

The Montague Reporter

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

FEBRUARY 23, 2023

Town Weighs Its Options For the ‘Old Town Hall,’ Now a Branch Library

By JEFF SINGLETON

MONTAGUE CENTER— “I played basketball upstairs in 1971, and we were really lucky to have five tall hippies. We had an undefeated season, and then we switched to softball,” said Montague Center resident and town meeting member Sam Lovejoy, who went on to suggest that the second floor of the historic town hall, now called the Montague Center Library, be sold to an elevator company.

Lovejoy was giving his “public

input” on the future of the building, constructed in 1858, at a meeting last Thursday organized by library director Caitlin Kelley and assistant town administrator Walter Ramsey.

The building once served as the location of town offices as well as a library and the venue for town meeting. One can still see seating on the second floor, along with a performance stage and a basketball court that takes up most of the room.

The first floor is currently devoted to the Montague Center branch

see **LIBRARY** page A6

New Program Matches Local Seniors With Live-In Helpers

By MIKE JACKSON

FRANKLIN COUNTY – “As people are living longer, we’re seeing people that want to stay in their homes – people who have the ability to do a lot of stuff, but not necessarily everything,” Charity Day tells me. “The biggest obstacle is getting the appropriate amount of care at the right time. And there is such a long waiting list for people to get the services that they need – we’re having a hard time finding the workers who can help them remain in their home.”

Day is the associate director of client services at LifePath, a large regional nonprofit agency providing services and support for elders and people living with disability.

Facing a challenging labor market and struggling, three years into the pandemic, to recruit volunteers to help seniors, LifePath has been busy behind the scenes setting up a new program that hopes to meet that need by addressing another equally big one at the same time: housing.

“When I was growing up I was raised by my great-grandparents, and I would hear about boarders... It really never seemed odd to me,” Day says. “And now we’re going back to it, because of the high cost of housing... We’re seeing a lot of people that want to open up their home.”

see **MATCHES** page A2

AT LARGE

Alert Strangers Avert a Tragedy In Northfield Apartment Fire



AINSWORTH PHOTO

A fire broke out last Friday night in this East Northfield apartment building. Several pets perished. Several tenants were displaced, but none were injured.

By CHIP AINSWORTH

NORTHFIELD – On a windy cold night in the dead of winter, an explosive sound came from down the street. Probably the usual suspects setting off M-80s, I thought, but a few minutes later a fire truck rumbled past my house and let out a short, customary burst from its siren.

By the time I’d donned a coat, cap, and boots and stepped outside, Pine Street was a kaleidoscope of flashing red and blue lights. A woman in my neighbor’s gravel driveway animatedly told onlookers, “I live on the second floor, I’m watching TV, and I saw some flames...”

The fire was coming out of a third-floor bay window with the intensity of a blast furnace, and around the back the north wind was blowing billows of gray smoke and red ambers over an eight-foot high row of arborvitae trees.

In the parking lot, several tenants from the adjacent apartment building were huddled together, and a woman sat in her car with

one hand over the heater and the other holding a cell phone. I asked her if she’d heard the same “boom” I’d heard.

“No,” she said. “I just heard people banging on doors.”

According to the write-up by Bella Levavi in Monday’s *Greenfield Recorder*, Diana Nunez and Derrick Adams had seen the fire while driving home to Greenfield and had stopped to call 911 and get people out of their apartments.

The blaze was angry and powerful, and it seemed incongruous to see firefighters standing casually on the porch while a fire that reminded me of a steel mill scene in *The Deer Hunter* raged directly above them.

A first-floor tenant who’s on oxygen was safe, and the second-floor tenant was in the home of a family from Thomas Aquinas College, but what about the third-floor tenant?

Several Highland Avenue residents, including Erin Thayer and Mike and Wendy Hubbard, had seen landlords Kelly and Kyle Snow run past us.

see **FIRE** page A5



MIKE JACKSON PHOTO

While the former town hall’s first floor is in active use as a branch library, the upstairs is often empty, and people at the current town hall comment from time to time about the long-term cost of heating it and making it more accessible.

Screw Pumps, Green Burials, Appointing Top Special Agenda

By JEFF SINGLETON

MONTAGUE – The upcoming special town meeting next Thursday, March 2 will vote on a wide range of articles, including a very large appropriation of \$2.5 million to install new screw pumps at the town sewage treatment plant, now called the Clean Water Facility (CWF); a very small appropriation of \$2,500 to fund the farmers market in Turners Falls, which will soon have its own line in the town budget; and potentially controversial articles to change the town clerk and treasurer/collector from elected to appointed positions.

And that is only the tip of the iceberg.

The 21 articles were sent to town meeting members last week, along with motions and background information, and are also on the town website. They include a \$2,000 appropriation to evaluate a historic blacksmith shop in Montague Center; an article creating a “hearing officer” to judge appeals of “tickets” for violating building and fire codes; four articles to purchase new vehicles, including a “municipal inspectional services vehicle”; and an article to fund a “green burial area” in the woods at the Highland Cemetery on Millers Falls Road.

Most of the financial articles would be funded from so-called free cash, the positive balances left over from previous years’ budgets which are certified by the state Department of Revenue. Montague begins this

see **SPECIAL** page A6

Groups Discuss Tenants’ Legal Rights, Rent Control

By SARAH ROBERTSON

HOLYOKE – City councilors voiced support for rent control during a public workshop in Holyoke earlier this month focused on unaffordable and substandard housing. More than 30 people, including community leaders and residents experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness, attended the February 6 educational event at the office of the social-service nonprofit Enlace de Familias.

After listening to a presentation about tenants’ legal rights by Community Legal Aid experts, attendees shared their own experiences facing poor housing conditions, intimidation by landlords, and discrimination in the housing market. Many said they thought that rentals were

simply getting too expensive for average Holyoke residents to afford.

Holyoke city councilors Juan Anderson-Burgos, Kocayne Givner, and Jose Maldonado Velez and state representative Patricia Duffy heard from constituents dealing with mice, mold, lack of heat, and other issues.

“What can be done?” Anderson-Burgos asked. “How are they able to get away with raising the rent, especially in places like Holyoke where people are below the poverty line, people of color – how are they getting away with that?”

Cries resounded around the room: “Because there’s no rent control!”

“Do you have a vision of how to get that started, or what it would look like?” Givner asked the attendees, gathered in a circle around the

see **TENANTS** page A4



ROBERTSON PHOTO

Tenants and their allies hope to publicize existing laws – and advocate for new ones.

LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

As Home Prices Skyrocket, Workers See a 4.5% Bump

By GEORGE BRACE

At their meeting Tuesday, Leverett’s selectboard and finance committee voted to provide 4.5% cost-of-living increases to all town employees in FY’24. The board also heard a presentation from the board of assessors on the reasons behind a significant rise in some residents’ property valuations, and a recent delay in sending out tax bills.

The town’s personnel board had recommended a 5% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), and the selectboard and fin com heard a multitude of opinions before voting 4 to 2 in favor of a 4.5% rate.

Fin com member Phil Carter said that “the number that matters most” in the decision is the change in the consumer price index (CPI), which was recently as high as 7.1%. Carter said the town should choose “something close to 7%,

otherwise we’ll be actually cutting their pay in real terms.”

Member Nancy Grossman said she favored a smaller increase, and that the town needed to consider “sticker shock,” and to “balance our desire to take care of town employees” with the “concerns of residents and the reality of their lives.”

And Jed Proujansky, the third and final member of the fin com at the meeting, said he was “concerned on multiple fronts.” Proujansky said he had heard that town employees were leaving over pay, and didn’t like “balancing the budget on workers’ backs,” but on the other side, “many [other] people are on fixed incomes, or going without raises.”

“I don’t see a great answer,” he said, indicating that he would like to set it under 5%, but “not [by] a lot.”

Town administrator Marjorie McGinnis provided a handout for

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Prop Newspaper For Local Film Set: Contents

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The Montague Reporter

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LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here's the way it was on February 21, 2013: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

Youth Give Planners Perspective

The Rise Up class at Turners Falls High School met with the Downtown Livability Planners Walter Ramsey and Kate Tooke on February 5 to give the teenage perspective on what makes downtown Turners Falls a good place to live, work, and hang out.

Some ideas that emerged were outdoor areas that offered opportunity for safe recreation for a variety of ages, a fitness center or gym that could serve the community for a reasonable rate, more shops that cater to youth interests and style, and an entertainment hotspot where

youth can safely hangout with their friends, listen to music, and get a bite to eat.

Fall River Bridge On Track

Work on the bridge over the Falls River on Route 2 is proceeding ahead of schedule. Northern Construction Superintendent Jack Graves anticipates finishing well before the completion date of November 2014.

The project ran into problems earlier, encountering blasted ledge fill deposited during the bridge's original construction in 1931. The original contractor backfilled the abutments with chunks blasted from the ledge on the north side of the westbound lane of the highway as it approaches the bridge.

20 YEARS AGO

Here's the way it was on February 20, 2003: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

Small Towns Band Together To Demand State Payments

First formed in 1996, Small Towns Against Repression (STAR) was revived last year to keep after state officials to meet the Commonwealth's commitment to the PILOT program, which provides payments in lieu of taxes for state-owned land in towns and cities.

Though it includes over 90 towns in its membership, STAR has been unable to get a response yet from the Romney Administration, despite repeated attempts to open a dialogue on the issue.

With state revenues tanking, the subject is cause for serious concern in towns like Wendell, Erving, and Montague, all represented at the group's meeting on Wednesday.

The organization voted to keep its acronym, but changed its name to be "Stand Together, Act Responsibly."

150 YEARS AGO

Here's the way it was on February 19, 1873: News from the Turners Falls Reporter's archive.

Local Matters

They want a half a dozen girls at the Montague Mill. See card.

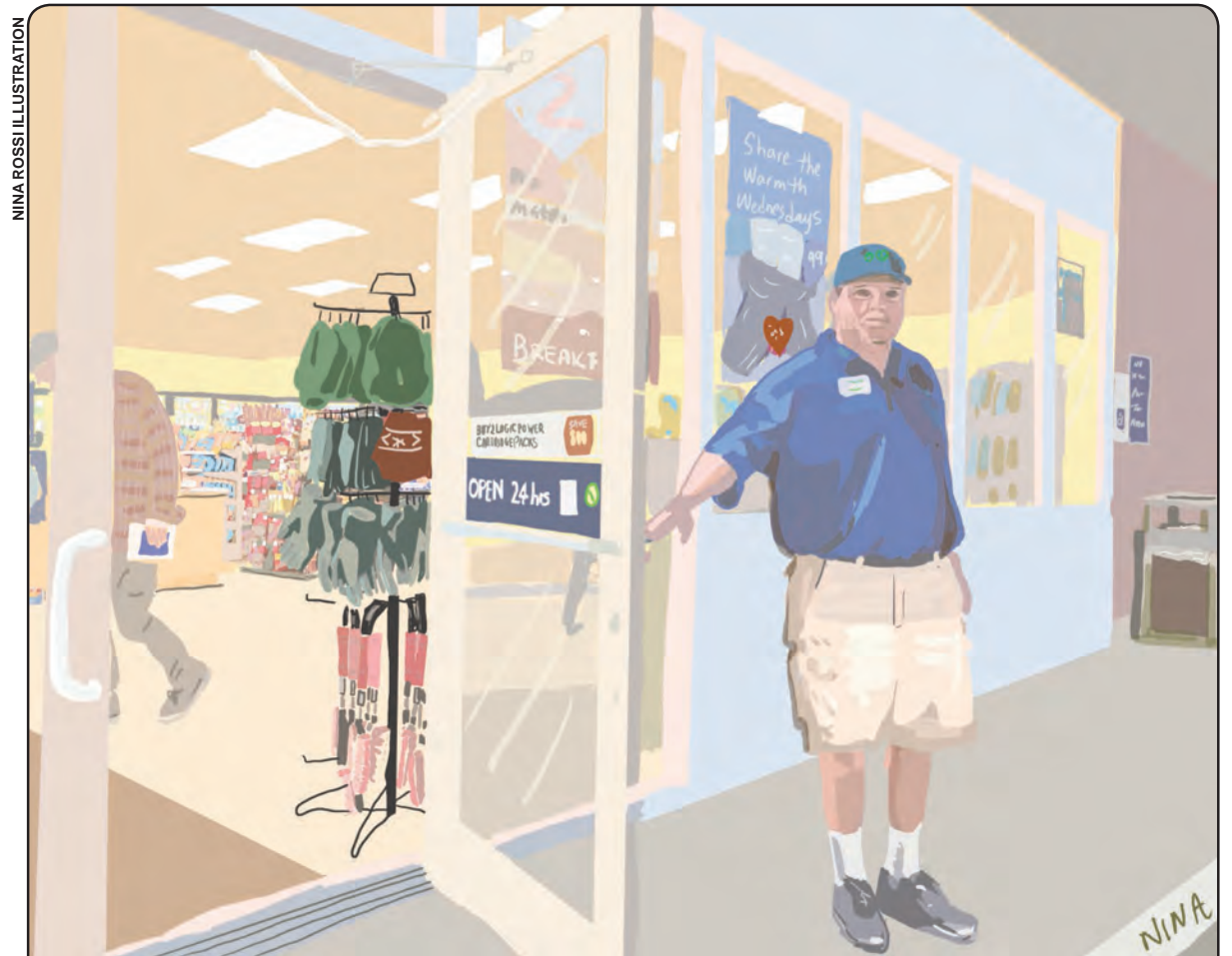
The Turners Falls Lumber Co.'s mill is raised.

Town meeting takes place on Monday, March 3. We suppose we shall have the warrant before our next issue, then we'll tell you what's going to be "did."

For some time past the work-

men engaged at work on Morgan's sand banks have been in the habit of leaving their shovels where they worked. Two of said shovels have disappeared, and Mr. Morgan requests us to say that he knows where they are, and if they are returned no farther proceedings will be had.

If the person who found a meerschau pipe, with silver ferrule bearing the letters "G.T.B." on the stem, on Friday evening last, will return the same to this office, he will receive a liberal reward and the thanks of the loser.



Sean, from Amherst, has worked for Cumberland Farms convenience stores for 14 years. He holds the door open at the Turners Falls store on a recent evening, a pose chosen due to company rules about where he may be photographed.

MATCHES from page A1

Last fall, Day's agency quietly launched what it is calling the HomeShare Program, which matches "home sharers" 60 and older with "home seekers," people who may simply want to rent a room, or who may be interested in putting in a little work around the home in exchange for reduced rent, or more serious caregiving in exchange for free room and board.

"It's really flexible," Day explains. "We do the matching, we meet with both parties separately, we make sure the home is livable, we do reference checks on both sides.... We help write what we call a 'homeshare agreement,' which is similar to a rental agreement but more detailed. If there are any services being provided, we really want to spell them out."

LifePath has modeled the program after HomeShare Vermont, a Burlington-based organization that started in 1982 and is still successfully matchmaking, with the "twist" that LifePath is capable of arranging a wide range of additional services and has been working with local housing authorities to provide support for older tenants.

So far, Day says, only one official match has been made – many wrinkles have been ironed out, and the agency's own housing program director position is currently vacant, but they are now "hoping to get the word out, so that we're able to get enough sharers and seekers that we can begin to process them at a fairly rapid pace."

"You want quality matches," she adds. "You'd rather have 20 quality matches than 40 bad ones, and the more time you put into ensuring that people are the right fit, the better it will be."

Details and contact information are available at www.lifepathma.org/services/services-for-elders/homeshare. Home sharers are people 60 or over, and could be an individual or larger household.

"For some people, maybe they just want somebody that does grocery shopping, and then maybe

they want a small amount towards rent," says Day.

"We're seeing elders that are just really looking for somebody to just be there, mostly just for a presence in the evening. Some people are looking for assistance with some hands-on care.... I live in Bernardston, and we don't have traditional curbside trash pickup. If you live in Bernardston, maybe one of the negotiating points would be to have somebody take the trash to the dump."

As the program is designed, LifePath helps set up the homeshare agreement, but is not a party to it. The agency's initial involvement is typically six months, and comes with fees, which are linked to income and are higher for the home sharer than the seeker. After the first six months, the agency can be called back in to help troubleshoot, potentially for an hourly fee.

In Montague and Orange, community block grant funds have supported the program's launch, so between now and the end of March residents of those two towns will be prioritized, and their fees will be waived.

One aspect of the arrangement Day calls "tricky" is that because tenants are legally protected, the home sharer must allow the seeker to live in the home for at least 30 days after an agreement is terminated.

If the home sharer's needs increase beyond what the seeker is comfortable with providing, "LifePath would work to find someone to come in and provide those services," Day says, but she adds that "we do live in a really challenging time to get services.... an honest conversation would need to be had."

Day says she is optimistic the program can become self-sustaining.

"Electricity, food costs – everything is just going up, and no one is exempt," she says. "How do we, as a society and as a community, look at things more holistically? If somebody has space in their home, and somebody else just needs a place to live and can help out, maybe that's a good fit for the HomeShare Program."

Letter to the Editors



Grateful for Support of Photo Exhibit

I would like to thank the Great Falls Discovery Center, RiverCulture, the Friends of the Great Falls Discovery Center, The United Arc, and all who attended my photography exhibit hosted in mid-January.

I would like to express a special thanks to Turners Falls House of Pizza for providing food; Dawn Marie Morin, owner of Dawn's School of Dance; Stephanie Duclos, owner of Stephanie and Sons Cleaning; Suzanne LoManto, director of RiverCulture; Lisa Davol, from Marketing at the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, and local historian Ed Gregory for their attendance.

I would also like to thank Montague TV, GCTV, 22 News, The Montague Reporter, The Greenfield Recorder, The Brattleboro Reformer, and Country Folks, a national farming trade magazine, for their coverage and advertisement of my photography exhibit.

Please feel free to check out my newest exhibit at the Montague Center Library and write a review or a letter to the editor of my work. Please check out "Joe R. Parzych Photography and Etc." on Facebook. I encourage all artists and writers to submit your work to the *Montague Reporter* for publication.

Sincerely,

Joseph R. Parzych
Greenfield

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LOCAL BRIEFS

Compiled by NINA ROSSI

The Erving Conservation Commission is sponsoring two **winter hikes at the Poplar Mountain Conservation Area**, Old State Road, Erving.

The first, which will take place this Saturday, February 25, is titled "Animal Tracks in Winter." Learn how to read signs of snowshoe hares, squirrels, mice, foxes, porcupines, coyotes, deer, and maybe even a bobcat. Area tracker-naturalist David Brown of Warwick will lead the hike.

The second hike, on "Plants and Insects of Late Winter," is planned for March 26 with naturalist Adam Kohl of Wendell. Both hikes will start at 9 a.m. at the conservation area parking lot on Old State Road.

Dress for the weather; bring water, and possibly a thermos of cocoa for after the hike. Portions of the trails are steep, and there may be snow and ice so consider bringing snowshoes with cleats, microspikes or Yaktrax, or similar traction aids for ice and snow; trekking poles are highly recommended. If you would like to be on an email list for activities and volunteering, email conservation@erving-ma.gov.

The National Spiritual Alliance will host a **Psychic Fair** from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. this Saturday, February 25 at Thompson Temple, 2 Montague Avenue in Lake Pleasant. For more information and to register, visit www.spiritualallianceusa.org/calendar.

Cutlery and Hand Tools are the focus of a free presentation this Saturday, February 25 at 1 p.m. at the

Museum of Our Industrial Heritage in Greenfield.

Silversmith Steve Smithers will tell the story of the first tradespeople and artisans who came to Greenfield and the surrounding towns in the late 18th century, and the emergence of important metal industries in this region. He'll discuss and demonstrate some industry tools and techniques. Marc Fournier will also lead a hands-on tool clinic that explores the history of the area's toolmaking companies.

This is one of the collaborative events scheduled in connection with the *Crossroads: Change in Rural America* exhibit which is at the Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls until March 18.

A free, drop-in workshop called "**Surviving COVID, Together: Peer Education on COVID Resources and Strategies**" will be held on Saturday, February 25 at 3 p.m. at 104 Fourth Street in Turners Falls.

Learn about the latest medical guidance, where to learn about community infection rates, and how to access testing and other resources in a peer-facilitated space. The group will discuss "ways to stay knowledgeable, how to speak to others about COVID, and simple techniques for keeping ourselves and each other safe, especially while gathering with others," according to the event description.

The facilitators do not claim to be experts, just believers in citizen science and empowering each other with knowledge; one is Casey Wait, who pens the *Your Sick Friend* column in this paper. An email is requested if you plan to come, but drop-ins are also welcome. Contact

casey@caseywait.com to confirm your attendance and with any questions. Masks will be provided, and low scent appreciated. The space is wheelchair-accessible.

Curious about **the process of needle felting**? Montague fiber artist Chris Pellerin will give an informal demonstration of her creation process at the Mill District Local Gallery in North Amherst between 1 and 3 p.m. this Sunday, February 26.

Pellerin makes needle-felted animal portraits, hand-felted scarves and shawls, felted journals, wet-felted bowls, and hand-hooked cuff bracelets. Attendees can watch her work on her current project, and explore the materials she frequently uses. The demo is free and open to the public. Children under the age of 14 must be actively accompanied by an adult.

Talk about food, farms, and food insecurity while enjoying a soup dinner and quiz night with neighbors and friends at the **Crossroads: Food For Thought** event from 6 to 8 p.m. next Tuesday, February 28.

It's free, and held at the Montague Common Hall in Montague Center. Registration is required at www.greatfallsdiscoverycenter.org/food-for-thought because seats are limited. The snow date is March 3. This event is in connection with *Crossroads: Change in Rural America* exhibit.

The **44th Annual Artspace Market Fundraiser** is back next Saturday, March 4 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Greenfield High School. This was formerly called the Artspace Pottery Seconds Sale, as some of you may remember. Organizers report that they have over 25 local vendors with pottery, jewelry, greeting cards, paintings, and more.

There will also be live music, and a family activity booth sponsored by the Franklin Community Co-Op. Admission is free, and a suggested donation of \$5 comes with a free raffle ticket for door prizes donated by the artists. A percentage of the sales goes to support Artspace's music and arts programming for youth and adults. Learn more at www.artspacegreenfield.com.

Learn about **winter seed sowing** on Monday, March 6 at 1 p.m. at the Bernardston Senior Center, 20 Church Street in Bernardston. Greenfield Garden Club member Pamela Lester of Gill will talk about the advantages of starting your seeds in late winter in opaque – not white – milk jugs or other plastic containers, which act as mini greenhouses.

"It's a bit of plant it and forget it, with Mother Nature doing all the work," reads the description. "Forget the tables and lights, seed-starting mats, and other equipment. Handouts will be provided. Free."

GCC's next Senior Symposium will be on **Hidden Contemporary Art Treasures at UMass-Amherst** with Loretta Yarlow on Tuesday, March 7, from 2 to 4 p.m. in the John Zon Community Center in Greenfield. Yarlow is retiring from her long-held position as director at the University Museum of Contemporary Art in June. There will be a talk followed by discussion. For more information, see engage.gcc.mass.edu/seniors/senior-symposia.

If you missed the "**Five Villag-**

es: One Future" Comprehensive Plan workshop for Montague residents and stakeholders on February 4, you may view it online at www.vimeo.com/797787795.

There is also a Zoom community workshop, scheduled for Thursday, March 9, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. The February meeting will be summarized, and then group discussions will focus on identifying goals and priorities for the town's next Comprehensive Plan. All are welcome, and translation services are available by request.

Register at www.tinyurl.com/montaguegoalsworkshop. For more information on the plan and how you can be involved, visit www.montagueplans.org.

The FRCOG also wants to hear your **feedback on the Regional Transportation Plan**, an assessment of needs, issues, facilities, and potential funding for the regional transportation network. The FRCOG is currently updating this plan and needs public input. You can take a survey online before March 17 at www.tinyurl.com/rtp413.

There is also a cool interactive map where you can leave a comment on problems pinned to locations at www.tinyurl.com/rtp413map. (Not surprisingly, the road to Greenfield over Canada Hill is just covered with public comments about bike and pedestrian safety.)

The **Massachusetts Fair Housing Center is looking for volunteers** to help with fair housing advocacy in Massachusetts. The Center is involved in public education, fair housing testing investigations, federal and state litigation, housing mobility counseling, and public policy advocacy. Learn about the organization at www.massfairhousing.org. To learn about volunteer opportunities, fill out an online form at www.tinyurl.com/fair-volunteer.

Nonprofits and schools should know about the **Massachusetts Surplus Property Program**, mentioned in the latest *Connections* newsletter from the Communities That Care Coalition. If you need supplies, equipment, furniture, computers, or wheelchairs at a low price or want to donate something, you should know about this clearinghouse. Find out what is available at www.tinyurl.com/surplus-mass.

From the Village Neighbors newsletter: AARP may be able to provide IRS-certified tax prep volunteers to **handle local seniors' tax returns** free, but they need a minimum of 30 people to sign up, and they need to gauge demand for these services before scheduling them. Call Sue Corey at (413) 665-9508 if you are interested.

Assets for Artists has announced it is offering 10 to 12 **Capacity-Building Grants of up to \$3,000** to artists who live or work in Massachusetts and currently identify as one or more of the following: Black, Indigenous, or person of color; an active caretaker of a child or adult; an immigrant; a veteran; LGBTQIA+; formerly incarcerated; living with a disability; or housing-insecure. There are no strings attached. Applications will be accepted from March 1 to April 17 at www.assetsforartists.org.

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PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

'We Are Not Machines'

GREENFIELD – The Pioneer Valley Workers Center and the LAVA Center, a community arts space in Greenfield, have partnered to curate *No Somos Máquinas (We Are Not Machines): Farmworker Resistance in the Connecticut River Valley*. This fully bilingual exhibit sheds light on the experiences of farmworkers in Western Massachusetts. It consists of portraits, interpretive panels, a timeline of farmworker organizing, and audio excerpts of oral history.

Through portraits and local farmworkers' own words, the exhibit explores the broken immigration system, the exclusion of farmworkers from basic labor protections, and the conditions that have compelled them to rise up.

The LAVA Center collaborated on the exhibit as a launch to their *IndiVISIBLE* project, part of the Mass Humanities program *Expand Massachusetts Stories*. *IndiVISIBLE* will document in images and stories the lives of the indispensable, yet too often invisible, agricultural workers in Franklin County.

This is the second iteration of

the *No Somos Máquinas* project. The first exhibit, held in 2016 at the A.P.E. Gallery in downtown Northampton, featured oral histories and portraits of that town's restaurant workers.

"Photography can show the monumentality of a moment in an instant, and nothing is more monumental and impactful than the faces and voices of farmworkers organizing in the fields and their communities," says Alfonso Neal, co-director of the PVWC and the exhibit's photographer. "Behind their eyes is a fierce determination to leave the world in better shape than how it's found. It was a privilege to photograph these farmworkers and to highlight their historic struggle for dignity and respect."

The exhibit will be at the LAVA Center in March and April. An opening reception will be held next Saturday, March 4, from noon to 3 p.m. Neal will speak about the images, and reflect upon the themes the exhibit highlights.

The LAVA Center is located at 324 Main Street in Greenfield and online at www.thelavacenter.org.


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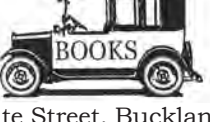
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TENANTS from page A1

meeting room. "What exactly does accountability look like when we say 'holding landlords and these property owners accountable?'"

Neighbor to Neighbor and Nueva Esperanza, two longstanding Holyoke nonprofits, organized the workshop with the recently-formed Tenants Union of Western Massachusetts.

"This is how you get it started," said Kate Talbot, a lead organizer with Neighbor to Neighbor. "The more we talk to people, the more we realize that there is a gap between what we as tenants have for rights, what that looks like on the ground, and what we as tenants know. It's important that our reps are here to see what's really going on."

In December, a group of renters brought together by Neighbor to Neighbor attended a meeting of the Holyoke public safety committee to inform them of apartments in "uninhabitable" conditions, *MassLive* reported. People who said they struggled to find affordable housing or had prior evictions on their record said they felt they had no choice but to put up with poor conditions because they had nowhere else to go.

At the February 6 workshop, employees from Community Legal Aid and its affiliate, the Central West Justice Center, taught attendees about the state housing code, tenants' rights, housing court, and how to navigate the complex legal landscape.

"As a tenant, you have the right to tell your landlord when things need to be fixed, and your landlord should not retaliate against you for complaining about bad conditions," said Maya McCann, a legal fellow at the Central West Justice Center. "Our advice? Do it in writing."

Anyone in western Massachusetts or Worcester County who has been forced out of their home, is living in substandard conditions, or suspects they have been discriminated against while applying for housing may be eligible for free legal representation from Community Legal Aid. For tenants already in housing court, the organization can help bring counterclaims against landlords and help make sure health and safety problems are addressed.

"Court can be scary, and we understand that," McCann said, "but housing court should be a resource for you." She emphasized that the Central West Justice Center offers legal service to anyone, regardless of immigration, housing, or employment status.

Fifth Hampden district representative Patricia Duffy told the *Shoestring* she was grateful that the organizations organized the event.

"Nothing is more valuable than hearing from my constituents directly," Duffy said. "My colleagues and I know that the housing crisis is growing more serious by the day, and are working together to find solutions."

Duffy, a member of the legislature's new Housing For All caucus, sponsored a bill this session called *An Act Relative to Problem Properties and Enhancing Fire Safety*. The law would impose a fine of \$20 per day on any landlord who fails to get a certificate of occupancy or a fire safety inspection, with further fines for refusing entry to a local board of health. Residents displaced by fire would have additional protections as well, as insurers would be required to provide them with accommodation until the unit is fixed.

"We live in this state that acts like we're a tenants' rights state, but actually, in how it plays out in our daily lives, there is a disconnect," said Talbot. "We're going to want our state reps to fight for rent control, so it's great that they're here."

Another project of Community Legal Aid, the Springfield Fair Housing Project, runs a fair housing testing program.

"Landlords aren't allowed to say, 'I don't take Section 8,'" said program coordinator Nuri Sherif. "Requiring three times the monthly rent to be eligible, or employment verification - you can't do that, because that is source-of-income discrimination, under Massachusetts state law."

One attendee, who is living in a shelter, said that he had been repeatedly rejected from renting apartments using his Section 8 voucher. Sherif explained that this is a direct violation of anti-discrimination laws.

The project is seeking "fair housing investigators," volunteers who attend apartment viewings, pretend to have a particular job or living situation, and report back to Community Legal Aid whether they encountered discrimination. Sherif said the program helps the organization evaluate the everyday business practices of some of the region's largest landlords.

"We assign individuals characteristics, we send them out, they interact with that housing provider, totally as neutral as you can, and you come back and tell me what you experienced," Sherif said. "These are some proactive ways that [we] can hold landlords accountable for their behavior."

Other attendees at the workshop said they had been threatened with eviction by their landlords if they reported poor conditions to the board of health. Community Legal Aid representatives said tenants should document these threats of retaliation so they can be reported to the state Commission Against Discrimination.

"Legally, in court, it leads to a more compelling case if you can say this is a pattern of behavior instead of just a one-off incident," Sherif added. "We would love to hear if something fishy is going on.... Talking to your neighbors, talking to other tenants in your building, talking to other people on your block.... Group collective action is what is going to change behavior."

The Tenants' Union of Western Massachusetts has been knocking doors in the Holyoke area and elsewhere in western Massachusetts to build a broad network of renters. The new group, affiliated with the nationwide Autonomous Tenants Union Network, has been putting up information flyers and circulating a "tenants' bill of rights" the group drafted with help from Neighbor to Neighbor.

The group aims to create neighborhood associations, "[w]hether it's HUD housing, private units, or single- or multiple-landlord LLCs," according to a statement shared with the *Reporter*. "Through this we'll gain numbers and the capacity to call on for the fight for rent control, reforms regarding regulations, greener living spaces, and much more."

"There's not many things protecting us from class discrimination in Massachusetts," one of the union's leaders, John "J.R." Rivera, said at the event. "That's why folks are so interested in things like rent control."

LEVERETT from page A1

comparison listing COLA adjustments for 18 Massachusetts towns ranging between 2% and 6.10%. Selectboard member Patricia Duffy calculated the average number in the list to be 2.53%.

Duffy said she thought that seemed low, but had seen projections of the CPI growth slowing, and wondered how Leverett would be able to afford the cumulative effect of retirement increases and salary increases sought in contract negotiations. She suggested 3.5% to 4%.

In the end, a compromise was reached at 4.5%, with Carter, Grossman, Duffy, and selectboard chair Tom Hankinson in favor and Proujansky and selectboard member Melissa Colbert voting against.

Values Deepening

Board of assessors chair Jim Staros gave a presentation on property assessments, and why tax bills were delayed this winter.

Staros said he had seen research in the *New York Times* suggesting that higher-value property assessments were undervalued nationally, resulting in owners of lower-value property subsidizing the tax base. This inspired the board of assessors to compare the prices at which 37 single-family homes sold in Leverett between 2018 and 2020 - ranging from \$100,000 to \$700,000 - with their assessed values.

The board, Staros said, was "immediately struck" by the fact that while all but one home assessed at under \$450,000 sold at within 10% of their assessment - a guideline set by the state - nearly all the higher-value homes sold at "significantly" above the guideline. Overall, he said, Leverett had assessed these properties at 74% of their sale price.

Staros said he had shared these findings with the professionals hired by the town to assess properties, and that they had told him they would consider his study. This may have contributed, he said, to a "fairly extensive" revaluation of some higher-value homes.

The town sent out the tax bills for the second half of FY'23 unusually late. Staros explained that a series of small delays - the hiring of new assessors, the use of new software, and a postponed tax classification hearing - added up to a larger one, especially after an error the town made in filing with the state took a "succession of meetings" to rectify.

Staros said that any resident who feels their property has been overvalued in error should file an

abatement request that must be "seen by the assessors" within 30 days of the bill's mailing date, with no "wiggle room."

Turf War

As part of a proposed refurbishment of the athletic field at Amherst Regional High School, its natural turf would be replaced with artificial turf. Leverett, as a member of the regional school district, is being asked to contribute Community Preservation Act funding to the project.

Duffy said the board has received "a lot" of emails expressing concern with the presence of PFAS chemicals in artificial turf. Proujansky added that along with other concerns, there is the matter of how to dispose of 20 tons of artificial turf when it's done with.

The selectboard decided to ask the board of health to weigh in on the question. Duffy said that other towns' boards of health had commented, and that she thought Leverett should do its "due diligence" and have a voice in the health and safety of children.

Hankinson said he thought the health board was "unlikely to discover anything new," but that "having them go through the process publicly in Leverett may actually inform Leverett residents, because it's closer."

Other Business

A resident, Martha Corcoran, complained to the selectboard that she was "shocked and insulted" by municipal light plant (MLP) board member Robert Brooks's treatment of her at a public meeting when she sought answers to billing questions.

Corcoran said she was seeking an explanation for a 103% increase in her broadband bill, and was met with "intimidation, threats, and lies" from Brooks, the only member present of the MLP, which oversees the town-owned broadband network.

Corcoran said she plans to request a meeting with all three MLP board members in attendance.

In an unrelated event, the selectboard reported that it had received two emails opposing the prospective appointment of Macaylla Silver as a transfer station attendant. Hankinson said both he and Duffy had conflicts of interest in the matter. Duffy disagreed, but joined in a unanimous vote to refer the matter to the town's personnel board.

Jennifer Thornton was appointed to the affordable housing trust.



Montague Community Television News Author Talk Recorded

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

TURNERS FALLS - Local author Jennifer Acker, founder and editor-in-chief of the literary magazine *The Common*, author of *The Limits of the World* and the memoir *Fatigue*, presented works from her new novel at the Montague Center Public Library on February 15. MCTV was there to record the event so that you can watch it at your leisure on our Vimeo page, or catch it by chance if you tune into Channel 17.

Other recent videos include the February 15 Montague finance committee meeting, the February 8 Montague public health director interview, and the February 14 GMRSD

school committee meeting.

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.

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NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Grants Help Town Face Rising Costs; Sugarer Wants Public Maples To Stay

By JOSHUA HEINEMANN

At a special meeting on February 9, the Wendell selectboard held an official evaluation of town coordinator Glenn Johnson-Mussad after just over one year on the job. Board members took turns praising his ability to grow into the job and take on new responsibilities, and his open, friendly cooperation with citizens and other boards.

They also discussed financing overruns on the Kentfield Road Bridge project, but deferred making a decision about the source of funding until they could get the finance committee's input. Other topics came up again at the board's regularly scheduled meeting on February 15.

At their regular meeting the board heard reports of ongoing projects, discussed next steps following an inconclusive tree hearing, and put together the warrant for a special town meeting scheduled for next Saturday, March 4, at 10 a.m. in the town hall.

Finance committee co-chairs Thomas Richardson and Meagan Sylvia came with a list of expected appropriations for FY'24, most of them up from the current year. They said Swift River School, approaching 50 years since it opened, will need serious maintenance and repair.

Selectboard member Dan Keller added that the cost of the town's joint policing agreement with Leverett is likely to increase. He said it is a big change from former Wendell chief Ed Chase's \$5,000-a-year stipend. New state rules require police officers to commit to enough training that part-time work is untenable, and financing police protection is becoming more expensive.

With the fin com's help, the board worked out the details of the special town meeting warrant. Wendell's total free cash has been certified at \$411,433, and is expected to pay for most of the articles. After July 1 anything remaining in the account "disappears" – i.e., it becomes un-certified again and cannot be spent.

Article 2 would put \$90,000 toward the repair of the Mormon Hollow Road culvert, and **Article 3** would authorize \$21,524.20 for Swift River School transportation. **Article 4** would authorize \$21,000 for an industrial-grade backup generator at the town hall, and **Article 5** would pay a \$16 bill to the board of health from a prior year.

Article 1 would move anything remaining in free cash after this meeting into the stabilization fund.

Project Management

Davenport Construction wants to be absolved of responsibility for the issues that resulted in a washout that undermined the new culvert on Mormon Hollow Road soon after it was put in place.

Project manager Phil Delorey said the town's road crew makes daily checks on the temporary fix of the culvert, and it was still working as intended, so planned repairs can wait until warmer weather when soil can be worked.

Delorey said the new heating system for the police station has arrived from back-order, and plumber Casey Bashaw is scheduled to install it during the week of February 20. He asked where the building's electricity comes from, and suggested the town hall was most likely.

The library cellar is still waiting for painting after gutters were installed to keep water away from the cellar walls. Delorey said he thought American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) money might pay for the painting, and asked if there was a time limit for using that money. Johnson-Mussad said there is a time limit, but that the end is not soon.

Delorey said a bid accepted last summer for strengthening and replacing the roof at the highway garage was \$73,000. That work, scheduled for last summer, was delayed until too late, but the town bought sheet-metal roofing materials and has been storing them.

A new bid from Hayden Roofing has come in at \$22,400, expected to result in a total cost of less than \$40,000 for the roof repair. The highway commission can pay for it using Chapter 90 money.

The selectboard voted to approve a contract with Hayden.

Setting a Cap

Delorey also asked for the board's approval of two contracts involved with capping the old town landfill. \$75,000 in grant money is earmarked for the project.

WJF Engineering, at \$7,400, put in the lower of two bids received for engineering consulting, locating monitoring wells, and communicating with the state Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). For tree removal, the low bid was \$6,250 from David Wilder. The board voted to approve both contracts.

Other expenses involved in capping the landfill will include many truckloads of fill needed to build a road around the site – an unknown figure – and a surveyor to mark the

property boundary.

Delorey said MassDEP has been patient and cooperative in the process. When the landfill is capped, he said, it would be a good site for the town wood bank.

Sticking on Sap

The tree hearing held on February 2, addressing the last of the trees power company National Grid is seeking to remove from near its lines, left some still under dispute – specifically, some maple trees on town land that are part of a private person's sugarbush.

National Grid arborist Ryan Kress says these trees are a real danger, though he expects them to live three to five more years.

The company's crew is still working in Orange, and Kress could not give an exact date for when they are expected to finish there. They are willing to come immediately back to Wendell from Orange to finish their work, but after they move on from the area any other tree work, or any limbs or trees that come down, will be the town's responsibility.

Therefore, there is a conflict over several trees between one resident who taps the maples and the town's finances. Selectboard member Gillian Budine said she would talk with this citizen and try to reach an agreement.

Other Business

Johnson-Mussad reported that the previous Friday, February 10, newly-elected state representative Aaron Saunders and other state officials had met with Swift River School principal Kelly Sullivan and Union #28 superintendent Jennifer Culkeen to discuss the PFAS contamination in the elementary school's well.

Calls to engineering firm Tighe & Bond have been adding expenses quickly. Johnson-Mussad said that the Franklin Regional Council of Governments makes low-interest or no-interest loans available from its clean water revolving fund.

Town laptops are now connected to Entre Technology, to allow staff to get technology help. Everyone using a town laptop must log in by July 1 so the town can get cyber-insurance.

The selectboard ended the February 15 meeting with an executive session, "to discuss strategy with respect to litigation as an open meeting may have detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares."

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FIRE from page A1

Kelly Snow had called her upstairs tenant, Larry Welcome, and he told her he was in Maine visiting his mother with his fiancée Jessica Snow and their three children. Knowing everyone was safe was cathartic, and the fire departments began to methodically douse the flames.

I did not envy whoever was precariously perched at the end of the firetruck ladder, or those who plodded up and down the street in heavy gear laying out fire hose in the brutal cold, or whoever had to stay the night to be sure the fire wouldn't re-ignite.

The next morning the damage done was plain to see – gaping black holes where there used to be windows, burnt mattresses and charred detritus on the ground, pavement streaked in white by the water and road salt – the only aesthetic was a water-soaked bush glazed by the cold.

"We left right away and got home at about 1:30 a.m.," said Larry Welcome. "I lost everything. Our cats are gone. My money, my safe is cooked. They said it was flameproof."

Two cats had perished, and a third was missing. "Some lizards, too. The lizards are fried," said Welcome, who subcontracts as a mechanic at Berkshire East and other ski areas.

His fiancée said the cats were

named Little Little, Opal, and Sage. "We kept the children away," she said. "I don't want them to see this."

Welcome told me he had lived in the upstairs apartment for six years. "It was my home, my favorite place," he said.

A fire damage restoration company had arrived early, and a crew was upstairs. The Northfield charity Loaves and Fishes had contacted Jess Snow, and fire chief Skip Durnell was on his cell phone dictating children's shoe sizes and clothing needs. "That was the Red Cross," he said. "They have an emergency response team on the way."

Welcome had removed everything from his truck in order to fit his family on the trip to Maine, including several small propane bottles he used for his job. That might've been the loud bang I had heard. Perhaps the fire had already started, or maybe the propane was stashed too close to a heating source.

At this writing, no one knew why a fire had started under a new moon on February 17, but as for the outcome, one observer said: "It was a best-case scenario from a worst-case situation."

Chip Ainsworth writes sports for the Recorder, and news and opinion for the Reporter. He lives in Northfield.



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LIBRARY from page A1

library and a large staircase leading to the second level, which is technically under the control of the parks and recreation department. That level, no longer heated by the giant propane space heater which hangs from the ceiling, is not being used by the department for sponsored activities because – according to rec director Jon Dobosz, who attended the meeting – it is not handicapped accessible.

Linda Hickman, the town's former library director, commissioned a "property condition assessment" of the building in 2020. That study, which her successor Kelley reviewed at the beginning of the meeting, estimated that necessary renovations phased in over a 14-year period would cost nearly \$2.3 million, with more than half that total being the cost of building an external handicapped-accessible elevator, and another half-million dollars or more

attributed to "exterior walls."

A "second opinion," in Kelley's words, by a structural engineer suggested that state handicapped-accessibility requirements could be met by installing a less expensive internal lift, and that façade improvements would cost "much less" than the \$581,000 original estimate.

Kelley also noted that the department of public works had installed a concrete apron along the northeast side of the property so that water from the roof will no longer flow into the basement, and that two air-source heat pumps have been installed, essentially replacing the old oil furnace in the basement.

However, she said, during a conversation about repairing the building's "beautiful windows," which "at best are leaky and at worst you could put a finger through," the building committee of the library trustees wondered, "should we spend this kind of money, if we don't know what the future of the building is?"

"Your desire to maintain this space as a community space is clear to me," Kelley then told those at the meeting, adding that recent usage statistics indicate that "this library is more heavily utilized now than it has been in 100 years."

Next on the agenda were presentations by branch librarian Anna Greene, who described a series of authors' presentations and art exhibits at the facility, and Jon Dobosz, who said that while Parks and Recreation no longer sponsors activities on the second floor, any Montague resident who wants to use the space can apply for a key.

"For the most part it's been basketball and stuff like that," he said.

The meeting was then opened to public comment. Much of it focused on the use of the second floor. Chris Mason, who lives on North Street and serves on the energy committee, said he would "love to see the second floor utilized again"



The village's branch library, located on the building's first floor, is open from 2 to 7 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays, and from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Fridays.

MIKE JACKSON PHOTO

SPECIAL from page A1

particular town meeting with over \$2.4 million in free cash, in part due to a very large tax appeal settlement with the Eversource electric company, which has been upgrading its infrastructure and thus increasing its assessed value.

An article dedicating \$35,250 in "consulting and design costs" to allow the town to participate in a state library construction program would be funded from the balance remaining from a 2017 town meeting appropriation for planning a new central library in Turners Falls.

A \$68,000 appropriation to fund a transit van for the Clean Water Facility would come from "retained earnings," the CWF's own version of free cash, and an article to fund a new roof for the town-owned Colle building on Avenue A would be financed by a special fund called "Colle Receipts Reserved for Appropriation."

The \$2.5 million for CWF screw pumps authorizes the town treasurer, with the approval of the selectboard, to borrow money for that purpose. The town would apply for a grant from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) to cover part of the expense, but the process requires a local commitment to funding the entire project from the outset. The USDA grant is expected to fund between 35% and 70% of construction costs, according to background information provided by the

selectboard, "with the balance to be funded by a USDA loan."

One article concerns a fund designed to cushion the impact of retired town employees' future healthcare costs. According to town accountant Carolyn Olsen, Montague created this fund in 2015 and is now being asked, in order to meet auditing standards, to accept a 2016 state law defining its parameters. (Its name would also change from the "Other Post Employment Benefits Trust Fund" to the "Other Post Employment Benefits Liability Trust Fund.")

The meeting, which begins at 6:30 p.m. in the auditorium of Turners Falls High School, will be "in person" without a virtual component. Town meeting moderator Ray Godin told the Reporter that one section of the room will be set aside for those who wish to wear masks and engage in "social distancing."

Godin also told us he was considering having the selectboard and finance committee sit in front of the stage on the same level as town meeting members, in part to enhance his ability to see and call on those committees.

But after consulting with the local access station MCTV, which records the meeting, the committees will sit on stage at the wings of "a V-shaped" configuration, according to Godin, with him, Olsen, and town clerk Deb Bourbeau at its center.



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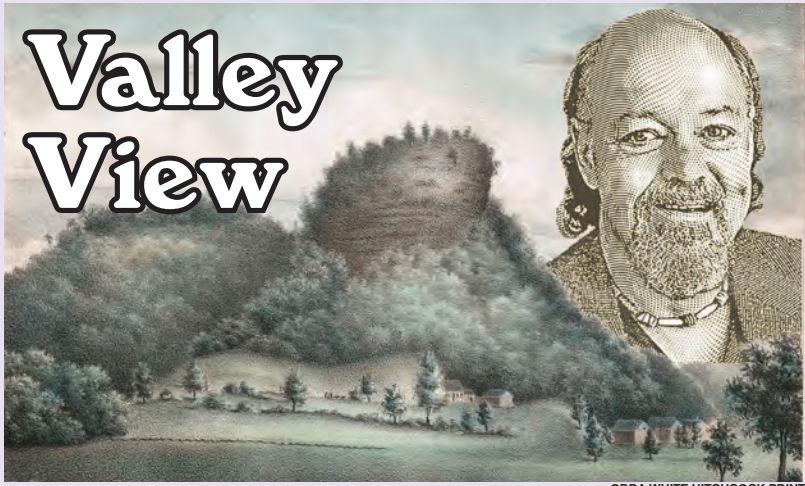


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FEBRUARY 23, 2023

Above: Miss Alice Taylor and her charges at the Wendell Center School, circa 1890. Thanks to Ed Hines for sharing this photo.



Valley View

ORRA WHITE HITCHCOCK PRINT

By GARY SANDERSON

GREENFIELD – The day before Valentine’s Day was funeral day for old friend Michael.

The evening service was held in my native town, hosted by a mortician I have known for years. Michael grew up a couple of miles down the road in East Whately, where his family farmed rich river meadows first tilled by Indigenous people and dominated by Sugarloaf. Diagnosed with an aggressive, unforgiving cancer in late August, my friend didn’t survive six months.

I knew his parents, his siblings, and even his grandmother. Her name was Mary. We called her Thunder. Elderly when I met her in the late 1960s, she worked the vegetable patches with us, often reminding us to handle the first tomatoes of the season with care. Bruises were a mark against them at the daybreak Springfield market.

It’s strange how some things unfold. In August, I had bumped into Michael quite by chance at the South Deerfield Post Office. I was happy to see him for the first time in many years. He looked great, clear-eyed and trim, and I told him so. He said he was getting his ducks in order for imminent retirement.

Our quick chat provided me the opportunity to offer condolences for the passing of his younger brother some eight months earlier. He told me he had fought hard and outlived doctors’ predictions. They gave him two years. He lived three. I now wonder if Mike’s terminal-stomach-cancer diagnosis had already been delivered. If so, he gave no hint. Same kind blue eyes. Same warm smile.

We met as junior-high-school lads budding into young men. Soon I was working on his family’s produce farm where, unlike the tobacco farms on which I had toiled for slave wages, there existed a certain level of dignity. Working on that farm for those humble servants of the land, I always felt appreciated, not exploited, and they paid cash. No abusive supervisors glowing with authority and barking orders to their young workforce. Straw bosses, they were called. Some of them schoolteachers earning supplemental summer-vacation income. They were not my cup of tea in or out of the classroom.

It must have been the destination

that spun me into reflection on the drive to the funeral. I exited Interstate 91 within sight of the Whately BP Diner and doubled back toward the funeral home. My intended route would take me past Brookside Cemetery, where my ashes will someday lie in my family plot.

As I crossed the Route 116 railroad overpass to Long Plain Road and the cemetery, I thought back to the roads as they were configured when I was a boy on a bicycle. Back then the Route 5 & 10 bypass around town was still fairly new, and 116 still ran right through the center of town. South Main Street, previously 5 & 10, forked at the northwest corner of the cemetery. The right leg led over a now-barricaded railroad crossing to a swimming hole we called “Manmade Lake.” The left leg followed the tracks on the so-called road to the Straits in East Whately.

My late friend would have known that old fork in the road. I suppose that’s why it came to mind; that, and the realization that those who remember it are getting older and fewer with each passing week. Soon no one will remember South Deerfield before the rerouting of 5 & 10 around town, the arrival of Interstate 91, and the Route 116 bypass to Sunderland Bridge built when I was in high school.

Michael and I were there for the temporary service road around the railroad-overpass-construction mound. We both knew the teen from nearby Porter Street who lost a kidney to a nighttime car crash on the sharp temporary curve circling the construction site.

It’s interesting how that funeral ride stirred memories. Part of the mourning process, I suppose. And it didn’t end there.

My reflections continued as I drove past the Thayer Street homes of childhood classmates, teammates and friends – people like E-Nart, Duboy, and the Hosleys on the right, Pete Kuchieski and J.P. Walker on the left. Behind the homes on the north side of the street was the Pickle Shop, it too gone and largely forgotten today.

Thinking of that Pickle Shop brought back memories of my late son, then in junior high, being charged with vandalism for writing his initials and “NIRVANA” on a wooden vat. He did it while

see VALLEY VIEW page B4

COMEDY

Drifting Off: On His New Podcast, Joe Pera Digs Deep Into the Details



IMAGE COURTESY OF ADULT SWIM

Joe Pera brings his genial, soft-spoken aura to Drifting Off with Joe Pera, a new comedy podcast featuring music from frequent collaborator Ryan Dann.

By NATHAN FRONTIERO

TURNERS FALLS – The charm of comedian Joe Pera is in how he inspires both hearty laughs and a deeper appreciation of the beauty in the everyday.

Whether he’s exploring the legacy of iron mining in Michigan, diner breakfast options, or ways to relax for a sound sleep, Pera, 34, approaches his subject matter with curiosity, earnestness, and a gentle, beyond-his-years cadence. His humor is a kind of respite, as often soothing as it is surprising.

In the three-season run of his live-action Adult Swim series *Joe Pera Talks With You* and the preceding animated short “Joe Pera Talks You to Sleep,” Pera’s mild-mannered delivery on simple subjects blends seamlessly with contemplative music from composer Ryan Dann.

Following the TV show’s cancellation in 2022, Pera and Dann have continued their collaboration in *Drifting Off with Joe Pera*, a monthly comedic sleep podcast to help listeners lighten up and settle down. The podcast’s 15-minute format layers Pera’s jokes, stories, and

phone calls with friends over Dann’s calming mix of synths, pianos, drones, and curated sound effects.

In phone interviews with the *Montague Reporter*, Pera and Dann characterize the podcast as a natural extension of their prior work.

“I was walking home with my friend Nate Fernald one time,” Pera says. “We did stand-up together. And I guess I always kind of had a slow pace on stage, kind of soft-spoken. So he said, ‘You should do a sleep cassette!’”

That conversation inspired Pera to workshop stand-up material that would eventually become the initial animated short. With the TV series, Pera “tried to do one episode each season that was subdued and had a sleep intention,” he says. The podcast offered another step forward.

“Ever since the animation came out, people have been telling me that they’ll use it every night to go to bed and that it works for them,” Pera says. “I’ve always felt a little bad that they were listening to the same one over and over, so Ryan and I always threw around the idea of doing more of them. But we finally had the time now.”

“You can talk about a million different things, and there’s a million different ways to be relaxed and to

see DRIFTING page B5

High School Sports: Playoffs Dribble On

By MATT ROBINSON

TURNERS FALLS – This week was a very busy one for area high school sports teams. Franklin Tech and Turners Falls played a combined eight basketball games, and this reporter went to five. Three were some of the best games I’ve seen this season.

But let’s start with the cheerleaders. The Turners Falls hybrid cheer squad took first place at Wahconah Regional High School in Dalton last Sunday, and they now have another large trophy to fit into the display case.

However, the Leaders cannot rest on their laurels. They have a league competition this Saturday in Easthampton, and if they score high enough there, they may qualify for the next round of regionals.

Girls’ Basketball

FCTS 57 – Putnam 37 Drury 46 – FCTS 45
Monson 57 – TFHS 31 FCTS 61 – Renaissance 51

Both girls’ teams were eliminated this week in the first round of the PVIAC tournament. Franklin Tech finished their regular season with a pummeling of Putnam, but lost a close one against Drury in the Class C bracket. They then played a consolation game against the Renaissance Red Phoenix, which had a very unusual ending.

The Eagles closed out the season last Thursday with a 20-point win against the Putnam Beavers. Not much to say about this game: Tech burst out, made steals, ran plays, and led 19-2 with a minute remaining in the first.

For the rest of the game, Coach Gamache sent in his

see SPORTS page B8



DAVID HOULT PHOTO

Franklin Tech’s Lea Chapman goes up to the net against Blue Devils defender Jacinta Felix during Monday’s PVIAC quarterfinal match against Drury High School. The well-fought nail-biter ended with Drury edging past the Eagles, 46-45, and eliminating them. Chapman scored 11 points in the contest.

Pet of the Week



“TITAN”

Titan's guardian passed away, and the gentleman who maintains the building kindly brought him to Dakin. Titan's guardian was sick for a long time and had a teenage daughter, so it's likely that Titan is accustomed to being in a fairly quiet home and would do well with older children.

He is a very friendly boy and is the first one to meet you when you

walk in the room. This boy needs someone who can help him start a new chapter of his life. Maybe 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.

MONTV / MUSIK / MOUNTAIN



No. LVI: Angela Sawyer

Interview by J. BURKETT

TURNERS FALLS – If you live in the Boston area, or even way beyond it, you might know Angela Sawyer, or be familiar with one of her many creative outlets. Or maybe you have met her and not even known it! Maybe you bought a record from her, or from her famous website, or maybe you saw her play in a variety of very different bands, or solo. Or maybe, when you were looking at a new import reissue of an obscure '60s album and you got sucked in by some amazing liner notes on the sticker... those might have been by her!

Most of Angela's recent live performances have actually been stand-up comedy events. They happen in all kinds of venues – be warned, you might be asked to wear pajamas to these – but yes, she still loves and plays music, and is going on tour soon with Valley favorite Arkm Foam. The local show for this will be on March 31 at the Cold Spring house in Belchertown.

Check out her website, www.sevenarkadins.wixsite.com/angelasawyer, for more info about all of her everything.

MMM: Hi Angela! what are some of your first music memories? Were you in school bands? Any early record-collecting memories?

AS: I love records. Even bad ones. My mother taught art at a preschool, so I was born into a very particular vibe and also a collection of children's records. I learned to read from read-along 45s, and I never stopped enjoying kiddie records even when I got way too old.

I had rudimentary music lessons too. Piano, a little viola, and a little French horn. I never got good enough to do more than play the theme to *The Pink Panther*. I'm definitely someone who makes experimental music because I can't quite make the regular kind.

I was grounded most of my junior high and high school years – from music, using the telephone, watching TV, etc. – so when nobody was home, I would sneak reading a book or listening to an album that my parents owned. I liked an '80s Willie Nelson Christmas album (*Pretty Paper*, still a killer), and the Eagles.

I discovered that if you turned on the radio of an alarm clock, put

the volume all the way down, but held it up right next to your head, you could still hear it. I often fell asleep sneaking late-night radio, and woke up with lines from the speaker embedded into my face.

I thought Van Halen was the wildest thing I had ever heard, so when a radio station in the '80s broadcast their whole first four albums each Sunday afternoon for a month, I snuck a boombox into an unused room and made a cassette recording of each one. I was terrified that I was going to get caught!

I didn't have any older siblings, so it wasn't until I got to college that I discovered that there was more music. And as luck would have it, there was lots and lots and lots more. I wasn't even looking for it, but I followed a good-looking boy to see if I could get him to talk to me and ended up at a meeting for new recruits at the college radio station. He didn't end up joining, but I did.

They had a good, well-curated library, and I sat in the station for hours out of every day, ignoring my classes and other human beings, and listening to everything, absolutely anything.

MMM: Amazing! So, we met through the Boston record store community... do you want to talk about Boston, and those earlier record store days?

AS: One of the first people I met at the radio station was Ron Lessard from the label and record store RRR. He told me the *Jan and Dean Meet Batman* record was good, and I latched onto it like a fundamentalist bible.

It wasn't until I got a job at a record store that I found a bunch of people who thought about music critically. They looked at every record like it was a pair of sunglasses and the particular tint could make you see the world a whole different way. I heard Albert Ayler and Pierre Henry and the Silver Apples.

My boss, who I think hired me because he thought I would annoy the other employees from being so green, said I was going to end up being the worst of them. I began every work day by listening to Borbetomagus as loud as possible until people made me stop. I started thinking about records like clues left for a detective. If you

could just put the implications together, you could suss out the point of view that the person held who made that record.

I decided not to go to grad school because it would cut into my time listening to the Four Freshmen and Lambert, Hendricks & Ross.

MMM: How about your solo music – how did that start? You have a lot of amazing solo releases.

AS: I booked myself to perform as the opener at the gallery where my friends played, without having any instruments or ideas. I pre-made something with the junk I had lying around my terrible apartment and played it through a speaker while I sat in the audience. A very fancy jazz critic came to the show and I walked him in less than five minutes.

Eventually one day John Voigt asked me to join him on a radio show performance. In the car on the way to the station, I thought I would warn him: “You know I'm not really a musician, right?”

He said, “Of course you are. What have you got?” I looked in my backpack. I had packing tape. He said, “Great. Now you play packing tape.” So I did. And I do.

Eventually I started playing all the time, and put out some records of my own.

MMM: Wow! I always liked your record reviews, do you still do that?

AS: I spent a mountain of time talking about records, and occasionally people asked me to write about them. Eventually I got a job writing liner notes. Eventually I opened a record shop of my own, ran it for 10 years, built a website, and wrote over 18,000 reviews for it.

Sometimes a person along the way did not consider me enough of a musician, or enough of a record collector, or enough of a writer. Sometimes they thought that having fun meant you weren't doing anything important. Or worse, that being out there trying stuff left you open to potential uncoolness that would ruin everything instead of making it better.

This is how I eventually became a stand-up comedian.

MMM: I was actually going to ask! How did that start? How would you compare your music and comedy sets?

AS: Stand-up and improvised experimental music aren't as different as you might think. Both are puzzles where you try to elicit a specific reaction from people. Both allow you to use absolutely anything you happen to have at your disposal.

The questions are also the same: How do I start? How do I know when to end? Can I make the middle different enough from the beginning so it will feel like something changed? Is there a through-line? Are the people in the room figuring it out? Do I like it like this?

The main difference is that experimental music, instead of laughter, is usually meant to make people feel uncomfortable. Personally, I'm way, way more talented at that than I am at comedy.

MMM: What kind of stuff do you listen to these days?

AS: Today I listened to the Everly Brothers, Lil B, “(Let's Get) Tammy Wynette,” Lydia Mendoza, Migos, Sippie Wallace, and Xenakis.

Senior Center Activities FEBRUARY 27 TO MARCH 3

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.

WENDELL

Foot care clinic is 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.

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. The AARP Circuit Breaker Tax Aide is available March through April. For more information please call 863-9357.

Monday 2/27

10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
Tuesday 2/28
9:30 a.m. Tuesday Knitters
3 p.m. Tai Chi
Wednesday 3/1
9 a.m. Veterans' Hours
10:15 a.m. Aerobics

11 a.m. Chair Exercise
12 p.m. Bring Your Lunch Bingo
Thursday 3/2
10:30 a.m. Brown Bag
1 p.m. Cards & Games
Friday 3/3
10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
2 p.m. By The Seat of Your Pants

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.

Monday 2/27

9 a.m. Interval
10:15 a.m. Seated Workout
Tuesday 2/28
9 a.m. Good For U
10 a.m. Line Dancing
Wednesday 3/1
9 a.m. Cardio Low Impact
10:15 a.m. Chair Aerobics
11:30 a.m. Bingo
Thursday 3/2
9 a.m. Core & Balance
10 a.m. Barre Fusion
Friday 3/3
9 a.m. Quilting & Open Sew

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FRIDAY & SATURDAY – 4:30 TO 9:30 P.M.

CALL TO CONFIRM: (413) 423-3328

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

The Poet's Seat Poetry Contest

GREENFIELD – The Friends of the Greenfield Public Library seek poems for the 32nd Annual Poet's Seat Poetry Contest. The contest is open to all Franklin County residents, and students ages 12 to 18 who attend school in Franklin County. Each entrant may submit a maximum of three poems post-marked or emailed by March 29.

The competition is held in honor of Frederick Goddard Tuckerman, a Greenfield resident from 1847 until his death in 1873, considered to be a gifted poet by such contemporaries as Emerson, Thoreau, and Tennyson. The observation tower on Mountain Road, built in 1912, replaced a wooden tower built in 1879 which Tuckerman had re-

ferred to as a "poet's seat."

Awards will be given in first, second, and third place in the Adult category, and there will be four unranked winners in the Youth category: two from ages 12 to 14, and two from ages 15 to 18. Awards will be given out at a ceremony and poetry reading on May 16, 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Stoneleigh-Burnham School.

The first-prize Adult winner will receive stewardship of the special Poet's Seat chair until the next year. Their name will be engraved along with the previous winners on the plaque affixed to the back of the Poet's Seat chair. Other prizes will be awarded in each category. Submission rules are available at www.friendsofpl.org/poets-seat-poetry.



EXHIBITS

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Crossroads: Change in Rural America*, Smithsonian on Main Street exhibit. Through March 18.

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. Through March 18.

Sawmill River Arts, Montague Center: *Small Works Show*, invitational exhibit of small wall art. Through February.

Montague Center Library: *Photographs by Joe R. Parzych*. Local scenes taken by the Gill photojournalist. Through March 18.

Looky Here, Greenfield: *Mystic Art Show!* Artwork by Dawn Cook, J. Burkett, Nora Charters, Shannon Ketch, Erica Pinto, Troy Curry, Andi Magenheimer, Phineas Roy, Ariel Kotker, and more. Reception on Friday, March 10 at 6 p.m. with music from Junk Orbit, Wednesday Knudsen, Arkm Foam, Allysen Gallery, Dusty Miller, and Tarp Big Band.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *No Somos Maquinas (We Are Not Machines)*. Words and portraits of farmworkers in Western Mass. Bilingual. *Photographs*, work by Joseph Ackerman. Through March. Reception Saturday, March 4, from 12 to 3 p.m.

Geissler Gallery, Stoneleigh-Burnham School, Greenfield: *Another Way to Experience Winter*, mixed-media work by Malaika Ross. Through March 17.

Wendell Free Library: *Loop by Loop*, traditional and contemporary rug hooking by members of the Quabbin Rug Hookers' Guild and the Rug Social of Brattleboro.

Through February.

Von Auersperg 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 28. In March: *Through a Window*, group show by members.

Fiddleheads Gallery, Northfield: *Figuratively Speaking*, art featuring the human figure. Weekends through March 19.

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.

Gallery A3, Amherst: *Sculptures in Wood*, three-dimensional carvings by GK Khalsa. Through March.

Hope and Feathers Gallery, Amherst: *Jules Jones*, collage paintings. 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.

Oxbow Gallery, Easthampton: *Roads.Rivers.Clouds.Structures*, new paintings by Turners Falls artist Karen Evans; *The Maelstrom*, ceramic figures by Harriet Diamond. Through February.

Brattleboro Museum and Art Center: *Keith Haring: Subway Drawings*. Eighteen works from NYC subway stations. Through April 16.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Hide & Seek; Third Street Camp; Menacing Critters; Out Of Hibernation; Vacant Upstairs Apartment

Monday, 2/13

12:52 p.m. Motorist stated that some items went missing from his vehicle while he was inside the Montague Village Store. Report taken.

1:26 p.m. Multiple calls about an accident on the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge. Rau's requested for tow. Vehicle operator in custody. A 27-year-old Turners Falls man was arrested and charged with operating under the influence of liquor or .08%, second offense; and operating to endanger.

3:56 p.m. 911 caller transferred from Shelburne Control states their five-year-old daughter went out to the chicken coop ten minutes ago; they saw her out the window seven minutes ago, but just went outside and the child is gone. Child does not venture away from house. Officers responding. Child located; was hiding inside her bedroom.

5:21 p.m. 911 caller states a house across from Scotty's is on fire. Transferred to Shelburne Control. Officer advises no fire in this location; there is a house down the road with its chimney going. Area surveyed by FD. No fire/smoke found.

7:17 p.m. 911 caller reports neighbor banging on walls and screaming at Keith Apartments. Contact made with party; advised of complaint.

7:31 p.m. 911 caller reporting hit-and-run accident on Bridge Street. Officer advises not as reported; vehicle owner states parked vehicle (a standard) was in neutral, rolled backwards down the street, and hit a railing.

9:07 p.m. Caller from Federal Street states people have been working on demo cars and drag racing them at full throttle all night. Would like them to quiet down. Officer advises quiet upon arrival.

9:11 p.m. Caller from Highland Street wants to speak to an officer about a disturbance of the peace; someone nearby builds race cars and drives them up and down the road at 3 or 4 a.m. when everyone is sleeping. States she doesn't need to discuss now as it is quiet at this time. Officer advised.

Tuesday, 2/14

12:22 a.m. 911 caller states

his fiancée's ex-boyfriend is currently in the rear of the building, smashing on the back door, trying to get inside. Caller states involved male is currently messaging his girlfriend as well and advises the male party has been outside since 12:15 a.m. Shelburne Control and Greenfield advised to be on lookout and to stop and hold party and contact Montague.

8:33 a.m. Officer meeting with assessor's office about property where homeless camps may be set up.

9:40 a.m. Officers investigating homeless encampment near the public parking lot at Third and Canal Streets. DPW on scene as well. Involved parties are packing up their things and clearing out.

2:41 p.m. 911 caller reporting that someone just struck her vehicle on Madison Avenue. No injuries. Report taken.

2:59 p.m. Walk-in states there is a car with CT plates parked just over the General Pierce Bridge and no one is in it. It's enough into the road that it's causing a traffic hazard. Additional party called in as well to report same. Officer advises vehicle gone on arrival.

Wednesday, 2/15

9:37 a.m. Officer advises he is off at Third and Canal Streets with DPW, cleaning up homeless encampment remnants.

10:04 a.m. Vehicle repossession on Sunderland Road.

12:41 p.m. 911 call from Montague Housing Authority; a tenant came to the office and made threats. Caller advised of options. Involved party requesting a call back as she believes another party is trying to have her removed from her apartment; believes this is harassment.

1:50 p.m. Greenfield PD called in requesting assistance checking a Montague address for a stolen vehicle. Officer advises driveway empty.

1:56 p.m. Caller from East Main Street needs to speak to an officer; they are filming in town, and parties involved with the film are parking in the parking lot of her apartment building. She wants them towed out of the way because she

not them. Officer on scene to meet caller outside. Caller states she watched the vehicle move out of the parking spot and does not want to go outside; states she knows the vehicle was parked there out of spite, and she wants officers to monitor the area and let the film parties know they cannot park in her parking lot. Officer advised.

Thursday, 2/16

7:51 a.m. Report of lost cat on Hillside Road. Small; green eyes. Info forwarded to animal control officer.

10:48 a.m. Utility vehicle reported stolen from Mohawk Ramblers last night. Officer spoke with caller, who will look at the cameras and call back with more information.

12:11 p.m. Caller reports her father is harassing her by mail after being told to stop. Advised of options.

12:44 p.m. Officer flagged down by a Salvation Army Thrift Store employee. Employee told officer that a male had stolen a package. Officer made contact with male. He has a package from his home that is addressed to him.

12:49 p.m. Caller from Fourth Street reports an ongoing issue with a female letting her dog run loose and harass people. Info left for ACO.

8:44 p.m. Caller states she just broke up with her boyfriend and now he is trying to talk to her by climbing up the side of the house. Officer requesting male party be called to meet at his vehicle outside. No answer; voice mail not set up. Officer spoke with caller and advised her of her options. Male party seems to have left on foot. They will monitor the area to see if he returns.

8:55 p.m. Caller from Third Street states that the last couple of nights there have been cars speeding by her house and making a lot of noise. Referred to an officer.

9:11 p.m. Caller states that there is a car parked across from his house on Letourneau Way that is on his property and shouldn't be there. Officer advised. Registered owner has taken possession of the vehicle. Scene cleared.

10:14 p.m. 911 caller from Fourth Street reports there are opossums and raccoons on his porch and

he does not feel safe because he has to go to work at 6 a.m. tomorrow and he can't get outside past them. Officer advised.

Friday, 2/17

11:20 a.m. Motorist reporting a dead skunk in the road near Scotty's. DPW notified.

8:14 p.m. 911 caller states his dog stepped on his phone and it dialed 911 in his shirt pocket.

Saturday, 2/18

12:34 a.m. Caller reports about eight individuals on the east side of Sheffield Elementary School creating a lot of loud noise. Officer advises he spoke to the group, who were showing off their vehicles to each other. Moved along.

9:10 a.m. 911 hangup received from area of Turners Falls-Gill Bridge. Party located on bridge. Gill PD transporting party to hospital.

4:54 p.m. Greenfield PD requesting MPD close the canal bridge for a rollover with entrapment on their side of the bridge. Services rendered.

5:35 p.m. Caller from Eleventh Street states there is a raccoon on the bridge over the canal that is limping and doesn't look healthy. Officer advised; states they are all coming out of hibernation and appear messed up initially. Animal located down the embankment; injured from something; it is away from people along the canal; officer will leave it alone for now.

11:56 p.m. 911 caller from Hillside Road reports individuals keep knocking on her door and beeping car horns by her house. Caller states this has occurred several times tonight starting at 11:30 p.m. Caller also advises that last year a similar issue occurred and someone broke their window. Officer advises he spoke with a neighbor in the area who reported hearing a loud bang matching the caller's timeframe.

Sunday, 2/19

5:59 p.m. 911 caller states her upstairs neighbor is screaming and threatening to beat someone up. Banging on walls. Officer advises all quiet upon arrival. The second floor of this building is vacant.

9:54 p.m. Suspicious person report on Davis Street. Advised of options.

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VALLEY VIEW from page B1 cutting cross-lots to a friend's home after a half-day of school. For many years I had known the police chief who brought charges. He was two or three years behind me in school and I thought his intervention was harsh as small-town policing went. It would not have happened when I was young and cops knew the difference between kids' stuff and crime.

At Sugarloaf Street I headed south toward my old Little League and men's-softball diamonds, pulling into the funeral-home parking lot as it was filling up. Inside, I saw the director sitting at his desk in the room to the left of the door. We exchanged pleasantries as I walked his way. I wanted to inquire how the recovery of his younger brother and partner was going. An early COVID victim. I had heard he was having a tough slog, then got confirmation from an insider. Sad news. The guy got sucker-punched when the pandemic was new and remedies were few.

I passed through the room, took a right into the hallway, passed the staircase, and signed the guestbook before crossing the threshold into the somber funeral parlor. There was no casket, just family and friends standing and seated around a small altar and urn positioned as the last station before reaching the immediate family.

I arrived early and recognized some but not many of the attendees, few of whom recognized me. There's no denying that appearances change over 50 years and more. I did my best to learn their identities on my way through, and was familiar with most.

I remembered some of the women seated in the gallery from their days as basketball players on legendary Frontier Regional School

coach Vi Goodnow's teams. The Goodnow legend has by now faded, even in South Deerfield, but I will never forget the proud coach from Buckland. She was the only coach who allowed me and my grammar-school friends to shoot around on side baskets during practice. Growing up on family property abutting the school, I knew Goodnow since her first year at the school, and as an adult I supervised coverage of her teams as sports editor of the local newspaper.

Goodnow learned how to plug strong farm girls into her rosters – dependable athletes who tossed around 50-pound bags of storage potatoes on the farm like cotton candy. Goodnow made good use of her local stock. Some of them, including Mike's older sisters, were at the service. It was more than 60 years ago when I watched them play basketball under the old rules, with six to a team, only three of whom could cross into the offensive side of half-court. (Check it out if you doubt me – I saw it with my own eyes.)

I won't get into the days when Mike and I were young carousers, hunting deer with his father on Chestnut Mountain, digging potatoes on The Island west of Herlihy Park and Field's Farm in Montague, bagging winter storage spuds, attending a raucous politicians' stag party in Holyoke, and bar-hopping around town. He and wife Debbie sponsored "Spuds 'n' Buds," the men's softball team I played for.

I learned flush-and-retrieve pheasant hunting behind his dog, Smokey, a spirited bitch who loved to chase pheasants and was good at it after living many years on a farm stocked weekly during the fall season. "Take her anytime you want," Mike and his father implored. "She loves to hunt, is easy to handle, and retrieves birds to us all the time af-

ter catching them."

I took them up on the offer, got the bug, and in 1980 bought my own Lab, Sugarloaf Saro Jane, from Bill Gokey – then of Leverett, now of Conway. When I was training Sara, Mike helped by calling with detailed reports about how many birds had been stocked around his farm and where. I used to hunt his family's miserable Hopewell Swamp all the way from Christian Lane to the foot of Sugarloaf – a young man's game that produced wild partridge and woodcock as well as stocked pheasants.

Even though we grew apart in adulthood and I saw him only rarely, we did occasionally communicate by email when I was working. I will miss Mike. He was a good man with a kind heart, and his mischievous twinkle sparkled whenever our eyes met.

When in youth I worked my friend's croplands and hunted his wetlands, I didn't know how deeply stained the acreage was with my own DNA. He lived on the old Allis farm where my fourth-great grandmother was born, and owned the terraced cropland to the immediate north owned, farmed, and lived on by six generations of my direct Sanderson ancestors.

Learning of those genealogical links created in me a much deeper relationship to my pal's family farm – introducing a spiritual dimension. Unbeknownst to me as I worked the land was that it was part of my blood, my soul. In my mind, that stuff happens for a reason, and cannot be dismissed as random coincidence. Something pulled me back to the land of my forebears and inspired me to dig in and figure it out.

I would have liked to explain to him in detail my family's connection to his place. Sadly, it's too late now.



when a scene had no need for the music to be tense like that. One scene that definitely called for the music to be faster and tense was when a man who might be the killer checked into a room. I believe that back when music was originally used for films, they wanted to use it to indicate "this could be him."

Rapsis appeared to do that one more time with the music when we see this suspected individual enter the room, and we know it's probably a room the Jack the Ripper-like guy would like due to certain things in it – pictures of blonde girls. Adding to that, the guy got nervous at a paperboy shouting news about the murder. The music continued that way with scenes that some would call tense, especially with the guy who could be our killer, and other scenes that didn't need that kind of music played to them.

The theater was nicely packed for the movie with people who wanted to see it. I thought Jeff Rapsis ended up doing another nice job of playing music to a silent film.

connection with playing his music with this film.

Before the film the owner of the Garden made an announcement that three more silent films would be coming here again like the last three have, one apiece for three months in a row. Instead of Rapsis, a friend of his named Don and a violinist would be playing music to them.

Then, before he played, Rapsis spoke about how Hitchcock made the film.

At the start of the movie, he played music with a malicious tone to it. This is the kind of music you have to use with this type of film. Then he seemed at times to speed up the tone of the music on his keyboard. I guess this was in connection with the tension in some of the scenes, which definitely called for the music to be like that.

Rapsis played it nice and slow

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Cars, Bridges Perennial Hazards

Tuesday, 1/3

8:31 a.m. Assisted Northfield PD with accident; no injuries.

Thursday, 1/5

8 a.m. Caller from Main Road advises a tree fell on power lines. 9:25 a.m. Welfare check on a person slumped over the steering wheel on the French King Highway. All OK; was watching a video.

3:02 p.m. Welfare check on an employee who didn't show up for this morning's shift. 7:21 p.m. Debris reported in roadway on the French King Highway. Some loose plastic bags are now on the roadside grass.

Saturday, 1/7

1:01 p.m. Officer requested on Mountain Road about threats.

10:21 p.m. Caller from French King Highway reported a sedan slamming on brakes, slowing down then speeding up. Marked-lane violations on Route 2.

Sunday, 1/8

12:29 p.m. Assisted Northfield PD with accident, Route 10 and Hinsdale Road. Airbag but no injuries.

6:23 p.m. Montague dispatch received a call from CSO that someone was on their way to the French King Bridge to commit suicide. One person later taken for evaluation.

Monday, 1/9

10:19 a.m. Helped workers gain access to a building, Main Road.

Tuesday, 1/10

7:38 a.m. Assisted Leverett PD with threat on Farley Road.

3:02 p.m. 911 caller reported a dead deer in the Factory Hollow area. Unable to locate. 6:53 p.m. Loose dog reported, Walnut Street.

Thursday, 1/12

8:26 a.m. Welfare check, French King Highway. All okay.

8:53 a.m. Caller from Boyle Road reporting a loose dog in front of the elementary school. 10:42 a.m. Welfare check requested on the French King Bridge. CSO called, is working with the subject.

12:38 p.m. Caller advises her nine-month-old accidentally dialed 911.

Friday, 1/13

1:55 p.m. Welfare

check, West Gill Road 5:54 p.m. Welfare check, French King Bridge.

9:55 p.m. Main Road caller states someone was trying to break the door to their apartment 15 minutes ago.

Saturday, 1/14

4:12 p.m. 911 call, French King Highway. Road rage with yelling.

Sunday, 1/15

4:03 p.m. Caller reports gray smoke by power lines on Main Road. 6:28 p.m. Caller from West Gill Road reporting a station wagon left in the roadway across from the bus company.

Tuesday, 1/17

1:47 a.m. Welfare check requested. Tractor-trailer unit is parked in the rest area on the Gill side of the French King Bridge.

Thursday, 1/19

3:04 a.m. 911 call from a female in distress on Main Road. She was crying and was unable to give her name.

4:45 p.m. Car vs. tree, West Gill Road. Car about 10 feet off the road. Operator does not think she needs an ambulance, but reports of fluids leaking.

6:33 p.m. Montague dispatch took report that a truck struck another vehicle while turning onto the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge and continued on.

7:40 p.m. Caller from South Cross Road reports a vehicle has been on the side of the road with its blinkers on for about 15 minutes.

Friday, 1/20

2:40 p.m. Articles recovered on the French King Highway. 9:22 p.m. Caller from Main Road states a friend reported a gas smell in apartment.

9:31 p.m. Caller from Main Road reports parties screaming at each other in the parking lot, threatening to "knock their teeth out."

Saturday, 1/21

9:12 a.m. Welfare check requested on a male party standing on the French King Bridge.

12:55 p.m. Welfare check, Highland Road.

1:51 p.m. Caller from French King Highway complaining a vehicle has been parked in their lot since last night.

Monday, 1/23

7:13 a.m. Caller from South Cross Road reports some type of tree/lines on fire.

8:06 a.m. Vehicle off the road, Main Road. 10:23 a.m. Medical emergency, Memorial Grove Road.

11:19 a.m. Report from Boyle Road of an electrical explosion.

2:33 p.m. Caller from Boyle Road advises they just cleared the power lines but now they are smoking.

3:24 p.m. Lines down, Barney Hale Road.

4:31 p.m. Large tree limb hanging over primary lines, Main Road.

Tuesday, 1/24

8:23 a.m. Fire alarm, Stonecutter Road. Fire on the first floor.

1:45 p.m. Assisted party removing property.

Wednesday, 1/25

8:29 a.m. Caller would like to speak with an officer about her daughter receiving text messages.

8:19 p.m. Caller reporting a female wearing dark clothing, standing at the end of the driveway while on the line. Same headed south.

Thursday, 1/26

8:47 a.m. Manager from French King Highway reports a tractor-trailer knocked over the air pump in the parking lot.

2:12 p.m. Caller from Boyle Road reports a limb on lines. No arcing or sparking.

Monday, 1/30

12:21 p.m. Funeral services reducing Main Road to one lane. Assisted with traffic.

Tuesday, 1/31

12:17 p.m. Medical emergency, French King Highway.

6:42 p.m. Crosswalk signal at French King Highway and Main Road is flashing, but no one is there. MassDOT advised.

7:27 p.m. Caller from Main Road reports a customer locked out of their silver Malibu. Entry gained.

7:57 p.m. Caller from Riverview Drive advises he is visiting a friend and his dog got away.

Dog is a male white pointer, about 25 to 30 pounds, with collar and tags. Caller advises he found his dog.

EVENT REVIEW

Jeff Rapsis and *The Lodger*

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – The Garden Cinema has shown silent films before at the theater with Jeff Rapsis, a live accompanist, playing music to them. They decided to do it again this winter for three Monday showings, sponsored by the Precision Driving School. One happened in January, one in February, and one will happen in March.

The February movie was *The Lodger: A Story of the London Fog*, made in 1927 by Alfred Hitchcock. The film is based on a novel by Marie Belloc Lowndes and the play *Who Is He?* Its plot concerns the hunt for a Jack the Ripper-type individual.

I managed to talk to Jeff Rapsis for a moment, and he said, "I have done it a half dozen times over the years – last month in Boston," in

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DRIFTING from page B1

create relaxing environments and relaxing music,” says Dann. “Why not just keep exploring?”

Dann accompanied Pera for a portion of his stand-up tour, which included a stop at Northampton’s Academy of Music Theatre in January. Toward the end of Pera’s set, he and Dann performed a comedy-and-music bit that had become part of his stand-up routine shortly after the TV show’s cancellation, and loosely inspired what they eventually created for the podcast.

“Joe pitched the idea of a sleep bit, in line with what we’ve done in the past,” Dann says. “I guess we drew from what we did in his live show while we were making this first [podcast] episode, as sort of a template. They’re sort of connected, but it wasn’t super explicit when we were doing it.”

A Natural Pace

The first episode of *Drifting Off with Joe Pera* focuses on soup. As with Pera’s televised output, the single focus per episode serves as a springboard for observational humor, historical asides, and personal anecdotes.

Pera’s writing ritual is built on a foundation of inquisitiveness about a specific topic. The story and humor grows from there.

“I like to write by hand because it allows me to go at the pace of my thinking,” Pera explains. “I don’t know where it’s gonna head when I start. I guess my approach to storytelling is by starting with the detail and trying to connect it – finding and figuring out what’s important about it, and seeing the narratives involved in that.”

“The soup one is a good example,” Pera continues. “We barely scratched the surface. I could have done a couple of movies about soup. Really. The way that it’s one of the oldest foods, the nutrition, all eras of soup – it could go on forever.

What types of people make different soup, eat different soup. Soups that connect different regions of the world. It connects a lot more than you realize.”

At one point in the episode, Pera reflects on the trope of a good broth resuscitating a character on the verge of death. As Dann’s accompaniment swells with sentimental synth and strings, Pera subverts the stakes of the moment with his punchline: “They regain their strength and win the beauty pageant. It’s a food that can bring about immediate change.”

Pera points out how he and Dann complement each other’s creativity.

“The timing of his music and the jokes themselves is pretty connected,” Pera says. “My notes for him will have to do with that and he knows how to write for the way I write now too.”

Later in the same episode, after recounting how milk soup momentarily stopped a war between Catholics and Protestants in 16th-century Switzerland, Pera lands another big laugh as he imagines the thought process of a member of the fighting factions: “Do I want to run my neighbor through with a halberd because he’s performing mass in vernacular, or am I just hungry for bread and milk in a pot?”

In addition to “being attracted to more natural characters,” Pera says he is “also attracted to a more natural pace” than the brisk, scene-jumping style he generally sees in today’s media.

“We don’t ever really experience life at that fast of a pace,” Pera says.

Focusing on one topic at a time and “letting things develop at a slower pace,” as Pera describes his TV narrative style, both map well to the sleep podcast.

“Especially before bed, it’s about slowing down,” Pera says. “The more you focus on one thing at a time, the easier it is to slow down and relax.”



New episodes are released on the first Sunday of each month.

A Flexibility of Format

On *Joe Pera Talks With You*, Pera played a fictionalized version of himself, a Marquette middle-school choir teacher whose thoughtful commentary dovetailed with wholesome, awkward, and amusing narrative arcs in his tight-knit Midwestern community.

Drifting Off..., by contrast, is “more between me and the listener,” says Pera, who is based in New York City and originally from Buffalo. He adds that the format switch is “almost taking a layer of fiction away,” but that right now the exact delineation is yet to be determined.

“We’re still figuring out what the podcast is,” he admits.

One key difference is the freedom an independent audio production allows Pera and Dann compared to the television format.

“I feel like the audience is more a participant with the podcast than the TV show,” Pera says. “We can take as much time as we want with

things. On this new episode we’re working on, with bell tones and the largest bells around the world, it’s neat to let them ring out in their own time. It feels like that’d be hard to justify in a television show, but it’s really neat inside of a podcast – we can build the space, and sit longer in moments. Also let the audience use their imagination in a way they weren’t able to before.”

Working in an audio-only format has also made Pera and Dann’s collaboration more direct, since it’s no longer happening between filming and editing footage.

“There’s been a lot more back and forth,” Pera says. “[Ryan will] pass me a piece, and I’ll write to it. And then that’ll hopefully get him to laugh and inspire another piece of music. The writing process is happening simultaneously for both of us – he’s involved in everything, right from the beginning.”

For Dann, who also releases music under the solo project Holland

Patent Public Library, composition is often about intuitively following the direction of his own creative tools.

“I’ve heard sculptors talk about how they get a big square of clay and then at some point the clay speaks to them or whatever, and I always thought this was kind of funny,” he says. “But that is sort of how it works for me with music. I’ll find an instrument and the instrument just sort of tells me, ‘This is what I do well, this is what sounds good, this is a melody that works well.’”

A sequence in the soup episode features Pera chopping vegetables for minestrone, and Dann points out that finding the right sound is more time-intensive than it might seem.

“You think looking up the sound of chopping is easy, but there are 50,000 different sounds of chopping and not all of them sound great,” Dann says. “So, finding the one that really feels like it’s close – it’s not abrasive, you get a nice thud and you feel the juice of the vegetable that you’re chopping – it takes time to find that sound.”

Pera and Dann aim to release a new podcast episode on the first Sunday of every month “for at least a year,” according to Pera, a schedule that gives the pair the flexibility to continue work on other projects and alternate between in-person and remote collaboration as needed. They’re also interested in tapping musicians they admire to guest score future episodes.

Pera calls the podcast “a jump in a different direction,” and says he hopes that new ideas and new approaches will keep the project interesting.

“There’s a lot to cover,” Pera says. “It’s hopefully sustainable for a very long time.”

Drifting Off with Joe Pera is available on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and YouTube. Listeners can also support the podcast on Patreon.



FROM A TEEN’S POINT OF VIEW

Writing a Book

By FINTAN ANDREW JONES

MONTAGUE – When is the last time you read a book? I am currently reading three – two for school, and one for pleasure.

The process that writers take to write a book is extremely complex. It usually takes authors between three months and three or more years to finish a book. And that is working 9-to-5, like a normal job.

Now I will talk about some of the major steps authors have to do to write a book.

They first have to think of an idea, which can take a while. This part can get some people hung up because they want to make sure that their idea is somewhat unique but not too far from what is expected. Also, if

your book is based on a true story you have to make sure that some of your facts are correct.

Then, authors have to create some sort of storyboard or a plan for their book. There are a couple different ways of doing this. You can just make bullet points that briefly run over the characters, chapters, and other stuff. Many people also use index cards: they write ideas down on the cards, and compile them into a sort of storyboard. Some authors, if they are really excited to start writing, will write a very brief summary, touching on the points of the plot.

Next up, authors start to write the rough draft of their book. This doesn’t necessarily mean that they need to write a 200-page rough draft. They just need to write

enough to be able to go back and revise it. Authors will usually include important things, such as the main points of the novel and side notes to make it better.

Sometimes writing a first draft can be hard, and you may not be able to word something the way you have it in your head. If you cannot figure something out, then skip it! You can definitely mark it so you know to come back to it, but don’t get hung up on one section.

Once people have finished drafting, they wait.

You may be confused about what I mean by this, but I actually mean they do not look at the draft for a while. This can range from a day to a year. Steven King recommends a minimum of six weeks. This is because you get new ideas, and once you look back at it, you might see things that you didn’t see before. I know before I turn my own papers in for school, and even before turning in this column, I will leave

it alone for a day or two and come back to it with a fresh perspective. This helps me a lot!

With some of the basic ideas from the first draft, authors typically write a whole new second draft. Sometimes it takes more drafts than that to get a copy that you would be comfortable with people reading.

After all of that is complete, you can have some people read your draft and give you feedback. Sometimes I have my English teacher read my columns before I send them in. After the people are done reading it they will have a lot of feedback, some of which you will try to incorporate. It is okay to disagree with some feedback, because it is your book, but sometimes your opinion may not be the best opinion.

A common misconception is that you have to come up with a title – and stick with it – before you even start writing. Most big authors write their book and then make the title

based on how it feels, because there is a chance that you may change or modify your story while editing that was not accounted for in the title. After this step is publishing, and I have no clue about all of those details.

It seems like a cool, but hard, process to write a book. It is crazy how some authors put their work on hold for up to a couple of years.

I would also love to mention that I went to a cubing competition. You may remember a couple of months back I wrote about the Rubik’s Cube. Well, a cubing competition is basically when people race each other in all sorts of cubes and shapes. It was my first competition and I got nervous, so I did not do the best, but it was more of an experience anyways. I have another competition in a couple of weeks and I have been training, so I will hopefully do better.

In the next few weeks you will see another column from me about rock climbing.

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

– William Carlos Williams

edited by Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno
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Montague Reporter at: 177 Avenue A
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Our February Poetry Page

Winter

The fields roll by, despite the speed they creep by slowly
Absorbing every layer of the mosaic, in dull browns and greys
Bleak and lifeless, still, frigid and foreboding
Dormant under the chill winds and smothering weight of winter
Then ancient barns and outbuildings
Their purpose unknown, often without purpose
Decaying fiber by fiber
Standing at obtuse angles
Square little houses, neat and trim
Yellow light peeking out from within
Flumes of pure white smoke rising up
Faint memories and melancholy
Reminders of lives simple but complete
Their entire cycle completed here in these quiet little places
In these snug little homesteads
That roll by and fade into obscurity

– RM Garcia
Erving

THIS IS THE MOMENT

This is the moment when all could have occurred
The sea could have glistened in your eyes
You could have demolished golden rocks with your look
Or become a lady of the coastal land
Or a lady of the open sea
This is the moment when even non-existent things collapse
This is the moment when X axis
Rays of love are emitted
When flaming passions are being restrained and silenced
When it is possible to fly and fall
This is the moment when we all remain, executioners,
This is the moment when even non-existent things collapse
This moment has been stopped for a reason
The moment when all could have occurred
All remained only passing by
Because this is the moment when even non-existent things collapse

– Ibrahim Honjo
New Westminster, BC
Canada

Contributors' Notes

Edna French has lived in New England, and in the town of Montague, for years. Also a photographer, a recent focus included urban structures imprinted by human nature: "Town Without Pity" and "Town Without Pity (next door)". Professional success includes: proposal writing and research for education, arts, and community health fundraising.

R.M. Garcia, when not cooking gourmet meals for his family and friends, or wandering through the woods, or writing the occasional poem, or watching the river run and the hawks and eagles soar, works at the USGS Silvio Conte Anadromous Fish Research Laboratory.

Ibrahim Honjo emigrated to Vancouver from Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1995. He has published more than a dozen books in English, and extensively in his native language. He has won prizes in Canada as well as in the former Yugoslavia.

Joisinet Post World Stroke and Coma (1/7/2023 a.m.) (pronounced "joie-zine-ette")

After the world had its stroke Joisinet thought she might start vaping. She was already 75 and that would add something. Everybody was talking about being old and "learning new things" to stay sharp. Everybody old was scaring themselves: "Oh no oh no you gonna get the next virus version! You gonna get the next virus you are so old you are gonna be a magnet for it."

Joisinet loved how sneaky you had to be to vape... sliding your hand out of your pocket like a gun. Taking a couple of hits and then put it away, you are done. She was soothed to observe the viral cloud spewed above their heads. So much easier to avoid, and more sophisticated, than tobacco lips and stabbing the cigarette out in the ashtray. Or twisting your foot on the ground to put it out, though a bit of fun in heels. She didn't really know, of course, how to start.

Online she learned what to watch out for, how you assemble the cartridge, if there was a thumb drive, how you load it (if you did). She could have gone to the Tobacco Barn but it would have tipped her hand, showing her as a "cute elder newbie," or just stupid. Besides, the young lady's mural, inked on her bosom and up to her chin, startled her: she couldn't concentrate. It was a story, in tableau, of ravens feeding on starfish at the shore.

When the world was in its coma Joisinet also started sleeping with people she didn't know well or care very much for. She cared more for her husband than anyone, ever, but if she was going to get the virus she didn't want to think that the last person she slept with – her husband – was the only one she would sleep with for the rest of her life (if it was going to be short). She tried but couldn't see any other way to get around that.

After the stroke when the world was in its coma she also couldn't sleep very well. Now she was always too hot in winter. To cool herself off she'd look outside at the snow fallen. Moonlight changed everything. Colors of everything became the same but shapes of things stayed what they were. "How could that be?" Branches reached over the snow and the roots under them had melted the snow on the grass above. She was relieved to think the roots were hot.

Now that she was old, and virus bait, and had lived through the coma she noticed people began to recede to their corners. Joisinet remembered hiding from bomb threats under her desk in school, and her mother hiding from the Germans, and this virus was the same kind of thing. Unless you are in gang territory, or Ukrainian and hearing bombs you can hide hearing absolutely nothing but the deep psychic drumbeat of the virus "gonna gitchev." Even so, it was remarkable that people became more of what they were when their socialization flattened: some evinced magical fairy dust thinking pleading for others to join the tribe in "thinking about possibilities" and dreams and "being positive". For inspiration: vintage postcard images of fairy looking women – always white, young – with hair that had ribbons in it and swirling dresses. For Joisinet this was abjectly bilious. Enough so that she herself rose – to try – to be positive about THAT and resist criticizing "hopefulness."

Some did religious things religiously and she didn't hear from them. A few went furiously to art, painting animals fleeing, jumping across rivers and encroaching. More carried little items in pockets, washed their hands ceremoniously, or cooked up special immune "bone" soups and ritual green potions. Some people she knew and even Joisinet, completed her license to carry application. She went to YouTube to learn what to carry. There was a famous woman writer who traveled with a typewriter and a gun. The scourge then was men preying on women. There were some lady sized pistols she liked.

Joisinet was reluctant to staying sharp in key new ways the coma revealed to her: it wasn't enough to be what you were. Now you had to be your own lawyer, cop and doctor. She naturally accepted the Constitution like she did air. Now it was different. Now you had to know it before it could turn its back on you.

– Edna French
Montague



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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



looking forward...

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23

Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *Singer-songwriter night*. Free. 6 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Two-Step Night with Les Taiauts, The Honky Tonk Angels*. Dance lesson, live karaoke. \$ 7 p.m.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Lush Honey*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24

Brick House, Turners Falls: Screening, *Revolution Selfie*, with discussion with director afterward. Free. 6:30 p.m.

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

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Open mic night*. Free. 7 p.m.

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

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

Next Stage Arts, Putney, VT: *Duke Robillard Band*. \$ 7 p.m.

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

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

Shutesbury Athletic Club: *Ch-Chunk*. Free. 8 p.m.

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

Belltower Records, North Adams: *Bad Trips, Nazi Coffins, belltonesuicide, Hissquiet*. \$ 7 p.m.

Deja Brew Pub: *The Shadow Twisters*. Free. 7:30 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Goth Girl Field Trip IV* feat. *imissmydeadfriends, DJs Cullen, Madel, Fetus Slayer, moms-deadmac*. \$ 8 p.m.

Shutesbury Athletic Club: *Johnny Cash Birthday* feat. *Josh Levangie, Wild Bill & the Flying Sparks*. Free. 8 p.m.

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

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

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Matt Emmer, Ch/Chunk*. Free. 9:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: Screening, *The Conformist (1970)*. \$ 8 p.m.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY, MARCH 3-5

Northampton, eight venues: *Back Porch Fest* feat. *Watch-*

house, Molly Tuttle, Cedric Burnside, Sunny War, many more. See backporchfest.com.

FRIDAY, MARCH 3

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

SATURDAY, MARCH 4

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Talk, Recovering Indigenous Histories Along the Kwinitekw* with Margaret Bruchac. Free. 4 p.m.

Pioneer Brewery, Turners Falls: *Groove Prophet*. Free. 7 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *No Lens, The Upstairs District, The Baxbys, The Agonizers, Slob Drop, Jake Tuvek*. \$ 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, MARCH 5

Belltower Records, North Adams: *Constant Smiles, Jeanines, Sunday Compost*. \$ 7 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Chris Goudreau, Aaron Noble & the Clones, more*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

MONDAY, MARCH 6

Tree House Theater, South Deerfield: *Josh Ritter*. \$ 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 9

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *Suzanne Ciani, Jesse Beaman*. \$ 8 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Consider the Source*. \$ 8 p.m.

The Drake, Amherst: *Goldsetter, Topsy and Co*. \$ 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 10

Looky Here, Greenfield: *Mystra*

Art Show reception with music by *Junk Orbit, Wednesday Knudsen, Arkm Foam, Allysen Callery, Dusty Miller, Tarp*. Free. 6 p.m.

Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *Don LaCoy, Rich Stratton*. Free. 7 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Y2K Dance Party* feat. *DJ Both Hands, DJ Poptart, DJ Corixa*. \$ 7 p.m.

Pushkin Gallery, Greenfield: *Ruth Garbus, Nick Bisceglia, Blue Dish*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

The Drake, Amherst: *Thank You Scientist, Hot Dirt, Clock Serum*. \$ 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, MARCH 11

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Enter the Haggis*. \$ 8 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Big Takeover, Lush Honey*. \$ 8 p.m.

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

SUNDAY, MARCH 12

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Deepening the Power of Place*, with *Erica Wheeler, Andre Strongbearheart Gaines*, more. Free. 4 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 16

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Padded Waltz, Screensavor, St. Intel*. \$ 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, MARCH 25

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *King Tuff, Tchotchke*. \$ 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, APRIL 2
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Deerhoof, Sound of Ceres, Zannie*. \$ 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, APRIL 14
Palladium, Worcester: *Carcass, Municipal Waste, Sacred Reich, Creeping Death*. \$ 6 p.m.

SUNDAY, APRIL 16
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Non Phixion, Subtex*. \$ 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, APRIL 21
Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Iain Matthews, Pairedown, Allysen Callery*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 22
The Drake, Amherst: *The Feelies*. \$ 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, APRIL 23
Academy of Music, Northampton: *Father John Misty, Loren Kramar*. \$ 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, MAY 14
The Drake, Amherst: *Acid Mothers Temple, My Education, Sunburned Hand of the Man*. \$ 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, JUNE 10
Bombyx Center, Florence: *Iris DeMent, Ana Egge*. \$ 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, JUNE 16
Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Souls of Mischief*. \$ 8:30 p.m.

TUESDAY, JULY 18
Pines Theater, Northampton: *Big Thief, Nick Hakim*. \$ 7 p.m.



JOEL PAXTON ILLUSTRATION

JAN ATAMIAN ILLUSTRATION

OVER THE HILL

Carolyn Clark

Panel 1: "You know that balloon, Harry? I keep thinking about the youngster flying that fighter jet." "Probably a 50-year old seasoned pilot."

Panel 2: "In my mind he's a kid who only a few years ago was doing that on his Nintendo. Brmm, brmm. He's psyched. Now he gets to have some real fun!"

Panel 3: "He's so excited he's practically beside himself with joy! A real target with a real missile! Brmm, brmm..." "Brrm is not the sound a jet makes."

Panel 4: "He concentrates. There it is! Take careful aim... NOW! Let that baby go! WOOSH! Pop! BIG POP! Yippee..." "My Cupcake. A woman of many talents."



JOEL PAXTON ILLUSTRATION



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SPORTS from page B1

second and third strings while his team kept a comfortable lead. The Beavers never gave in. Their players chanted "Let's go defense" every time Tech had the ball, even into the final quarter. Three Eagles put up double figures: Hannah Gilbert (17), Lea Chapman (13, with eight rebounds), and Kendra Campbell (11). Lilianna Inman (9) came close. Laken Woodard (5), Trinity Doane (3), and Cordelia Guerin, Kyra Goodell, and Kitana Rodriguez (2 each) rounded out the team's scoring.

On Monday, the Drury Devils went down to Tech. This was one of four games this week that was decided in the waning seconds. Drury countered Tech's defense with steals and blocks, and anticipated Tech's passes. The loose ball bounced against the floor, bodies, arms, and legs as the ladies fought for it.

At the halftime buzzer, the Devils hit a three to gain a 20-18 lead. By 1:30 left in the third Tech were up 37-30, but then the Devils mounted their own surge to make it 39-36 after three complete.

The teams went nose-to-nose through the fourth, Tech holding a precarious 45-44 lead. With 20 seconds left, Drury hit a 2-pointer. Tech took possession, but lost the ball out of bounds with ten seconds on the clock and were forced to intentionally foul. This worked, and Franklin got the ball back. With 0.4 seconds left they inbounded under their own basket and made a shot, but that ball was blocked, and Tech lost 46-45.

Gilbert (12), Chapman (11), Campbell (9), Kaitlin Trudeau (7), and Goodell (6) scored for Tech.

That same night, the Turners Falls Thunder was eliminated from the PVIAC Class D playoffs by the Monson Mustangs. The game started early, and fans at Tech were receiving updates. The news was discouraging: Turners was down 29-15 at halftime, and the Horses kicked in 20 points in the third *en route* to their 57-34 victory. Taylor Greene was Turners's top scorer with 17 points,



Turners Falls' Jake Lavin launches from downtown, sinking a trey to tie up last Thursday's game against the Lee Wildcats 52-52 with under 14 seconds on the clock.

followed by Steph Peterson, Madi Liimatainen, and Tatiana Williams (4 each) and Morgan Dobias (2).

On Wednesday, Tech hosted the Renaissance Red Phoenix in the consolation round. This was another interesting game, with a very sad ending. Franklin had the same trouble they'd had against Drury: Renaissance anticipated the long passes and swooped in to block or intercept. At the other end of the court, Tech couldn't bank their shots, but their rebounding crew kept pace, and after one the Birds were ahead 12-11.

Tech held a lead deep into the second period, but in the final minute Red made a run. In a repeat of Monday's game, the visitors hit

a 3-pointer at the buzzer, putting them up 38-31 at the half.

Renaissance only dressed five players, and by the third quarter the wear and tear showed. Tech knotted it at 41 going into the fourth, and picked up the pace in the final quarter, fighting to a 53-43 lead with 3:37 left in regulation.

One of the Phoenix players was slow getting up. Her corner wrapped up a scrape. Play resumed, but then officials called time – her bandage had come off and was stuck to Campbell's sneaker. This lightened up the mood, and players from both teams smiled through their exhaustion.

But then it got ugly. With 31.8 seconds left and Tech holding a com-

manding lead, a foul was called on a Red player. The Phoenix coach became irate and, to the chagrin of the players and fans, screamed at the refs for five minutes before gathering his jacket and exiting the court. After the foul shots, the Eagles walked away with the ten-point victory. There was no post-game handshake.

Chapman, who fought most of the game in the paint, scored 22 points, grabbed an incredible 17 rebounds, blocked six shots, and made seven steals. Gilbert also scored 22, with seven assists and six steals. Goodell had 9 points and seven rebounds, Inman scored 6, and Campbell hit a 2.

The Thunder have their own consolation match this Thursday, heading up to Mount Everett, and on Friday the Lady Birds lace up their sneakers to face South Shore Vo-Tech in the first round of the Small Vocational tournament, a bid to defend their state championship belt.

Turners and Tech will both compete in the MIAA state tournament.

Boys' Basketball

- Lee 54 – TFHS 52
- Palmer 80 – FCTS 63
- Westfield Tech 48 – FCTS 44
- Hamp Sci East 51 – TFHS 49

Neither boys' team made the playoffs, but they played consolation games. The Tech Eagles lost a road game against Palmer, then were edged out by four points at home; the Turners boys also lost both their games, but by a combined total of only four points.

Last Friday Turners faced the Lee Wildcats, one of the best games I've seen all season. The black-coated Cats kept mounting leads and the Thunder kept charging back. The game was pretty physical – bodies bouncing up and down the court.

In the fourth, Turners made one final push. Lee was ahead 41-32 with 6:28 left, but Blue would not go away gently, and tied it at 52 with 14.6 ticks on the clock. Lee passed the ball through all sorts of waving hands and managed to score with 4.6 seconds left. The Thunder,

unable to answer, lost by two points.

Alex Quezada hit three 3-pointers, scoring 13 points total, while Jakub Lavin netted four for all 12 of his. Logan Addison (11), Jackson Cogswell and Levin Prondecki (5 each), Deven Sloan (4), and Cameron Burnett (2) also scored points.

That same evening, the visiting Eagles lost 80-63 to the Palmer Panthers. Ty Sadoski (29) and Noah Ausikaitis (25) accounted for most of the Birds' points, with Robert Murphy (4), Gabe Mota (3), and Robert Belval (2) helping out.

On Monday, in the opening game of the Franklin Tech double-header that would include the girls' loss to Drury, the Eagles lost a nail-biter to the Yellow Tigers of Westfield Tech.

This one was another great game, very physical from the get-go, with both teams accruing multiple team fouls. Tech took a 21-13 lead early on, but couldn't shake the Cats.

West had taken away the rebounds, forcing Franklin to shoot from outside; when the Eagles grew cold, Westie made up ground. By the half they had nosed ahead by a point.

In the third Tech led 29-24, but they started missing, and Yellow reversed the deficit to go up 42-33 at the start of the fourth. Tech fought back until it was a 3-point game. With only 9.3 left on the clock, they had the ball, but missed the shot and the rebound. The Birds were forced to foul, and the Cats scored one more point to seal the 48-44 victory.

Sadoski (13), Belval (10), Murphy (9), Ausikaitis (8), and Mota (6) scored the points for the Eagles.

Turners Falls closed out their 2022-23 season on Wednesday down in Chicopee, against the Hampden Charter School of Science East. Hampden reportedly outscored Powertown by 10 in the fourth period to eke out a 2-point win.

Lavin (14), Prondecki (10), Quezada (8), Cogswell, Sloan, and Dylon Shinall (4 each), Brody Girard (3), and Burnett (2) put up Blue's final points of winter.

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