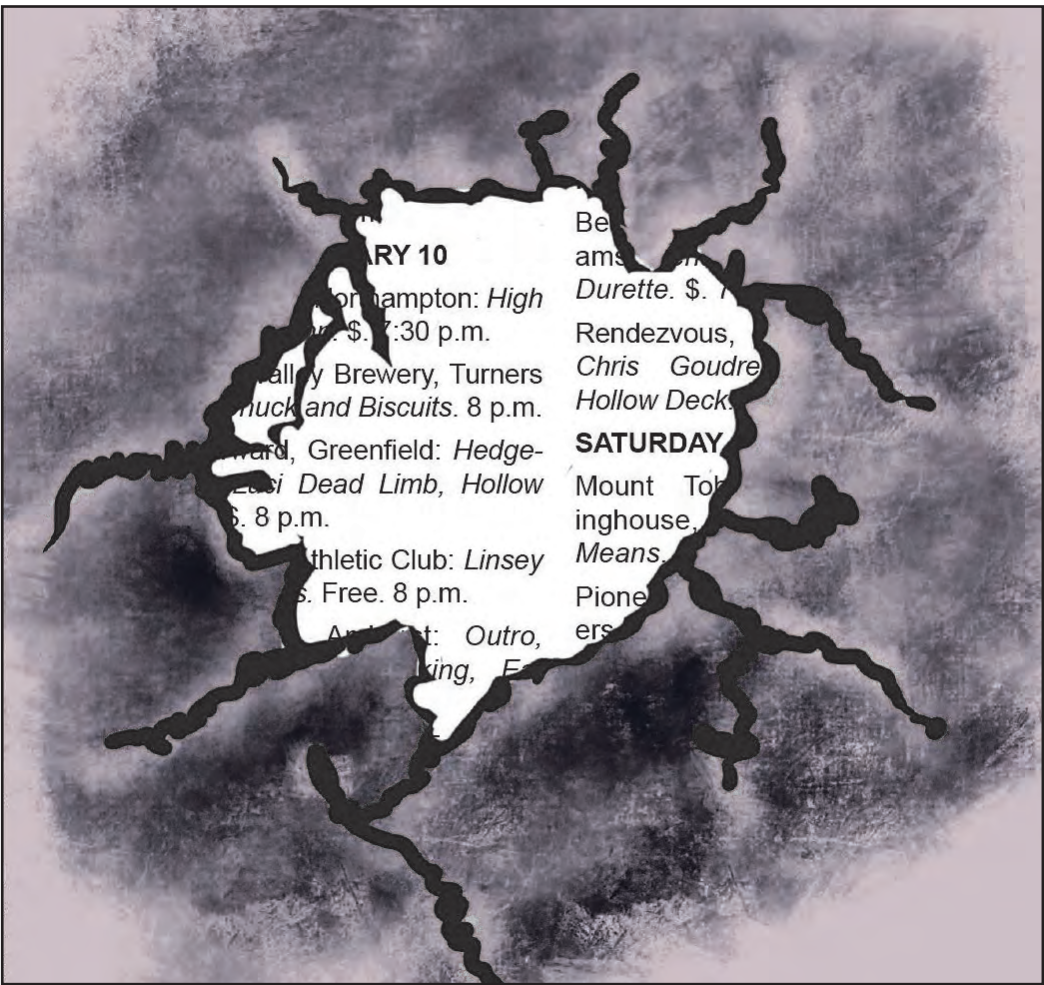
11:49 a.m. Multiple calls reporting three-car accident on General Pierce Bridge. No apparent injuries/smoke/fluids. MPD and Greenfield PD units advised. Officer advises only two cars involved.

Wednesday, 2/12/20

5:45 p.m. Vehicle vs. bicyclist on General Pierce Bridge; call given to AMR and TFFD. Officer reporting minor injuries. AMR transporting one party.

Thursday, 2/13/20

12:34 p.m. Officer received report of a piece of steel in the travel lane on the General Pierce Bridge. Officer moved debris from travel lane; appeared to have fallen



off a truck.

Friday, 2/14/20

7:41 p.m. Caller reporting an orange cat sitting by the jersey barriers on the Greenfield side of the General Pierce Bridge. Greenfield PD notified; advised to give caller animal control's number.

Wednesday, 5/27/20

5:28 p.m. Caller states that a wagon-type vehicle sideswiped him on the General Pierce Bridge and kept going.

Tuesday, 6/2/20

5:38 p.m. Caller states that there is a 2x4 with a license plate attached to it in the roadway on the General Pierce Bridge. Officer went to registered own-

er's residence in Montague Center; owner following him to bridge to retrieve it.

Wednesday, 7/15/20

10:51 a.m. Report of tractor-trailer unit stuck on the Turners Falls side of the General Pierce Bridge. Greenfield PD and MPD both sending units.

Monday, 7/20/20

2:27 p.m. Report of lights malfunctioning on Greenfield side of General Pierce Bridge; MPD cruiser requested to assist with traffic on Turners Falls side.

Tuesday, 9/8/20

12:35 p.m. Motorist reporting hubcap in road on General Pierce Bridge.

Tuesday, 9/15/20

12:51 p.m. 911 caller reports that another vehicle just bumped into hers on the General Pierce Bridge.

Wednesday, 10/14/20

3:12 p.m. Shelburne Control requesting MPD officer check the traffic flow on the General Pierce Bridge; stated that they took a call reporting that the lights are not cycling properly. Officer watched lights cycle three times; all appears normal.

Saturday, 11/28/20

8:59 p.m. Report of five-car accident at General Pierce Bridge; caller states a car ran the red light and hit the car in front of her head-on. Call-

er's car involved as well. No injuries reported for either vehicle. Caller states the car that caused accident is now attempting to ram the involved vehicles. Vehicle then took off toward Turners Falls on Montague City Road. MPD units on another call. Greenfield PD reports they are off with the vehicle that caused the accident at Avenue A and Fourth Street. MSP responding. MPD officers responding to bridge and to Avenue A and Fourth.

Thursday, 12/3/20

8:36 a.m. Caller reports that she was rear-ended on the Greenfield side of the General Pierce Bridge; unknown injuries, but she has two kids in the car and advised they were hit pretty hard. Caller standing in front of other vehicle; states he is trying to flee because he does not have a license.

Wednesday, 1/6/21

4:39 p.m. Report of a hit-and-run accident on the General Pierce Bridge; caller states that vehicle just hit his vehicle while attempting to do a U-turn and took off towards Food City.

Tuesday, 2/16/21

2:35 p.m. Chief Williams received a report of rebar sticking up on the General Pierce Bridge closer to the Greenfield side. Officer checked area and confirmed same; advised there is a hole in the upper decking; not an immediate hazard. Greenfield PD and MassDOT advised.

Tuesday, 2/23/21

11:37 a.m. Report of tractor-trailer unit blocking traffic on the Montague side of the General Pierce Bridge. The TT unit was assisted with turning around.



By CASEY WAIT

TURNERS FALLS – Hello, dear readers. This month marks the one-year anniversary of *Your Sick Friend*! I began this column because, two years into this deadly pandemic, I was exhausted and infuriated by the way the media and government continually downplayed the seriousness of the situation, clearly preferring to prioritize the economy over human life.

I was particularly sickened by how often the disproportionate illness, death, and debility of those with preexisting conditions was cited in comparison with the supposed “healthy majority” as a cause for celebration and a sign we had triumphed over COVID-19.

By and large, the only time chronically ill and disabled people like me were mentioned, whether by the news or the director of the CDC herself, was to assure everyone else they had nothing to worry about. The “healthy” could go back to life as usual, while the already-sick could stay inside... indefinitely.

I started *Your Sick Friend* so that I could add my voice to the conversation, at least locally, and make sure us disabled folks weren’t being ignored. When readers came across media that invoked the “good news” of disabled death, you could think of me, Your Sick Friend – not some abstract, silent sacrifice to the economy and “the new normal,” but a human being with a full life and people who love me.

A year later, much has changed – and yet the pandemic drags on. According to preliminary data from Johns Hopkins University, in the year 2022 more than 267,000 people died of COVID-19 in the United States. This does not account for the many more people who contracted the virus and are now living with Long Covid.

Vaccinations and testing have stagnated. Due to immune-evading mutations of the virus, all our monoclonal antibody treatments for COVID-19, essential for those with weakened immune systems, have been rendered useless.

Looking forward to 2023, we can

likely expect the official end to the Public Health Emergency and the shifting of vaccines and therapeutics to the private market, making them even more difficult to access for those who need them most.

I’ll be honest – from where I sit today, things are looking pretty grim. Fewer people are dying from COVID-19 and that is, of course, wonderful. But the pandemic is far from over.

The rise in severe cases of RSV, influenza, and strep throat amongst children this winter can also be traced back to the COVID-19 pandemic and our government’s decision to abandon measures to curb viral spread. Contrary to reporting by even respected outlets such as NPR, the rise in these other viral illnesses is not due to the completely made-up concept of “immunity debt” that our population supposedly incurred over two years of school shutdowns and mask mandates.

“[T]here is absolutely no mechanism by which your immunity weakens on its own.... you don’t have to keep getting sick in order to be

healthy,” Colin Furness, an infection control epidemiologist and assistant professor in the faculty of information at the University of Toronto, told *Global News* last November in an article titled “‘Immunity debt’: Why experts say this new term promotes COVID-19 ‘misinformation’.”

“So why are so many kids experiencing severe illness from seasonal viruses?” Furness asked. “The leading hypothesis now is that COVID is harming the immune system. To what extent and how permanently, these are things we don’t know. But that’s what the data seem to be telling us, and it’s something we should be really concerned about.”

Given how many of us have had COVID at least once by now, this hypothesis is concerning indeed.

If you’ve been reading this column over the past year, you’ll know that I am not one for doom and gloom. I am a realist, and I believe it’s crucial to be honest about where things stand. However, I also know that the best hope we have, now and always, is each other. That’s why this year my focus, both in this column and in my daily life, is going to be on exploring ways we can take the situation into our own hands and protect one another even if our governing bodies refuse to.

For inspiration, I’ve been revisiting writing and initiatives from the early days of the pandemic, before we were all burned out and ground down. An especially beautiful piece

I recommend reading is an essay by cancer survivor Anne Boyer titled “This Virus.”

Boyer writes, “We can – today, right now – organize mutual aid networks among our existing social contacts, make plans to care for the vulnerable, prepare supplies for those who will get sick. We can provide shelter to the people who don’t have it, offer to be a support for anyone feeling crazy from the news, promise to take care of someone’s pets or kids if they get sick. We can provide important information to those who have been deceived or ignored. We can protect those who are unfairly stigmatized and discriminated against.”

It’s not too late to do all these things, and more. Because COVID-19 is likely not the last pandemic we will have to live through, and certainly not the last crisis of this scale. Strengthening our networks of care now will go a long way towards protecting us from what will come in the future.

Keep an eye on the events page of this paper later this month, as I’ll be hosting a conversation and workshop at the new organizing space on the corner of Fourth and L streets – date TBD – about how we can reinvigorate and better sustain COVID-19 mutual aid projects that were so vibrant in the early days of the pandemic. I hope to see you there!

With love and rage,
Your Sick Friend

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MEDICINE

Many Tests of the Heart

By CATHERINE DODDS, MD

TURNERS FALLS – February is Heart Health Awareness Month. Ah, the proverbial heart, center of love and passion! And the anatomic heart, an elegantly simple pumping device. How do those of us in the medical world determine what's going on inside this mysterious organ?

One of the most frequent questions I get from patients about their heart health is asking what tests should be done. And the answer is "It depends on your individual situation". Tests for the heart show different things, including ways to look at heart structure, rhythm, and function.

The heart's structure can be evaluated with imaging, including...

1. **Echocardiogram:** An ultrasound probe, like those used during pregnancy, is applied to the left chest wall to look at the heart's four heart valves (aortic, mitral, tricuspid, and pulmonic) and its four chambers, the left and right atria and ventricles. Echocardiograms are best for evaluating valve disease such as thickening (*stenosis*) or leakage (*regurgitation*).

This test also looks at how the heart fills and pumps blood. The heart can pump too little (*systolic* failure), be too stiff to fill well (*diastolic* failure), or pump too much (a hyperdynamic heart). An echocardiogram will also show if the atria or ventricles are abnormally enlarged or thickened (*hypertrophy*). Lots of information from a single test that involves no sedation, radiation, or contrast!

2. **Coronary artery calcium scoring CT scan:** This type of computed tomography (CT) scan focuses on the three coronary arteries, the blood vessels that supply blood to the heart itself. It shows if calcium buildup is reducing or blocking blood flow to the heart, a condition called coronary atherosclerosis.

The calcium score, on the "Agatston scale," can range from 0 – no calcium buildup, a normal result – to over 1,000, showing a very high risk of heart attack due to severe blockage. Any score over 100 is concerning, though the exact cutoff for high risk varies by age and sex. The coronary calcium score helps estimate the risk of a heart attack and the need for cholesterol-lowering medications such as statins.

3. **Coronary catheterization:** In this invasive procedure, a wire is usually inserted through the radial artery in the wrist. (Years ago, the more common access point was the femoral artery in the groin.) A catheter is threaded through the accessed artery all the way to the heart, and contrast dye is injected to directly visualize the coronary arteries and

the heart as it pumps blood.

Catheterization is done for the treatment of heart attacks, often with a stent placed in the blocked artery. It can also be done as a diagnostic test to evaluate for heart disease, though generally as a later step after other tests have come back abnormal.

4. **Cardiac MRI:** Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) uses a magnetic field to visualize the heart's tissues and structure in more detail than a CT scan or ultrasound. Cardiac MRIs are less common than the other imaging studies listed here, but may be performed for unusual causes of heart disease such as birth defects (congenital heart disease), masses in the heart, or systemic diseases such as amyloidosis and sarcoidosis.

The heart's rhythm is evaluated by looking at its electrical activity, including by:

1. **Electrocardiogram (EKG):** A 10-second recording of the heart's rhythm, commonly performed in doctor's offices and emergency rooms. Among other things, this simple, safe, high-yield, heart test can be used to see signs of a heart attack, as well as prolonged heart intervals (heart block, or QTc prolongation) or extra beats, as long as they occur during the specific ten seconds of the EKG.

2. **Holter monitor:** This EKG device is worn by the patient at home, usually for 24 to 48 hours. This evaluates palpitations that happen at least once daily, but not frequently enough to be captured on a standard EKG.

3. **Event monitor:** Small electrodes attached to the chest connect to a device carried in a pouch for up to 30 days, with the electrodes removed each day for showering and re-charging. The person wearing the monitor presses the device to activate rhythm monitoring when they feel infrequent symptoms, such as palpitations or lightheadedness, to try to correlate them with an underlying irregular heart rhythm.

4. **Implantable loop recorder:** A device is surgically implanted under the skin of the chest, to record the heart's rhythm for up to three years. The rhythm is monitored remotely, and the doctor is contacted if abnormal rhythms are detected. Loop recorders are generally used in the work-up of stroke, to try to detect an abnormal heart rhythm called atrial fibrillation that can increase risk of stroke. Event monitors can also be used for the work-up of infrequent (less than once per month) fainting spells or palpitations.

The heart's function can be evaluated with stress testing, including by:

1. **Exercise-EKG stress test:** A patient walks on a treadmill at increasing incline until their maximal

FRONTIERS

The New Cholesterol Medications: What Are They? How Do They Work?

By OLIVIA MACRORIE

MILLERS FALLS – Since high cholesterol is closely linked with heart disease, much research has been applied to develop drugs that block the synthesis of cholesterol in the liver, including the widely-used "statin" drugs. While about 20% of cholesterol comes from the food we eat, about 80% is made in the liver and released into the bloodstream.

Because cholesterol is too greasy to circulate freely in blood, it is carried by proteins in packages called "lipoproteins." There are two types of blood cholesterol: high-density lipoprotein (HDL) and low-density lipoprotein (LDL). HDL contains more protein, while LDL contains more cholesterol.

Healthy levels of HDL and LDL are 40 mg/dL and 70 mg/dL, or 0.4% and 0.7% of blood by mass. An excess of LDL cholesterol can build up in plaques that can block arteries, and lead to heart attack and stroke. HDL cholesterol carries LDL back to the liver where it is broken down. Thus, when your cholesterol is checked, you want to have high levels of HDL and low levels of LDL.

Also in the bloodstream are *triglycerides*, fat molecules the body uses for energy. Ideally, individuals will have high HDL, low LDL, and low triglycerides.

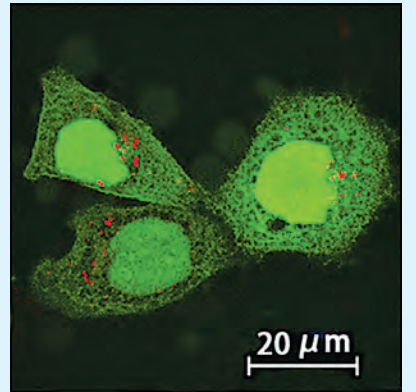
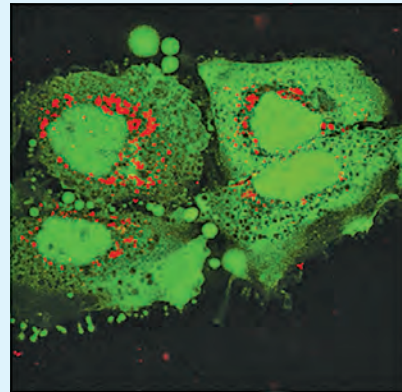
A new class of drugs, which blocks the function of the PCSK9 protein or gene, has been developed for lowering LDL cholesterol and reducing cardiovascular events.

PCSK9 was originally discovered in 2003 when it was found that some people have a mutation in the gene that results in high LDL cholesterol. A mutation is a single-letter change in the molecular code that tells our cells how to function. This PCSK9 mutation causes the protein to be hyperac-

tive, a gain-of-function mutation. On the opposite end of the spectrum, researchers found that patients with "nonsense," or loss-of-function, PCSK9 mutations had low levels of LDL cholesterol. These studies suggested that PCSK9 is somehow involved in cholesterol processing. But how do mutations in this gene cause changes in LDL levels?

Researchers found the PCSK9 protein binds to, or sticks to, LDL receptors on liver cells. When it binds to these receptors they are brought to the lysosome, the trash can of the cell, and degraded. This prevents the LDL receptor from making it to the surface of the cell, where it would normally bind to LDL, causing it to be removed from the bloodstream and degraded. With less PCSK9, LDL receptors become more prevalent, allowing for more LDL to be removed from the bloodstream.

This is the idea behind the development of PCSK9-blocking medications. Two PCSK9 antibodies, evolocumab and alirocumab, are currently on the market, having been proven safe and effective for lowering LDL cholesterol and reducing cardiovascular events. An an-



Human cells, colored in green, take up particles of LDL cholesterol, shown in red. At left is a wild-type cell with normal LDL receptors. At right is a cell in a patient with a mutation that degrades these receptors, making them less able to take up LDL and resulting in high blood cholesterol, or "hypercholesterolemia." (Images from Shu et. al., "A novel indel variant...", PLOS One, December 2017)

tiety, a gain-of-function mutation. On the opposite end of the spectrum, researchers found that patients with "nonsense," or loss-of-function, PCSK9 mutations had low levels of LDL cholesterol. These studies suggested that PCSK9 is somehow involved in cholesterol processing. But how do mutations in this gene cause changes in LDL levels?

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tibody is a T-shaped protein molecule that sticks to certain specific target proteins.

These antibodies prevent PCSK9 from interacting with LDL receptors so they do not get degraded and are able to stay at the cell surface. A number of short-term and long-term clinical trials have shown that these treatments, either alone or in combination with statin treatments, reduce LDL and cardiovascular events.

In addition to these antibodies, a PCSK9 gene therapy called VERVE-101 is currently in Phase 1b clinical trials in New Zealand. This gene therapy causes a mutation that turns off the PCSK9 gene. Because this is a Phase 1b trial, the primary purpose is to assess the medication's safety and tolerability, but researchers are also looking for changes in the concentration of PCSK9 and LDL cholesterol upon administration of the medication.

Anti-PCSK9 gene therapy has already been shown to work in other primate species, and the general mechanism seems sound, so chances appear good for this trial to succeed. While the specifics of gene therapy will not be discussed here, look for it in a future article!

blood flow to the heart. A radioactive tracer is used to compare blood flow to the heart before and after this chemically-induced stress.

The next time you or a loved one has testing done for your heart health, this brief overview will hopefully help you understand what the test is looking for, and how to think through the results you get back. As always when medical issues are concerned, talk to your healthcare provider about questions or issues related to your individual health situation.

Happy February, and keep your heart healthy!

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Joe K. Walsh, Grant Gordy, Briezy Jane and the Hurricanes*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

The Drake, Amherst: *Underground System*. \$. 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 3

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Four Rivers Charter School Annual Variety Show*. Free. 7 p.m.

Shutesbury Athletic Club: *The Shadow Twisters, Norwood & Myron*. Free. 7 p.m.

Brick House, Turners Falls: *Bill Nace* record release, *Stella Kola* record release, *Kieran Lally, Hollow Deck, DJ Krefting*. \$. 8 p.m.

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

The O's Music Bar, Sunderland: *Mibble, Orange & Amber, Rocco Desgres, The Maladaptive*. Free. 8 p.m.

The Drake, Amherst: *Landowner, Perennial, Ian St. George*. \$. 8 p.m.

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

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Adam Reid & the In-Betweens, Sailor Down, Julie Cira*. \$. 8:30 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls:

Ben Carroll. Free. 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4

Four Star Farms, Northfield: *Rosie Porter Trio*. Free. 5 p.m.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Doomsday* feat. *Warm, Problem With Dragons, Slow Wake, Shadow Witch, Geezer, Fox 45, Astral Bitch*. \$. 6 p.m.

Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *Lakeside Drive*. \$. 7 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Eggtooth Productions presents *Charley's Place*. "Pop-up chess club and immersive experience." \$. 7 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Behold! True Believers, Lives of Crime, AP Wray*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Bob Marley Birthday Bash* feat. *Toussaint, Lady Lee, D'Arryval, Nyjah, King Rhymez*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

SCDT, Northampton: *HUT 39* feat. *Amelia Heintzelman & Leah Fournier, Peter Gizzi, Bill Nace*. \$. 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5

Clark Art Institute, Williamstown: *Bill Nace/Matt Krefting duo*. \$. 3 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Ben Carroll, The Give, Matt Emmer & Friends, Dennis Crommett*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9

Marigold Theater, Eastham-

ton: *Screensavor, Loops For Pearl*. Free. 9 p.m.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10

Parlor Room, Northampton: *High Tea, Freemann*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *Chuck and Biscuits*. 8 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Hedgewitch, Luci Dead Limb, Hollow Deck*. \$. 8 p.m.

Shutesbury Athletic Club: *Linsey & the Llamas*. Free. 8 p.m.

The Drake, Amherst: *Outro, Spanish for Hitchhiking, Eat Fire Spring*. \$. 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Adelaide Fay*. Free. 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Crossroads* exhibit kickoff event. Free. 7 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Glen David Andrews*. \$. 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Valentine's Dance Party*. \$. 9:30 p.m.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Jenny Burtis*. Free. 9 p.m.

The Wheelhouse at Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Queer dance night* feat. *DJs JessXO, Bux Wild, Heartballoon*. \$. 9 p.m.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Zach Nugent, Dead Set*. \$. 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17

Belltower Records, North Adams: *Center, Matt Weston, Liz Durette*. \$. 7 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Chris Goudreau, Hedgewitch, Hollow Deck*. Free. 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18

Mount Toby Friends Meetinghouse, Leverett: *Pamela Means*. \$. 7 p.m.

Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *No Joke*. \$. 7 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Elias & Dan*. \$. 7 p.m.

Bombyx Center, Florence: *Crash Test Dummies, Carleton Stone*. \$. 7 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Matt Emmer & Friends, Helen Hummel, Kitchen Scissors*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

JJ's Tavern, Florence: *The Prozacs, The Manipulators, Slob Drop, Fear the Masses, Green Street Fiends*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Whiskey City*. \$. 8 p.m.

Deja Brew Pub, Wendell: *2 Car Garage*. \$. 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *The Bourbon Street Blasters, Zydeco Connection*. \$. 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Of Earth and Soul* presents *Life/*

Death/Life. \$. At 3 and 7 p.m.

Bombyx Center, Florence: *John Gorka, Patty Larkin, Cliff Eberhardt, Lucy Kaplansky*. \$. 7 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Tysk Tysk Task, Barbarian Thieves, Once Were Kings*. \$. 7:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24

Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *HyFy*. \$. 7 p.m.

Bombyx Center, Florence: *Club D'Elf*. \$. 7 p.m.

Nova Arts, Keene NH: *Florist, Footings*. \$. 7 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *She Said, Katie Clarke & Larry LeBlanc*. \$. 8 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Quiet Houses* record release, with *Mark Schwaber*. \$. 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Horse Jumper of Love, They Are Gutting A Body Of Water, Computerwife, Robber Robber, Pet Fox*. \$. 6 p.m.

Bombyx Center, Florence: *Kassa Overall*. \$. 8 p.m.

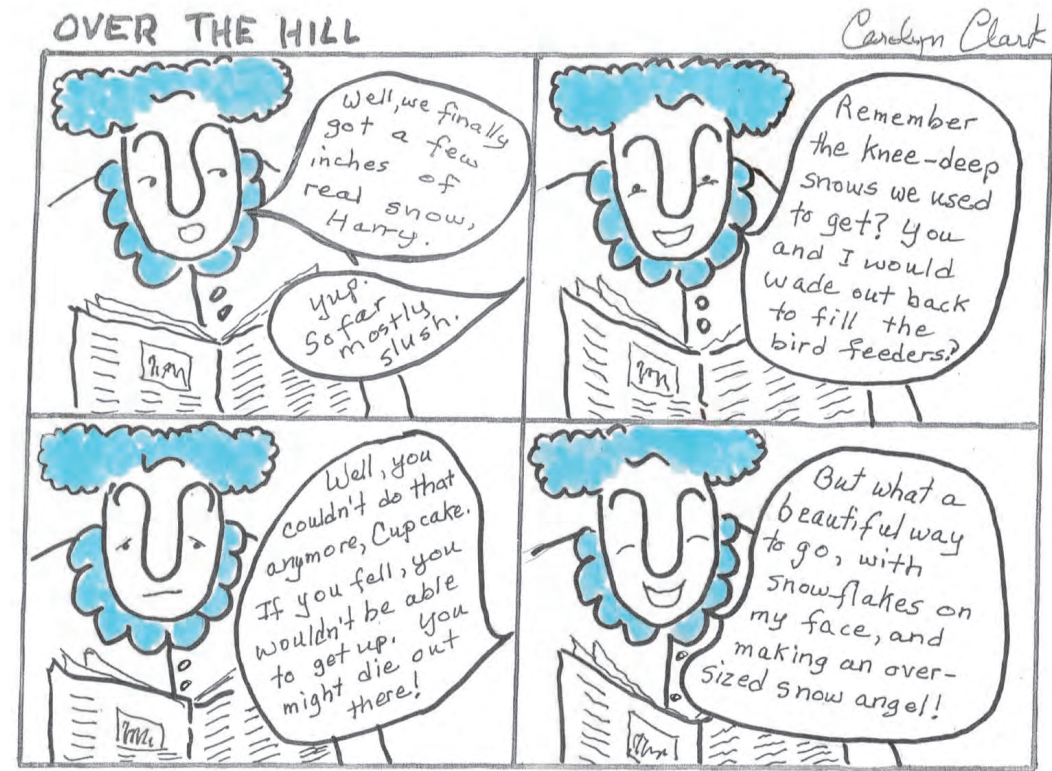
Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Suitcase Junket*. \$. 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 3

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

SATURDAY, MARCH 4

Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *Groove Prophet*. \$. 7 p.m.



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TRAVELS from page B1

serves Greenfield is the Vermonter, traveling as far north as Essex Junction-Burlington and then finally St. Albans.

There is another Amtrak train, the Adirondack, that will take you all the way to glorious Montreal. This train makes its way north from NYC through the Hudson Valley and on to Canada.

Amtrak’s Maple Leaf service has resumed cross-border service, once again offering a connection between the United States and Canada. Along the way, it stops at destinations like Niagara Falls, Buffalo, Rochester, and Albany. The trip to Toronto takes about 12 hours, including two hours for customs and immigration as it crosses the border.

Tickets start at less than \$300, although they can be more depending on the timing and whether or not you opt for Business Class.

High-Speed Acela

Amtrak’s pride and joy – and biggest money makers – are its Acela high speed trains, which operate between Washington, DC and Boston. If you’ve ever seen these blocky trains whizzing by and wondered why they look so old, it’s because they haven’t gotten new train sets for 20 years.

But in the fall of 2023, Amtrak will unveil its newest and best Acela cars yet, built in the US by the French company Alstom

and capable of great speeds. These trains will look like the Shinkansen trains in Japan and the TGV in France, with a long nose and very streamlined front.

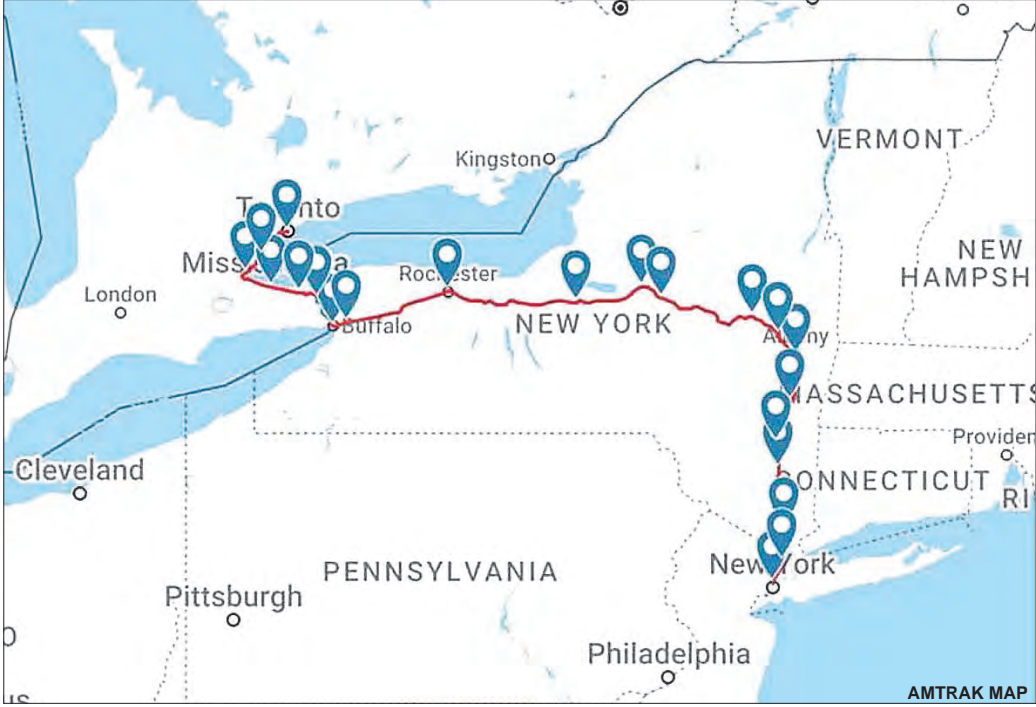
However, the tracks they will run on are still limited, so while speeds will improve somewhat, we are still far from the speeds reached on France’s TGV or Spain’s AVE trains, which can achieve running speeds up to 200 mph. The new Acela trains will have an enhanced active tilt system that will allow higher speed on the many curved sections of the route.

The new train cars will also bring in more money on this lucrative Amtrak line, offering 25% percent more seats. So there will be fewer occasions when passengers trying to book a ticket will get the “sorry, sold out” messages, which are not uncommon.

Amtrak Airo

Not only are Amtrak’s fastest trains getting better, the regular train cars used on the Northeast Regional service are going to be all new as well. These train sets are currently being built by Siemens Mobility in Sacramento, California and will be called Amtrak Airo cars. Delivery of these starts in 2024.

Even though today’s railcars are plenty comfortable, these trains will be as nice as what you find in Europe, with plenty of plugs, no middle seat, and continuous welded rail tracks that will avoid the clickety-clack of old-



The route of the Amtrak Maple Leaf train, which goes between NYC and Toronto.

er tracks like the Metro-North railroad system.

The new locomotives that pull these new Amtrak passenger cars will be hybrids called ALC 42 and will also be made by Siemens. These diesel electric locomotives provide increased hauling power and have improved safety features and use much-improved environmental technology that will make them among the most energy-efficient locomotives of their kind operating today.

Gateway Program

The biggest change that will ripple throughout the entire Northeast, in terms of how it will affect efficiency and scheduling, will be the most expensive to implement. The long-planned-for Gateway Program is a series of rail infrastructure projects that will improve the most-congested 10-mile section of the Northeast Corridor, adding needed resiliency and creating the capacity for a doubling of passenger trains under the Hudson River into New York’s Penn Station, the nation’s busiest rail facility.

The Gateway Program will create four mainline tracks between Newark, New Jersey, and Penn Station, where there are currently just two. This will open up the bottleneck that is the reason you have to wait to see which track your train will be departing from when you are at Moynihan Train Hall. There

are so many tracks coming in the station that, similar to airport terminal departure gates, they get changed at the last minute.

The additional tunnels under the Hudson are going to make a huge difference to Amtrak’s service throughout the Northeast.

The work for the Gateway Program includes a new tunnel under the Hudson River, rehabilitation of the existing century-old tunnel, new tracks and platforms at Penn Station, new Portal North and South Bridges over the Hackensack River in New Jersey, construction of loop tracks in Secaucus, and replacements for the Sawtooth Bridges, among other needed improvements.

Lastly, Amtrak is having a sale! They are offering the Amtrak USA Rail Pass at \$200 off per person, now through June 22. That’s 10 rides or “segments” to or from any of over 500 destinations, nationwide, for just \$299. If all of this exciting and positive news about our nation’s passenger rail carrier inspires you, maybe you and your family want to plan a trip.

Local travel editor Max Hartshorne writes about traveling around our region, and a little beyond.

Max is the editor of GoNOMAD Travel and host of the short-form GoNOMAD Travel Podcast, which you can check out at anchor.fm/max-hartshorne.



Amtrak’s new Airo train sets are coming in 2024.

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