

The Montague Reporter

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

FEBRUARY 15, 2024

New 1676 Counter-Attack Site Discovered



MIKE JACKSON PHOTO

Research has uncovered evidence of fighting as the English militia retreated across this hilltop, now the Green River Cemetery.

By JEFF SINGLETON

GREENFIELD – Researchers documenting the battle that followed the 1676 massacre of indigenous people near what is now Turners Falls have recently found a new site of conflict in Greenfield on a steep hill next to the Green River Cemetery. The team, headed by Kevin McBride of the University of Connecticut, shared their findings last week with the committee overseeing the study. McBride's team has been tracing the English retreat

from the massacre by discovering clusters of musket balls, most of which they believe were shot by the well-armed Native "coalition" engaged in a counter-attack. The research, funded so far by four rounds of grants from the American Battlefield Protection Program of the National Park Service, had previously identified several major conflict points along the retreat paths by unearthing large numbers of the musket balls.

The colonial militia, broken into several groups with some members on horseback, have been traced crossing see **DISCOVERED** page A5

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD Village's Pipes Still Taking In Mystery Water, At Massive Cost

By JEFF SINGLETON

The Montague sewer system dominated the town selectboard's February 12 meeting, and the most time-consuming and frustrating of the system's problems is a major increase in the flow from the village of Millers Falls to the treatment plant across the river in Erving, which treats the waste under a contract between the towns.

The excess flow, this year costing the town over \$94,000, is said to come from "infiltration and inflow" (I&I) from stormwater, which enters the system either through cracks in pipes or from illegally attached sump pumps and drains.

Public works director Tom Bergeron gave an update on his latest "I&I investigations" in the village. Bergeron said one pipe that seemed to be carrying large amounts of water from an unknown source was "still flowing quite badly," while a second suspect pipe had "died down." He said he was looking into purchasing a smoke machine to help identify the source of the inflow, and was investigating purchasing a "lateral camera."

Bergeron showed a photograph labeled with potential inflows coming from 12, 16, and 20 Federal Street, and identified the pipe at 20 Federal as the most significant source of inflow.

see **MONTAGUE** page A7

An Occasion for a Party



JACKSON PHOTO

Francis Campbell of Greenfield wore a pink shirt to the Valentine's event at the Arc.

By MIKE JACKSON

TURNERS FALLS – "Every time Valentine's comes, it reminds me of my mom," Mark Willoughby reflects. "My first Valentine's Ball I did with her, and we danced for half an hour. She passed away four years ago."

Willoughby has been coming to holiday parties at the United Arc for years, and coming to the Arc since he was 18, nearly four decades ago. He serves on the organization's Board of Directors, attends the Thursday night club, where members develop self-advocacy skills, and is practicing a performance for this Saturday's fundraiser at the Shea Theater.

"We're helping put the money together to keep these programs going," he explains. "I'm in it!"

Willoughby's roommate, Francis Campbell, says he is enjoying the party. "The way the turnout is, it's just great," he says, looking around the room. Indeed, the turnout is lively, as is the red-and-pink décor, the

food, and the Valentine's-themed accessories – and the DJ, who is playing a mix of classic rock, newer pop, and participatory dance numbers.

"This next song was brought to me by a special guest," the DJ announces. "Let's get ready to dance The Chicken Dance!"

The Chicken Dance brings a dedicated crew onto the dance floor, and by the end anyone not dancing is at least grinning as its gently zany steps progress.

Campbell says the Arc has been "really helpful" for him.

"They give us a chance to do what we want to do," he explains. "Going to a bookstore, or museums – they even have a program for your own outings, and we plan them."

Wednesday night's party brings together two of the Arc's main groups: the Pioneer Club, which normally meets that night, and the Thursday crew. Both focus on self-sufficiency and provide camaraderie to adults with disabilities.

see **PARTY** page A5

LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

End of Fed Aid Cited in Leverett Elementary 6% Growth Request

By GEORGE BRACE

Leverett's selectboard hosted a budget hearing Tuesday night to review the school committee's draft FY'25 budget for the Leverett Elementary School. The proposed \$2,615,068 budget would require a 6.21% increase in town funding over the current year, exceeding the board's guidance of a maximum 2.5% increase in departmental budgets.

"This is essentially a level-services budget," said school committee chair Jessica Rocheleau, attributing the cost increase in part to the drying up of federal COVID-related Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding.

Rocheleau said that among other uses, the school has been depending on this aid for the last several years to provide additional counseling and mental health services, but "while the pandemic-related funding has stopped, the need has not." She said the committee had data supporting a

see **LEVERETT** page A5

WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Town Building Inspector Will Retire in April; Joint Hire Eyed

By JOSH HEINEMANN

At the Wendell selectboard's February 7 meeting, project manager Phil Delorey quietly repeated his intention to retire as Wendell's building inspector in April, and celebrate in May. He offered possibilities for replacing him, the first being the inspection program at the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG). Delorey said its costs are comparable to what Wendell and building applicants pay now for his inspections, and that its service is dependable.

Wendell has hired an alternate building inspector for times when Delorey was away, and the alternate has been called only occasionally. FRCOG has several building inspectors as well as plumbing and electrical inspectors, so service can be prompt.

The finance committee has approved moving Wendell's building inspection to FRCOG.

As another option, Delorey said, see **WENDELL** page A8

Single Mouse Causes Wendell Internet Outage

By LINDA HICKMAN

WENDELL – A townwide internet outage started at approximately 4 p.m. on Monday, February 12.

At first, some residents assumed it was due to tree work being done by Verizon. Lockes Village Road between West and Locke Hill roads was closed until 4 p.m. that day for the tree trimming. Since the entire town was affected, it was probably not related to the tree work, accord-

ing to a discussion on the Wendell Townsfolk email listserv.

According to spokesperson Laura Dorman of Whip City Fiber in Westfield, the town's internet provider, the company's technicians were alerted to the outage around 4:30 p.m. Luckily there was a tech on standby.

They discovered a mouse had gotten into equipment.

Dorman said splicing repairs see **INTERNET** page A3

High School Sports Week: Spotlight on Junior Varsity

By MATT ROBINSON

TURNERS FALLS – This week a nor'easter was expected to blanket the region, causing additional postponements and cancellations, but the storm shifted southward, and high school sports games went on as scheduled.

Although there were not a lot of games on the docket, the ones that were played were exciting. In the Super Bowl, it took Kansas City five quarters to eke out a win against

San Francisco. Closer to home, the Franklin Tech varsity girls gave up a first-half lead against Taconic to drop their third game of the season, sending the Eagles into the postseason on a losing note. The Tech and Turners girls JV teams played twice inside a week, swapping venues and colors.

The Franklin Tech boys played the Lee Wildcats in a tight nailbiter, but came two points from winning their first game. Meanwhile, the

see **SPORTS** page A6



DAVID HOLT PHOTO

Turners Falls' Madison Haight drives the ball on a breakaway with Franklin Tech defenders in pursuit. The Tech Eagles hosted the Thunder's JV team on Monday.

We Oppose Nuclear War In Space

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The Montague Reporter

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August 2002

The State of It

If you logged onto Twitter, or whatever it's called, in the minutes and hours after the end of the Super Bowl on Sunday to see what else was happening in the world there was a good chance you saw a video of people trying to retrieve the dismembered corpse of a seven-year-old girl from a fence onto which the explosive force of a US client state's bomb ripped, flung, and stuck her. Flesh was hanging down.

Most commenters were rightly horrified, but not all of them.

"Looks like a classic Hamas party game," posted an American software developer, apparently, named Thomas Houfek.

"That'll buff right out," joked someone else posting under the handle "GraniteStateFJB."

If you scrolled on instead of throwing your phone as hard as you could against your kitchen wall there was a good chance you then saw a different video of people picking body parts from the rubble. These videos were removed but seen widely. It was the beginning of the assault on the Rafah displacement camp, where the Israeli state has pushed two-thirds of the 2.1 million residents of the Gaza Strip up against the Egyptian border.

Every day for four months, people living in Gaza have had no choice but to document and broadcast the violence they face, and every day dozens of images are produced that a generation ago would have won a Pulitzer – 1966's "Flee to Safety," 1969's "Saigon Exe-

cution," 1972's "Death in Dacca" series, 1973's "The Terror of War," 1983's documentation by Bill Foley of the Sabra and Shatila massacre. We have achieved the long-promised democratization of spectacle. Where exactly has it gotten us?

The dead girl's name was Sidra Hassouna, and her cousin is married to Husam Zomlot, who was born fifty years ago in a UN refugee camp at Rafah to parents expelled in 1948 from their home village, which is now part of Israel. Zomlot studied at the London School of Economics and taught at Harvard and became the Palestinian Liberation Organization's envoy in Washington, DC, until Donald Trump closed its office, and then the Palestinian ambassador to the United States, and then to the UK.

"The impact of the Israeli missile was so powerful it flung her out, leaving her mutilated body dangling from the ruins of the destroyed building in Rafah 48 hours ago," Zomlot Tweeted on Tuesday. "My wife's aunt Suzan, her husband Fouzy Hassouna, two of their sons, Muhammad and Karam, Karam's wife Amouna and her three children... were all killed."

Most commenters expressed condolences and horror. But not all.

"Poor Sidra is a victim of Hamas savages and everyone who supports them," wrote "MichaelSabra" of "Israel/United States."

"No proof to it," wrote "Rose1279," next to a tiny American flag emoji. "Stop telling lies."



Montague Center couple Laurie Davidson and Tom Carroll have been performing as "Tom and Laurie" for 20 years. At a recent library performance, about two dozen parents and children showed up to sing along and move in place to songs sung alternately in Spanish and English. Children and caregivers can enjoy bilingual Music & Movement with them every Thursday at 10 a.m., now through the month of March, at the Montague Center branch library.

Letters to the Editors

Fundraiser Shows a Gem

Hooray for NELCWIT! Hooray, hooray for Ja'Duke!!

Doing a fundraiser for such a critical and worthy cause is magnanimous – all proceeds went to NELCWIT.

Doing a fundraiser in the professional, exciting, entertaining, skilled, and exceptional manner of Ja'Duke productions is/was simply a thrilling, heart-warming, and uplifting experience.

For the better part of two hours, talented and well-taught/trained persons of ages ranging from approximately 5 to 50 filled the stage

with precision performances of dance and song, while filling the state-of-the-art performance space with dignity and delight, creating a captivating and joy-filled ambience.

The obvious evolution of Ja'Duke from its humble beginnings into a first-rate community performance venue, that rivals even some professional offerings in our region, is astonishing, a Franklin County wonder, and a gift to our entire community.

Mary Kay Mattiace
Montague City

Crannies

When next I realize I've paid a bill twice, missed a commitment or lost a list, I won't gripe or grouch, I'll endeavor to follow the Editor's way of "self-correcting once again, on principle, as if we take pleasure in it, as if the endless exercise alone will one day yield a higher truth."

Thanks for the little chuckles to be found the paper's nooks & crannies! I like to think they bespeak an editor, however hard-bitten and cynical, getting enjoyment out of the job.

Jonathan von Ranson
Wendell

GILL-MONTAGUE REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Cryptic Hints at 'Opportunity' for Relief in Budget Crunch

By MIKE JACKSON

GILL-MONTAGUE – "We've been through it a couple of times. Nothing has changed," business director Joanne Blier told the Gill-Montague regional school committee Tuesday night.

The meeting was short, held over Zoom, and was plagued by technical and procedural difficulties, chiefly stemming from chair Jane Oakes' poor audio connection and awkward parliamentary hand-offs amid a number of unanimous and mostly *pro forma* roll call votes.

It featured an official public hearing on the district's preliminary FY'25 budget, with no major changes flagged since the committee approved the document at its last meeting. Blier ran through a truncated version of the slide show. This year a reduction in state aid estimates of just over \$700,000 has prompted mid-course belt-tightening, but no specific

staffing cuts have been named thus far.

"We're still in that same holding pattern," said superintendent Brian Beck. "Even though we've met with the town[s], there is a possibility of – I don't know what the possibility is, but there may be an opportunity to close a bit more of the gap without having to make any reductions in positions."

"If we do make any reductions in positions," he added, reiterating his previously announced strategy, we're going to seek to target largely unfilled positions."

Elementary school librarian Ramona LaTronica warned during the meeting's public comment period, as she also has previously, that unfilled positions are already damaging the district.

"We are still incredibly short-staffed," LaTronica said. "Even though we've made it past 100 days of school, it has not been easy, and the people that are struggling the most, and are suffering the most, are students."

LaTronica added that many unfilled positions in Unit C, paraprofessionals and other support staff, are necessary for the district to meet its obligations to students' individual education plans (IEPs). "I'm concerned about our students making progress, and getting what they deserve and what they are legally owed," she said.

Heidi Schmidt, president of the Gill Montague Education Association union, announced that the union membership had approved a tentative agreement for a renewed Unit C contract. "The votes to ratify were roughly 98, 99%, so we are really happy that we have come to the end of our negotiations – clearly it was a positive outcome," she said.

The school committee, joined by select-board member Matt Lord on behalf of the town of Montague, voted unanimously to approve the new contract.

Much of the rest of the 68-minute meeting was taken up with administrative house-

keeping. The committee approved various account transfers, a student council field trip to a student council conference, and a \$1,000 private donation to the Helping Hands Athletic Leadership Council.

Finally, the committee voted again to appoint Carol Jacobs to fill a vacant Montague seat until town elections this May. Jacobs was voted on at the previous meeting, but as Beck explained, it turned out that she was registered to vote at a second home in Newburyport and thus could not hold public office in Montague. As Jacobs had reportedly re-registered to vote in town, the committee unanimously re-voted to appoint her to the seat.

The committee's next meeting is on Tuesday, February 27. The current strategy is to attempt to meet in person at Turners Falls High School, but also to post a Zoom link on the agenda, so that if there is a risk that a quorum of members cannot attend in person the meeting can be switched to remote.

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Compiled by NINA ROSSI

The Wendell Free Library presents “**How Spiders See the World**” tonight at 6:30 p.m. “With their big eyes, adorable courtship dances, and cat-like predatory pounces, jumping spiders are appealing even to many arachnophobes,” reads the description.

In this talk, Beth Jakob introduces these spiders and reveals how they gather and analyze information from their eight eyes. Jakob is a Wendell resident and professor of biology at UMass Amherst, and her area of research is jumping spider perception.

Makers, tinkerers, and fixers are invited to an **open house at the Hive Community Makerspace** at 231 Main Street in Greenfield this Friday, February 16 at 6 p.m. Get an idea of what the Hive has been doing so far, check out the tools that are available, and share ideas for what you want to see in a community makerspace at this informal, drop-in event.

The LAVA Center in Greenfield is hosting a “**Faces of Medicine**” exhibit and documentary screening, spotlighting Black female physicians in the United States, this Friday, February 16. View the exhibit at 6 p.m. and stay for a screening at 7 p.m. of the first episode of *Faces of Medicine*, a documentary series created by Dr. Khama Ennis exploring the journey of Black women practicing medicine today, including Greenfield resident Dr. Rose Cesar of Bay-state Franklin Medical Center.

The screening will be followed with a discussion with Dr. Ennis and Seth Lepore. Visit thelavacenter.org for more information.

Unnamed Books in Turners Falls will have their first **Backlist Book Party** for an underappreciated book this Friday, February 16 at 6 p.m. Then next Friday, February 23, at 6 p.m. they hold their first monthly movie night, featuring Agnes Varda’s *Vagabond* and shorts by Chantal Akerman and Hollis Frampton.

If you “put food by” and have extra to share, there will be a **Bar-**

INTERNET from page A1

can be slow, but the company was able to resume service at 6:53 p.m.

The timely repair was especially appreciated by residents who have their broadband internet bundled with phone and television services. Cellphone reception is spotty in Wendell, making an internet disruption particularly isolating.

Wendell municipal light board member Robert Heller warned on the listserv in January that a “single point of failure,” the connection between the town broadband hut and the “Internet’s backbone,” could cause a townwide outage, and said that a project to add redundant connections through Shutesbury was “in its early stages.”



ter Fair at the Greenfield Winter Market this Saturday, February 17, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Greenfield Public Library. Bring canned and dried items, tonics, tinctures, and ferments. No cash – trade only.

Learn how to stream free movies at the library’s information table, and enjoy Family Storytime at 10 a.m. There is also a Makerspace craft project with Friends of Reusable Bags, a project of Greening Greenfield, where you can make a reusable shopping bag from feed bags and drip tape, all materials provided – make one to use, one to donate.

On Sunday, February 18 John Ward of Greenfield Solar will speak on “Renewable Energy: **Using Solar Panels**” at the Episcopal Church of Saints James and Andrew, 8 Church Street in Greenfield. The event will be held in the church at noon with a one-hour presentation and half-hour question and answer session.

Since 2008 the company, formerly the Solar Store of Greenfield, has installed over 500 residential and commercial PV systems. They work with customers on design, financing, installation, and maintenance. Bring your lunch or a snack.

Community members are invited to gather at the Wendell Meeting-house on Monday afternoons from February through April for **Merry Band Mondays**. The events begin at 3 p.m. and include Tai Chi practice with Henry Geddes, a master class/tutorial for beginner and other singers with Laura Doughty, and choral group singing of early classical choral music, beginning at 4:30. Email ldoughty@mit.edu for more information. Masks are required.

Greenfield Public Library celebrates **Black History Month** with two events.

The first is a virtual author talk with Jason Mott next Tuesday, February 20 at 2 p.m. Mott’s novel *Hell of a Book* is about a Black author on a cross-country promotional tour. “While this heartbreaking and magical book entertains and is at once about family, love of parents and children, art and money, it’s also about the nation’s reckoning with a tragic police shooting playing over and over again on the news. And with what it can mean to be Black in America.” Register at library.org/greenfieldpubliclibrary.

The second is a screening of the documentary *Cathedral 1976* by filmmaker and Greenfield resident **Don Wright**, on Wednesday, February 21 at 5:30 p.m. According to the description, “*Cathedral 1976* looks at how a 10-year-old in Boston’s South End was changed by busing and the lasting effects felt nearly 50 years later... *Cathedral 1976* is one assessment of race and racism, including people from the Greenfield community and their work navigating the tension between systemic racism and the choices it brings about with lived experiences.”

The next **Greenfield Third Tuesday Word** at the LAVA Cen-

ter is scheduled for next Tuesday, February 20 at 7 p.m. Five-minute slots will be available for open mic readers, and featured readers Nina Keller and Ron Whittle share their work at 8:30 p.m. Masks are strongly encouraged.

The **Montague Center library’s Author Series** continues next Wednesday, February 21 at 6 p.m. with Dean Cycon reading from his book, *Finding Home*. Cycon is an author, lawyer, human rights advocate, and social entrepreneur, the founder of the coffee company Dean’s Beans. *Finding Home* is about Jewish concentration camp survivors trying to return to their hometown after the war. Refreshments will be provided, with music by Myrtle Street Klezmer.

The Montague Library’s **Graphic Novel Book Club** for ages 7 to 11 will discuss *The Moth Keeper* by K. O’Neill next Thursday, February 22 from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. at the Millers Falls branch library. Email gracem@montague-ma.gov to register, and pick up a copy of the book and an activity packet at any of the Montague libraries.

The 50th anniversary of **Sam Lovejoy’s toppling of Northeast Utilities meteorological tower** on the Montague Plains will be celebrated next Thursday, February 22 at 7 p.m. at the Shea Theater in Turners Falls.

In the early 1970s, the utility planned to build a 2,300-MW nuclear power plant with four large cooling towers on the site. The story of how Lovejoy’s actions halted this construction will be covered in the screening of the documentary *Lovejoy’s Nuclear War*, followed by performances by the Montague Marching Band and special guests. This is a ticketed event, and organizers say that the proceeds will benefit No Nukes.

Next Friday, February 23 from 7 to 9 p.m., Hartman Deetz, activist, artist, and member of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, will lead a discussion on the “**Rights of Nature for the Long River**” (the Connecticut River) at the Greenfield Community College dining commons.

The talk is held in conjunction with the Nolumbeka Project’s Full Snow Moon Gathering and Woodland Social Dance on Saturday, February 24, from 1 to 4 p.m. in the same location. Learn and participate in Northeastern Woodlands Native social dances led by Deetz and fellow Mashpee Wampanoag member and Asa Peters. These single-file, call-and-response dances are easy to learn and enjoyed by people of all ages.

Both events are free, and are organized by Western Mass Rights of Nature in collaboration with the Nolumbeka Project. Rights of Nature is a global movement aimed at conferring legal rights and standing to elements of the natural world in order to better protect these systems.

Learn about winter animal tracks with your youngster (ages 3 to 8) at the Discovery Center in Turners Falls on Saturday, February 24 at 10:30 a.m. “Who’s Been Here? A Tracking Adventure” will meet in the Great Hall and then go outside to look for signs of wildlife, so dress for the weather. Siblings and friends are welcome, and all children must

be accompanied by an adult.

On Saturday, February 24, from 11 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. Northfield Mountain presents “**Destination Alaska**,” a presentation by their new riverboat captain and adventure guide, Ryan Leclerc, at the Northfield Mountain Visitor Center, 99 Millers Falls Road in Northfield.

Leclerc will give a slide show and share his adventures as a guide for two sporting lodges in Alaska, one on the remote Aleutian Peninsula and one at a renowned fishing destination on Bristol Bay. “Get an insider’s look at America’s last frontier,” reads the description for this event. No registration necessary.

An evening of **local music and film** is planned at the LAVA Center in Greenfield on Saturday, February 24 from 7:30 to 10 p.m. They will be screening *Stove Bird*, a Western Mass-made horror-comedy short film written and directed by Ryan Arnold and starring Ezra Clemens Prior and Devan M. Arnold. The movie is about a man who “moves in with his friend to escape the city, only to go nuts by the persistent sound of a bird, or several birds in his new house.” The film is followed by indie comedy hip hop from Ezzy P and punk rock from HardCar.

The Discovery Center in Turners Falls will screen *Food for Change* on Sunday, February 25, at 2 p.m. The film focuses on food coops as a force for social and economic change. Meet filmmaker Steve Alves for a discussion after the film. Snow date on March 3.

LifePath’s Wellness Unplugged Series continues on Monday, February 26, at 10 a.m. with “Embodied Anatomy and Movement of Breathing” with Louise LeGouis. Get introduced to key features of your breath and body breathing landmarks, and practice gentle yoga during this Zoom workshop. Visit Lifepathma.org to register.

Fiddleheads Gallery in Northfield has put out a **call for artists** for “A Touch of Whimsy” – art that makes you smile. It is open to all artists living in New England. Contact margedvaa@gmail.com by March 19 with your submission. The show will be up from April 19 through June 9.

The Connecticut River Conservancy has posted part-time seasonal jobs in Vermont, Massachusetts, and Connecticut on their website, ctriver.org. There are also many opportunities to volunteer doing tree planting, migratory fish surveying, and cleanups – check out ctriver.org/get-involved to learn more.

Do you know a young person eight years or older who would like to explore basic STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math) concepts in a fun, no-pressure environment?

Makerspace Mondays at the Carnegie Library in Turners Falls start on March 4 from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Children are required to have an adult or guardian with them during this drop-in time. Contact Angela at (413) 863-3214, ext. 2 or email arovatti-leonard@cwmar.org for more information.

Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

Memorial Hall Theater
POTHOLE PICTURES
February 16 & 17 at 7:30 p.m.
MARY POPPINS
Julie Andrews and Dick Van Dyke star in this beloved 1964 children’s classic.
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NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

Pedestrian Priorities, Firefighter Facepieces

By KATE SAVAGE

The Gill selectboard played the hits Monday, with a friendly 30-minute meeting focused on trucks, roads, and sidewalks.

The board finalized a wishlist of the town's top 13 street improvement priorities, as part of the state's Complete Streets Funding Program, which aims to make streets safer and more accessible. They made speed control and access improvements near Gill Elementary the top priority.

"Anything that we can do to make traffic better and safer for bicyclists and pedestrians around the school is important," explained town administrator Ray Purington.

As second priority, the town listed a sidewalk connecting Main Road to Stoughton Place, which houses seniors and people with disabilities. Selectboard members noted the biggest obstacle to this project might be creating a new bylaw clarifying who is responsible for snow and ice removal on the sidewalk.

"I'm not sure we have the means to have the town take care of it," said selectboard chair Randy Crochier. "We certainly don't have the equipment."

Other priorities include better pedestrian crossings at the center of town, near Northfield Mount Hermon School, at the Oak Ridge Disc Golf Course, and at the intersection of Main

Road and Route 2.

The plan also lists sidewalk improvements along Route 2 from Main Road to Meadow Street, to help pedestrians from the Riverside neighborhood reach Turners Falls. "The [current] sidewalk is in pretty poor condition," said Laurie Scarbrough, the senior transportation planning engineer at the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG), who helped create the list. "I don't think a lot of people use it. You couldn't push a baby stroller on that sidewalk."

More ambitious improvements include widening West Gill Road to include a bike lane, and narrowing Route 2 at the intersection with Main Road to make it easier to cross.

Once the prioritized list is submitted, the town will be able to apply to the Complete Streets Funding Program for up to \$500,000 over the next five years to complete listed projects.

Other Business

The board approved a number of purchase orders, including \$1,050 from the snow and ice budget for three cameras on the highway department's new truck. One will be a back-up camera, and the other two will monitor the process of salting and sanding the roadways. They also approved \$1,040 for a two-way radio for the truck.

For the fire department, the board approved purchasing two rescue truck tires for \$696, and

spending \$770 for five spectacle kits for air-pack facepieces, which allow firefighters to insert their own prescription lenses into their breathing apparatuses.

"I just have to point out," said Crochier, "our volunteer firemen get paid a little bit to show up for fires – think of what they're going to spend on their own to be able to see. And as a guy who wouldn't be able to do it without his glasses, I understand why they will," he said with a laugh.

The fire department was also awarded \$10,500 from the Firefighter Safety Equipment Grant Program to purchase a handheld thermal imager.

The board reviewed and signed a sewer commitment of \$50,083.09.

Jenna Marotte was appointed to the conservation commission through June 2025, and Lynne Stowe Tomb and Margaret Vidrine were appointed as election workers through June 2024.

The board approved in-person early voting hours preceding the presidential primary election, which will be held Tuesday, March 5 from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. at the town hall. Gill residents can also submit their vote early if they go to town hall during these hours: Saturday, February 24, from 9 to 11 a.m. and from 3 to 5 p.m.; Monday to Wednesday, February 26 to 28, from 1 to 3 p.m.; or Thursday, February 29 from 3 to 6 p.m.

The next selectboard meeting will be held Monday, February 26, at 5:30 p.m.

AT LARGE

Sewer Chickens Roosting; Schell Game; School Cop

By CHIPAINSWORTH

NORTHFIELD – Early in the selectboard meeting at town hall on February 6, sewer commissioner Karen Boudreau issued a *mea culpa* to selectboard chair Alex Meisner for her remarks at the January 24 special town meeting. Boudreau had blamed Meisner for the town's sewer crisis because he allegedly had failed to act on a state Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) consent order he was served in hand and signed for on April 29, 2021, when he was a sewer commissioner.

"I took a cheap shot at Alex, and I want to apologize for it," said Boudreau. Meisner accepted the apology.

"There was no negotiation in that consent order," Meisner texted later. "Absolutely none. What did she think I was supposed to do?"

Boudreau has indeed been on a rampage, calling the selectboard "useless" on NextDoor and promising at a recent sewer commission meeting that "[b]y the end of the third period, there will be teeth on the ice and blood on the net."

"The selectboard has nothing to do with the sewer commission's business," Meisner responded. "The sewer commission is an elected board solely responsible for themselves and the [wastewater] plant. The selectboard has no oversight or authority over it. She should know that."

Meanwhile, the town's sewer users are bearing the brunt of Boudreau's unilateral actions to hike rates by 29%, up to \$1,276 a year. There are no abatements for seniors or single parents, landlords pay the full rate times the number of apartments they rent, and sole-occupant homeowners must fork over the same sum as large families.

Towns like Amherst use a metered system; you pay for what you use. Northfield's "equivalent dwelling" system means one size

fits all. "We asked the town to develop a plan we think they can afford," said MassDEP section chief Matt Sokop. "That's what the town decided to use."

In other words, blame the town, not the state.

Boudreau stressed that the influx of people who've moved to East Northfield to work, study, or teach at Thomas Aquinas College isn't why the sewer rates keep rising. "Actually, the flow we get over there helps," she said, "because you can have too little flow."

Limited Options

Sokop said the town could apply for grant money, but grantwriter Mallory Sullivan left Northfield for a higher-paying job, and Boudreau said grants are becoming a mirage.

"We've been told there's grants flying out my ass," she said. "That's not the case. Two-thirds of the [Biden] infrastructure money has already been spent. By the time it trickles down to us, we might get \$500,000."

Moreover, said Boudreau, "Mallory and I were looking at smaller grants and they said, 'Oh by the way, if you have a consent order you need not apply.'"

One Highland Avenue resident said the consent order was the consequence of long-term neglect: "Deferred maintenance and anti-taxation has been the theme of this town since I've been here – 53 years."

And now the chickens have come home to roost.

Long-Shot Options

It's impossible for all 285 ratepayers to withstand constantly rising rates. They will either move, put in a septic tank, or simply refuse to pay the bill and live with liens on their homes. As reported last week, the delinquency rate is already approaching 20%.

The town could foot the bill, similar to how taxpayers under-

write public education, but taking money from septic-system users would be like trying to take a bone away from a starving dog.

Another option would be to use the \$25 million earmarked to replace Schell Bridge. "At this point I would much rather use the money from that to fund a good sewage treatment plant," texted Meisner.

Plans to convert the rusted structure into a park and pathway came to a screeching halt two years ago when the low bid was \$40 million. The selectboard wrote a letter to transportation secretary Pete Buttigieg asking if he could spare \$15 million, but Pete hasn't responded. "That money's in a different pot," said a Schell Bridge committee member. "I don't know how easy it would be to reallocate it away from the Dept. of Transportation."

Hidden Evaluation

A public records request to see the selectboard's evaluation of town administrator Andrea Llamas was denied. The notification letter was signed by town clerk Amanda Lynch.

All five selectboard members wrote evaluations of Llamas's job performance which were edited and summarized by Meisner. Why bother editing if no one can read the remarks? So much for promises of transparency in town hall.

Llamas lives in Greenfield (pop. 17,456) where the mayor makes about \$90,000. Llamas's salary is \$115,670, plus four weeks' vacation and \$600 for mileage. Despite managing a town of less than 3,000, "She earns every bit of it for the money she brings in, and the work she does for Northfield," said Meisner. "The town has remained liability- and lawsuit-free in the six years I've worked with her."

Others claim she mistreats subordinates and fudges facts to meet her needs. Her biggest boondoggle was spending \$170,000 to buy land at \$7,391 per acre for the site of the



Look ma! A Mexican-Guatemalan food truck landed in Northfield! El Chapincito's Tony Lopez has set up shop in the pull-off on Main Street across from Maple Street, and is selling everything from tortillas and tacos to buffalo wings. Loosely translated, El Chapincito means "The Little Guatemalan." Lopez said business has been so-so, but hopes it'll heat up when residents come out of hibernation.

proposed emergency services facility. The ESF was shot down at town meeting, and now the taxpayers are stuck with 23 acres of gnarly woods and swampy wetlands.

Tennis, Anyone?

Every year it costs over \$5,000 to resurface the clay courts next to Moore Cottage in East Northfield. The courts are owned by Thomas Aquinas College, but the public is invited to use them provided they help with the finances and upkeep.

Friends of Northfield Tennis is accepting donations by check or Venmo. Checks should be made out to "Thomas Aquinas College" and mailed to Lucy Livingston at 89 Myrtle View Street, Bluffton, SC 29910, or gifts can be made on Venmo to lhlivingston@gmail.com.

Selectboard Vs. PVRS

Selectboard member Heath Cummings wants the Pioneer Valley Regional School Committee to revisit its decision against hiring a school resource officer, a.k.a. a police officer trained to work in a school environment. "Declining

to have that position is extremely troubling, and illegal in my opinion," said Cummings.

Cummings cited several incidents that happened last fall that required a police response. Some didn't hold a lot of water, such as "an unsubstantiated threat believed to be a rumor" and "a bag containing white powder believed to be narcotics" but wasn't narcotics.

Other incidents he cited were more significant – an escalating custodial issue between two parents, an alleged statutory rape, and bullying.

PVRS committee chair Reina Dastous said by email that the school committee stands by its decision.

"The District partners [with the Northfield PD] regarding incidents that may involve a crime and/or potential safety threat to our school community," she wrote. "It is customary for a school district to contact its local police department in these circumstances, and [Northfield PD] has been responsive to our needs."

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

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DISCOVERED from page A1

the Fall River from present-day Gill into Greenfield, and then crossing the Green River near the present-day public swimming area in west Greenfield. Captain William Turner, the militia's leader, was killed near this crossing.

The researchers had unearthed relatively few musket balls beyond that site, leading them to speculate that the militia were able to distance themselves from the coalition forces on their way south to the Deerfield River.

"The original conclusion may be in error based on the musket ball distributions recently recovered from the current investigations at the Green River Cemetery," McBride reported in a recent memo to the battlefield grant advisory committee, which represents the towns of Montague, Gill, Deerfield, and Northfield as well as Nipmuc, Wampanoag, Narragansett, and Abenaki tribal preservationists.

McBride shared a map showing 21 locations in the present-day Green River Cemetery where his team uncovered musket balls. The hill drops steeply by about 80 feet on its north, east, and southeast faces, overlooking the Green River.

Though the memo says that most of the balls are believed to have been fired by the Native coalition forces, McBride said the retreating colonial troops seemed to have been well-organized under the leadership of Lieutenant Samuel Holyoke after the death of Turner, and to have returned fire from the steep hill.

"We assume that the musket ball distributions along the north edge of Green River Cemetery are primarily Native fire into the southern flank of the retreating English,"

McBride wrote. "The English kept their northern flank close to the edge of the landform..."

Another cluster was discovered nearby, south of what is now Petty Plain Road, in a pattern McBride called "difficult to interpret" but said may represent both English and Native fire.

"I want to emphasize that these 'interpretations' are very, very preliminary and will undoubtedly change," he noted. One major point yet to be determined, he said, is whether the skirmish on the hill is evidence that "the Coalition forces caught up with the English," or that "a separate group of Coalition forces (maybe from Cheapside?) were waiting" there to find them — "or both."

Further investigation of the area, he wrote, may yield answers.

This spring and summer will be the final months of field research on the project, according to David Brule of Montague, the chair of the advisory committee. McBride told the *Reporter* that the research team still needs to fill a large gap between the cemetery and a later crossing of the Deerfield River to the south.

Much of the advisory committee's meeting last Wednesday was spent discussing options for public education about the study's findings, a condition of the grant. "What are we going to tell people about what we've done for the last ten years?" Brule asked. "There's the musket balls, the bullets and the blood, but there's also the human aspect."

A number of speakers emphasized the impact of the 1676 massacre on the present.

"The town that is now called 'Turners Falls' looks like what it does because of what happened on

that May 19," said Rich Holschuh of the Elnu Abenaki tribe. "That canal, the abandoned mill buildings, the brownfields sites: those are a direct outcome of that battlefield."

"This story was the beginning of the dominoes falling, and working their way across the country," said Joe Graveline of the Northfield historical commission.

There was also a good deal of discussion at the meeting about uncertainties raised by the research, and the biases of sources.

Holschuh gave an example of biases reflected in the accounts of English settlers. "I'm sitting here at my desk and I'm looking out the window, [and] I can see Wantastiquet Mountain... it ends in a 't.'" Now, the people that lived here would never have called it Wantastiquet Mountain — it's "Wantastiguk," ending in a "k." That is an Abenaki convention; the "t" is a southern Algonquin convention. The British took that name and they turned it into a southern Algonquin form — it's not the name they heard, but it's what they repeated."

Holschuh also questioned the recording of his own tribe's name. "The word 'Abenaki' was applied [by the English] to Indigenous people living all the way from mid-Maine to [Lake] Champlain," he explained. "It can be anything — and when we think of it in today's terms, what you've encountered in the past decade or so of your learning experience, 'Abenaki' is almost a useless term."

McBride said his team's recent findings have caused him to rethink the array of forces in the broader region at the time of the massacre and battle.

"I'm beginning to think that I've made some wrong assumptions about where all the [Native coalition] leadership was at this time," he said. "Increasingly things are pointing to Wachusett as a base."

Qadira Locke, a student from Hampshire College, suggested that the project could reach more people, particularly young people, through "short-form content" on social media. Locke said short videos on TikTok or YouTube could direct people to websites with more developed content.

The conversation appeared to end without a game plan for engaging the public in the results of the research. In the three previous rounds of the grant, the advisory board has organized public forums at the Turners Falls High School led by the researchers and a diversity of commentators.



Narragansett tribal historical preservation field specialist Muckquashim Hopkins and metal detectorist George Pecia searched for musket balls and other artifacts at the Green River Cemetery. The research team could only detect in the lanes between the graves and outside the burial area, but the search was fruitful.

PARTY from page A1

In addition to the individual community support at its Avenue A headquarters, the Arc owns and maintains four residential buildings in Turners and Greenfield. Though the organization was ordered in 2021 to turn its state Department of Developmental Services (DDS) contracts for residential programming over to ServiceNet after poor performance reviews, the community around the Arc continues on under new leadership and, if the vibe in the room is any indication, is on a growth trajectory.

"We're in a new age, we're bringing stuff back," says Willoughby. "I've seen more change this year than any other year, in the way the programs are put together. They're more disciplined."

Tia Shetler, a direct-support worker who helps with events, brings members shopping, and runs the Pioneer Club, says the Arc has been holding community events most weeks this winter. Shetler has worked at the Arc for a total of 11 years, having returned after working at another job. "If it weren't for my experience here, I wouldn't have had a clue when it came to my son," she tells the *Reporter*, explaining that her 7-year-old has Down Syndrome. "He's not at the Arc,

but it gives me a drive to be a bigger part of it."

Event generalist Sandi Vecchio, who masterminded the Valentine's party, had to recruit her own son to serve as the DJ after local pros didn't return the call. Vecchio, stuffing chicken salad into rolls as quickly as attendees can remove them from the tray, rattles off a long list of activities her Thursday group has been up to: cooking, crafts, movie nights, game nights. The Springfield Thunderbirds hockey team has invited the Arc to come to an upcoming "sensory night" home game, the group will learn how to make resin coasters — and everyone is excited for Saturday's "Arc-A-Palooza" at the Shea.

"I've been here since late August," says Malerie Pasterczyk, taking a break from dancing. "They do all kinds of stuff." She tells the *Reporter* she sometimes attends the Thursday group, but is most excited about the community choir, and will be singing at Saturday's event — which runs, she adds, "from 7 to 9."

Pasterczyk says she was referred to the Arc by DDS as a way to "be out in the community more."

"I came in on a tour and got to check out the place, and actually said I wanted to join it, and here I am," she recounts. "I love it here!"



Tip of the week ...

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GILL-MONTAGUE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT LEGAL NOTICE

Request for Quotes on Behalf of the Six Town Regionalization Planning Board (STRPB)

The Gill-Montague Regional School District is soliciting responses to an RFQ on behalf of the Six Town Regionalization Planning Board (STRPB) for consulting services as the Planning Board moves forward with its recommendation to form a new Regional School District comprised of the towns of Bernardston, Gill, Leyden, Montague, Northfield and Warwick.

The individual, organization or firm must have knowledge and experience with the process that needs to be followed by the Six Town Regionalization Planning Board in forming a new regional school district and developing a new regional agreement to govern it. Request for Quotes can be found on the Gill-Montague Regional School District Website by following this link: www.gmrtd.org/welcome-gmrtd/school-committee.

Respondents need to send their RFQ response by February 22, 2024 to: Joanne Blier, Director of Business & Operations, Gill-Montague Regional School District, 35 Crocker Avenue, Turners Falls MA 01376.

LEVERETT from page A1

need to continue these services.

Selectboard member Melissa Colbert, a physician, commented that in 2021 the American Academy of Pediatrics joined with the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and the Children's Hospital Association to declare a "National Emergency in Child and Adolescent Mental Health," and that she thought it was "imperative" to maintain mental health services, even in the absence of ESSER funding.

School committee member Becky Tew added that student mental health concerns and struggles can "have costs down the road if left unaddressed," and that the previously ESSER-funded position of adjustment counselor included in the school's FY'25 budget was "a big deal."

Selectboard chair Tom Hankinson said he had read reports that the ending of ESSER funding represented a "fiscal cliff" which many school districts around the country were struggling with.

Rocheleau also pointed to a 1.5% rise in contractual and existing step raises for staff, the addition of two new state-mandated positions, rising supply costs, and necessary sprinkler repairs as contributing to the budget increase.

Finance committee member Jed Proujansky responded that when organizations bring people in, "they rarely let go," and that budgets can thereby become "bloated" and "financially unsupportable over time." He said he wasn't accusing the school committee of this, but wanted to know that it did its homework in determining the budget was as low as it could be.

"If you did... I trust you guys" said Proujansky, to a background of "Yes"es and nodding heads of school

committee members as he spoke.

No votes were taken on the draft budget. A copy is available to read at www.leverettschool.org.

Fin Com member Nancy Grossman thanked the school committee for its work and suggested that more annotations and improved descriptions of line items would help townspeople better understand the document.

Personnel Growth

The personnel board has recommended the hiring of a fourth full-time police officer, a part-time highway department student worker, and a part-time library worker.

"That's what's going to hit us right between the eyes," said Hankinson, commenting on the number of additional employees being recommended for inclusion in the FY'25 budget, "We're going to have to make some decisions on who gets new employees."

The selectboard voted on the personnel board's recommendation that the budget include a 4% cost-of-living-adjustment for current employees. The personnel board used the 3.5% rise in the Consumer Price Index as a basis for its recommendation.

Selectboard member Patricia Duffy commented that this was another area that needed to be looked at carefully due to the compounding nature of such raises. The board voted 3-0 to recommend the raise, and the fin com also recommended it in a 3-2 vote.

Other Business

The selectboard also held a budget hearing for the board of assessors, with the assessors presenting a budget of \$51,475, representing an increase of less than the selectboard's 2.5% guidance.



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SPORTS from page A1

Tech JV boys went point-for-point with Lee for six periods before finally defeating the Cats.

Boys' Basketball

FCTS 53 – Lee 47 (JV)
Lee 46 – FCTS 44

Last Friday, the Lee Orange Wildcats waged two exciting battles against the Franklin Tech boys.

In the JV game, Orange jumped out to a quick lead, forcing Tech to play catchup. The Eagles fought back, and actually nosed ahead by a point in the waning seconds of the first half. Lee went for the last shot. It missed, and Brady McDonough raced down the court. The ball was hurled to him. Off balance, he launched it from outside the arc, the buzzer sounded, and the three-pointer counted to push Tech's lead to 17-13.

It didn't last. The Orange Cats banged ahead in the third quarter, and at the next buzzer Tech was facing a 28-22 deficit. In the fourth, Franklin went on their own run, seemingly putting the game away, leading 37-30 with less than a minute left in regulation. But two 3-pointers and a foul shot later, the game was knotted at 37.

In the fifth quarter, Tech's defense forced a time-violation, giving them possession. But they couldn't take advantage. With the game on the line and the kids exhausted, the ball began to bounce everywhere, and groups of players began diving at loose balls. At the buzzer, it was all tied up at 42.

I don't remember the last time I witnessed a game that went on for six periods. Unlike the preceding periods, this one began with a jump ball. Also, team fouls get carried into the quarter, meaning that after each foul a player went to the line.

Tech began pulling away in the sixth, and the Cats were forced to foul. Franklin kept increasing the lead, one point at a time, until the final possession when they dribbled out the clock.

The gym got loud in the varsity game, especially because the Lee JVs joined the crowd. In the first quarter an extraordinary number of fouls were called. When a Tech player went to the line, the Orange players and fans would begin clap-

ping arrhythmically, slowing down and speeding up in an effort to get into the shooters' head. But Tech did well at the line, and after one complete the Eagles were up 11-8.

The game see-sawed along in the second, but Franklin never relinquished the lead, and at the mid-game buzzer they were still ahead 21-17. The Birds came out hot in the second half and increased the lead to 25-17, though it did not hold – the Cats scored nine straight to claw ahead to 26-25.

In the final quarter, Lee held onto that razor-thin lead. With less than a minute left, Lee was up by two and was chewing up the clock, so Tech was forced to foul. Both shots hit the mark and with 29.2 seconds left in regulation, Tech was down 35-31. They scored as quickly as they could to make it a two-point game, but Lee wasted more time with long passes and Tech was unable to foul, so the Wildcats took the game by two points, 34-32.

Girls' Basketball

FCTS 41 – TFHS 22 (JV)
FCTS 43 – TFHS 33 (JV)
Taconic 44 – FCTS 34

Last Thursday, February 8, the junior varsity Franklin Tech Eagles crossed Millers Falls Road to take on the Thunder of Turners Falls. In this game Tech wore their blue jerseys and the Thunder wore white.

As in all Turners-Franklin battles the crowd was mixed, with fans of both schools placed haphazardly throughout the bleachers and supporters from both teams cheering "Go Blue" out of habit.

When the JVs face off, there is an added component: many of the Turners JVs are still in middle school, and therefore may opt to attend the Tech school when they reach high school. For Franklin, it was business as usual. All their players are in high school, and many have experience being sent in as reserves against varsity teams.

In last Thursday's contest Tech took control early, forcing turnovers, drawing fouls, scoring 10 unanswered points. Turners hit a two-pointer to get on the board with 1:38 left in the period, but they committed another foul to make it 11-2 after one quarter. The Blue Eagles held Turners to four points in the

second period while scoring eight of their own to make it 19-6 at the half.

White Thunder chipped away at the lead in the third to pull within 10 points, but their inexperience showed. At one point, Turners was guarding the wrong basket. Tech just inbounded the ball and put it in. Franklin steadily increased their lead in the fourth, and in the end they simply played keep-away.

Brayleigh Burgh and Jenna Petrowicz each scored 11 for Tech, followed by Samantha Duncan (5), Lindsey Taylor (4), Kaelyn Mclean (3), Cayleigh Aldrich, Ariel Peters, and Emily Sodlowski (2 each), and Alison George (1).

Four players scored points for Turners: Cadance Fisher (8), Ivy Lopez and Brianna Preston (6 each), and Autumn Thornton (2).

On Monday it was the Thunder who wore the blue jerseys, while the Eagles wore their home whites. And, as predicted, fans from both camps cheered "Go Blue."

Although the Thunder scored the first basket, Tech held them to just one foul shot for the rest of the first period, and led 14-3 after one quarter. But something interesting happened in the second. Blue began to play as a team, passing the ball around to keep the White Eagles' vaunted defense off balance. Preston consistently stepped into the paint, was fed the ball, and shot.

With three minutes left in the first half, the Thunder Ladies had pulled to within 16-14. Tech hit two foul shots to close out the quarter.

In the second half the Thunder tried to keep pace, but the White Eagles threw in wave after wave of fresh legs, taking the contest 43-33.

Petrowicz, who got hot at the foul line, scored 12 points. Peters also hit double digits with 10, followed by Burgh and George (6 each), Taylor (4), Duncan and Aldrich (2 each), and Madyson Lynde (1).

Preston led Turners with 13 points, followed by Lopez (7), Fisher (6), Dulce Berduo Galvez (4), Marilyn Abarua (2), and Madison Haight (1).

This was the final game for the intrepid Turners Falls Junior Varsity girls. The Tech Juniors will be back in white as soon as the post-season begins.

On Tuesday, the Franklin varsity girls traveled to Pittsfield and faced the Taconic Thunder. After leading 18-10 early in the game, Tech's fortunes went south as Taconic went on to win 44-34. It was the third loss of the season.

I asked Coach Joe Gamache how Taconic got back into the game. "Taconic switched to a 2-3 zone," he replied, "and we were unable to shoot our way out of it." Franklin has several players who shoot accurately, which makes it difficult for defenses because any of them can hit paydirt, but on Tuesday Tech only hit two 3-pointers in 15 attempts and only 14% of their field goal attempts counted.

Hannah Gilbert (16), Lea Chapman (9 points, 12 rebounds, 5 blocks), Kyra Goodell (4 points and 5 steals), Laken Woodard, Cordelia Guerin (2 points each) and Haleigh Benoit (1) made noise for the Eagles.

This will not be the final game for Franklin Tech. They will enter the Western Mass PVIAC tournament. Then, they'll compete in the MIAA statewide tourney. And the Eagles will also compete in the Massachusetts Vocational Tournament in a bid to defend their state title and three-peat.

**NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD**

Confusion With School Over Budget Process

By KEITH WATERS

The Erving selectboard held another joint meeting with the capital planning committee and finance committee Monday night, this time to review the town's education budget requests for FY'25.

Erving Elementary School was represented by four members of the Erving school committee, though not the Union #28 superintendent or the finance director. The school's draft budget amounted to \$3,947,488, or 2.1% growth over the current-year budget of \$3,866,456.

The increase was driven mostly by instructional costs, with regular classroom teacher salaries up 2.1% and the addition of an adjustment counselor, previously covered by a federal ESSER grant, to the local budget. Some savings were reached by cutting a special ed transportation driver position to 20 hours, and cutting lines for professional development, textbooks, and other instructional supplies that ESSER had been funding before it ended.

Selectboard member James Loynd asked how many teachers were paid under the \$1.01 million salaries line. School committee chair Mackensy Bailey ran through the math and told him it was for the equivalent of 13.49 full-time teachers.

Discussion turned to the school's employee health insurance costs. The budget was written with an assumption that these would increase by 2% next year, but earlier that day a figure of 8% was announced.

Town administrator Bryan Smith said this meant that any "capacity that we had budgeted to address" other uncertainties in the budget "has now been eaten."

"That's one more thing that we don't have much control over, when insurance companies increase rates," said fin com member Daniel Hammock. Unless we decide to cut everybody's benefits – we don't think we want to put that on the table."

The school committee did not submit any capital requests for FY'25. "I'd like an explanation as to why that is," said capital planning committee member Debra Smith.

There are a number of pressing issues at the school that need to

be addressed, with blinds, repairs or replacement of the rubber roof membrane, and HVAC at the top of the list. Last year, amid intense efforts to reduce the schools' budget request, a number of capital requests were withdrawn.

Debra Smith said the school committee should have re-submitted the requests this year.

"Because we gave the money back, are we starting fresh? Like, does the form have to be filled out [again]?" school committee member Katelyn Mailloux-Little asked.

"Yes," Debra Smith told her. She speculated that the requests may have been overlooked due to "turnover" in the school principal position – interim principal David Krane was not present at the meeting – but added that going forward, such requests should come from the "boards that have oversight," in this case the school committee.

There was a consensus that improvements to the roof and HVAC are two large projects that likely should be done together, bringing the total project cost well into the range of needing to be put out for formal bids. Bryan Smith said previous principals have also asked the town to consider including solar panels in any large roof project.

The members of the selectboard and all the committees spent a long time establishing that they didn't have a lot of the numbers they need now, and will talk about it all again during the budget season.

Franklin County Technical School superintendent Richard Martin presented his school's preliminary "budget book," to general approval. "This is a very thorough, involved budget and I'm sure I will have more questions when I have more of a chance to digest it," said Loynd.

Other Business

Before all the budget talk the selectboard appointed Philip Johnson to the cable advisory board, and Loynd asked fire chief Philip Wonkka how many suits a FY'24 Fire Equipment Safety Grant would buy for the town. The answer was six. Chief Wonkka assured Loynd that the fire department does have enough money to buy the other equipment it needs in its own town-supplied budget.

Additional writing was provided by Mike Jackson.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Sustainable Agriculture Grants

FRANKLIN COUNTY – Two Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) grant programs are calling for proposals.

Partnership Grants fund researchers, educators, and service providers working in direct partnership with farmers. Projects will design and implement innovative solutions to agricultural sustainability challenges, and strengthen connections between farmers and agricultural service providers. Proposals are capped at \$30,000; about 30 will be awarded.

Proposals are due April 9 at 5 p.m.

Graduate Student Research Grants fund students conducting research under the supervision of a faculty advisor on topics of importance to Northeast farmers, agricultural researchers, and farm support professionals. They are capped at \$15,000; about 30 will be awarded. Proposals are due April 16 at 5 p.m.

Live question-and-answer sessions for both programs will take place throughout March and into April. Visit www.northeast.sare.org to register and for more information.

MEANWHILE, ON THE ICE...



DAVID HOITT PHOTO

Turners Falls senior Derek Wissmann sends the puck around Westfield's Brayden Czarnecki as Greenfield High hosted the Westfield Bombers at Collins-Moylan Arena on February 7. Wissmann is co-captain of the Green Wave hockey team, a co-op team of athletes from seven area high schools. Highly-ranked Westfield edged the Green Wave, 4-3, in the competitive contest.

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MONTAGUE from page A1

Selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz suggested that the source of the problem was a resident or business who had attached sump pumps to the sewer system, Bergeron, on the other hand, said his “instincts” told him that the source might be a stream running next to railroad tracks in the area.

The question of how to pay the Millers Falls overage, which totaled \$94,667.83 for the last year, produced a lengthy discussion involving the board, Clean Water Facility (CWF) superintendent Chelsey Little, and town accountant Carolyn Olsen.

Little said the bill for the overage would be paid in FY’25. “It starts to get nitty-gritty, and super confusing,” she said. While much of the CWF’s budget is funded by sewer user fees, it is supplemented by taxes from all property owners, and this contribution from taxes helps cover a certain portion of the cost of I&I. Earlier discussion had suggested a special article at the May town meeting could be used to raise an increased contribution from taxpayers.

Little proposed instead that the entire cost of the overage be placed in the CWF budget, and that the share of the overage covered by taxes be funded by increasing the taxation funding for the CWF as a whole. She said there was already \$55,000 in next year’s CWF budget to cover I&I, so the line item would only need to increase by “about \$39,000.”

Olsen supported this recommendation, saying that putting the full cost of I&I in the CWF budget at town meeting “would give us a clearer history, going forward, of what we spent on it.”

Selectboard member Matt Lord asked if there was a “contract” between the town and the treatment plant that specified the share of I&I covered by taxation.

“Do you want me to give the history?” said Olsen.

“No, no, no – I don’t want the history,” said Lord. “I thought I asked a more concise question than that.”

Olsen said there is no “intra-town contract” on the issue, but that “we have been basing the calculation for the last several years on the original document that the engineers came up with back in the ’70s or ’80s, or something like that.”

Lord said he thought the proposal to fund the present overage through the CWF budget was a good one, but that the taxation share of the cost should be reexamined in the near future. The rest of the board agreed, without taking a formal vote, and Olsen said she would “make adjustments in the budget file and send it out.”

Harm Reduction

Little requested that the board approve a contract with the consulting firm Quantified Ventures, LLC, which is conducting a study of the town’s sewer rates. The company, she said, will analyze the current rates and present “up to three possible new rate structures.” The board approved the contract.

Little briefly discussed the monthly data required by the CWF’s federal permit to discharge treated waste into the Connecticut River. The data showed the discharge fell well within parameters of the permit.

However, Little shared a pub-

lic notice, required by the permit, of a “blending event” at the treatment plant caused by heavy rain on January 10. She explained that the plant has a special tank that captures some sewer overflow during major rain events, filtering out some “solids” and chlorinating the mixture before sending it into the river. This wastewater, estimated at 94,000 gallons, did not undergo secondary treatment in the upper section of the CWF.

Little said this event had also been reported to state and federal environmental officials. “We have all these fun requirements from the state for public notification,” she said.

As part of his own reporting, Bergeron addressed the 10,654 gallons of the January 10 event that was not diverted for partial treatment, but entered the river directly from the town’s combined sewer overflow system. Bergeron said that this volume was relatively small, “considering... that January was one of the wettest months we’ve had in history.”

Truck Wanted

Bergeron requested that the selectboard replace a 2002 single-axle dump truck that is in poor condition with a much larger 10-wheel dump truck at a cost of \$365,000. He said this would be the DPW’s second ten-wheeler, and would help the department with its increased workload.

Bergeron suggested delaying a project to upgrade a culvert on Ferry Road in Montague Center, currently scheduled to go before the special town meeting in March, and using some of that money for a down-payment on the truck, with the remainder financed by five annual payments from the town’s state Chapter 90 road aid.

Kuklewicz expressed doubts about delaying the Ferry Road project, but proposed to move the request “forward” to the finance and capital improvements committees for their recommendations. The motion passed by a two to one vote, with Lord voting in the negative. If eventually approved, the truck request would be placed on the May annual town meeting warrant.

Police chief Chris Williams, who had endorsed the request, noted that police officers have been injured at Wormtown because of “what people ingest,” but organizer Roger Dumaine said Troutfest would be “family-friendly and bring together all parts of the community.”

Bug Network

Public health director Ryan Paxton presented an update on the town’s potential request to join the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District. He gave a brief history of discussion of the topic in Montague, noting that in 2021 town meeting had given the selectboard the power to join the district and allocated \$10,000 for that purpose.

The town’s ability to “opt out” of statewide aerial spraying of pesticides to control mosquitoes carrying toxic viruses, Paxton noted, ended at the end of 2022 when a state law allowing towns to do so expired. He also noted a bill currently before the legislature, endorsed by Mon-

tague’s state senator Jo Comerford, could change the way mosquito control districts operate. He added that this discussion had been “conflated” with concerns about the controversial aerial spraying program.

Paxton said there would be a one-hour public “listening session” at the board of health meeting on Wednesday, February 21 to “get feedback from the community” and pose questions to Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District director John Briggs.

Trout Not Like Worms

The board voted to approve a music event on July 25 to 28 at the Millers Falls Rod and Gun Club on Turners Falls Road, despite hearing some misgivings after the “TroutStock Music Festival,” as it is called, was compared to the Wormtown Festival in Greenfield.

Police chief Chris Williams, who had endorsed the request, noted that police officers have been injured at Wormtown because of “what people ingest,” but organizer Roger Dumaine, who presented the request, said the event would be “family friendly and bring together all parts of the community.”

The board approved a request for the use of public property May 18 by the Brick House Community Resource Center for its annual 5K “Fun Run and Walk,” and from the library department for the use of Peskeompskut Park for a puppet show on August 9.

Other Business

Kyle Snow came before the board to request that the Thomas Memorial Golf Course liquor license be transferred. He was asked if this reflected a change in ownership of the golf course. He replied that the situation was “tricky,” because the land has been owned by the Thomas family while the club has been owned by a “board of directors.” He said he had been negotiating with both entities, and that the license transfer would be the last step in his purchase of the property.

Administrative assistant Wendy Bogusz said the license was being transferred from “Thomas Memorial Golf and Country Club, Inc.” to “TMGC, LLC d/b/a Thomas Memorial.” The board unanimously approved the transfer.

At the request of Williams, the board appointed detective Justin Moody to the rank of sergeant, to replace recently-retired John Dempsey. Moody had tied with officer Jim Ruddock on the state civil service test, and Moody was then chosen through an interview process.

Assistant town administrator Walter Ramsey noted, “for history’s sake,” that this may be Montague’s last civil service appointment, as voters at the March 14 special town meeting will be asked to withdraw the town from the service.

The board quickly reviewed, but took no votes on, the 17 articles on the draft warrant for the special town meeting to be held March 14.

Bogusz announced that an estimate of the summer “seasonal population,” which must be reported to the state Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission, was estimated at 8,800, which she said is about 220 people more than a current US Census estimate of 8,580.

The next selectboard meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 26.



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

Here’s the way it was on February 13, 2014: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

Uproar Over Proposed Natural Gas Pipeline

On Monday night the Montague selectboard unanimously rejected a request by Kinder Morgan’s subsidiary, Tennessee Pipeline Company, for access to survey a wooded parcel of town property near Millers Falls, demanding to be told more details first.

The company seeks to build a three-foot-diameter, 250-mile-long natural gas transmission line, cutting through Montague and making heavy use of transmission line right-of-ways.

Board chair Mark Fairbrother declared that it was “almost an affront to this town” that the company had not sent a representative to answer for the project.

The meeting was attended by a full room of potentially affected landowners and concerned citizens, one of whom asked, “What

makes it desirable for Montague?”

The following night, the board of water commissioners of the Turners Falls fire district voted to grant the company survey rights to seven tracts of land in the town’s Water Supply Protection District.

A Gentleman’s Red Pocketbook

The Wendell Historical Society continues to seek additions to its small, but growing collection and wishes to thank Adrian Montagano, artist and long-time Wendell resident, for a special gift he made to the Society last month: a wallet dating from the mid-1800s once owned by a hard-working Wendell farmer named Charles Hager.

The gentleman’s wallet or “pocketbook” is made of red leather and still contains a slim pencil, worn down by use, in its folds. Interestingly, Benjamin Franklin carried an identical wallet and his, in much worse shape, is now owned by the Phillips Museum of Art in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

20 YEARS AGO

Here’s the way it was on February 12, 2004: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

Changing Norms, Changing Forms

November’s ruling by the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts affirming the right of gay couples to marry leaves Montague’s town clerk, John Zywna, concerned about having the proper paperwork for same sex couples to fill out in time for the May 17 deadline set by the SJC. Current forms, for example, require information about “the groom” and “the bride.”

In response to an emotionally

charged constitutional convention in Boston to consider an amendment to the state constitution to limit civil marriage to the union of one man and one woman, state senator Stan Rosenberg said, “The Supreme Court got it right. I am opposed to writing discrimination into the Constitution.”

Take Me Out to the Ballgame

Nathan Duda of the Gill recreation commission asked the selectboard for help in coming up with enough money to purchase a block of tickets for the annual Red Sox trip to Fenway Park. The full sum needed is \$2,700.

150 YEARS AGO

Here’s the way it was on February 11, 1874: News from the Turners Falls Reporter’s archive.

Local Matters

A petition for a bridge at the Ferry is being discussed.

A bare-footed urchin coasting on Seventh street was the attraction on Monday afternoon.

It is reported that the friends of the free bridge to Riverside below the Falls will again petition the County Commissioners.

One of the Turners Falls Lumber Company’s double teams indulged in a harmless runaway on Friday. They started at the Hollow in Gill and travelled to Montague City.

Fred Hubbard, Esq. has purchased D.W. Benjamin’s interest in the firm of King & Benjamin at Millers Falls. We rejoice to hear it – the town could not afford to spare him.

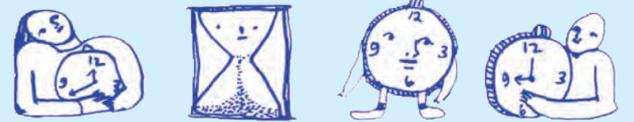
Homer O. Streeter is doing a fine business in his new paint shop. We are glad of it, he has toiled long and patiently to make an entering wedge. The sleighs from his establishment look as well as those from any carriage paint shop in the State.

The John Russell Cutlery Co. are running their manufactories as long as the men can see to work without artificial light. There is every prospect of a large spring business.

The Messrs. Griswold have no intention of letting their brick-yard the coming season; on the contrary, they will run it to its utmost capacity. They did not prepare and furnish it to let. They built it for their own use, and propose to use it.

Winter has paid us another visit, and seems inclined to stay awhile. Wood isn’t any cheaper, however, although sledding is good.

The Young Folks of Riverside give a dramatic entertainment at Wood’s Hall this evening.



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MONTAGUE REPORTER



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Readers Mark Roblee and Jacqueline Strauss consult their January 4 Reporter in front of the Museum of Applied Arts in Vienna, Austria, on January 16. (Going somewhere? Send photos to editor@montaguereporter.org!)

ON THE ROAD

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PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Seniors Eligible for Tax Break

FRANKLIN COUNTY – If an old-fashioned fuse box is the first thing you think of when you hear the words “circuit breaker,” you or someone you know may be missing out on an important but easily claimed tax break! The credit is for Massachusetts residents, ages 65 and up, who own or rent residential property in the state, used as their primary residence.

“Lots more people could benefit from this tax break, if only they knew about it,” says Gill-Montague senior center director Roberta Potter. “It’s easy to find clear information by searching for ‘MA circuit breaker credit,’ or by going to www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-senior-circuit-breaker-tax-credit.”

WENDELL from page A1

he got an email from someone interested in becoming building inspector for Warwick. That job, he said, added to Wendell and New Salem, would make a good part-time fill-in position.

Selectboard member Paul Doud said he liked the idea of a more local approach.

Acting selectboard chair Gillian Budine said she was concerned about timing if Wendell focused on the more local option, but Delorey said FRCOG can assume inspections on short notice. Wendell has time to advertise the job and consider other options.

Budine proposed taking Delorey’s job description and advertising for a local inspector, with the understanding that the option for using FRCOG is open. FRCOG’s inspection services can also be employed independently.

A Quiet Time

Speaking as the town’s project manager, Delorey said it has been a quiet time for projects in Wendell.

The landfill capping is on hold, waiting for results from the test wells sunk around the site. As much as \$100,000 more worth of fill may be needed around the site’s rear and sides, but Delorey said he hopes the state Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) will accept a 2:1 slope instead of 3:1. The land slopes down away from the original landfill making the necessary volume of fill much greater.

The project’s original \$75,000 earmark is spent, and he is looking for another grant

to pay for some of the shortfall. At least, he said, MassDEP is being patient with Wendell’s progress.

Delorey said that Erving, which is going through some financial constraints, seems to have lost track of the Farley Road bridge repair job, and that Farley Road itself will need more work. He said it looked like the original road had a log base, common in the time it was laid out.

Delorey said the Massachusetts Community One Stop for Growth portal can help Wendell find grant opportunities. Applications are due May 6. Town coordinator Glenn Johnson-Mussad said the state allows unlimited inquiries, favors regional approaches, and funded \$790 million in grants through the portal last year.

Battery Licensure

The selectboard’s document packet included for review a proposed bylaw for licensing battery energy storage systems, submitted by the citizens’ group No Assault & Battery (NAB). Two members of that group, Anna Gyorgy and Laurel Facey, Zoomed into the meeting.

Gyorgy said selectboard chair Laurie DiDonato, who was not at the February 7 meeting, had asked how the proposed bylaw was not a zoning bylaw. The state attorney general may void a zoning bylaw, she explained, but not a general bylaw.

Gyorgy said NAB hoped changes they have made to the text, including making the

selectboard and members of other boards the licensing board, and addressing the size, health, and safety of installations, would make it general bylaw.

This proposed bylaw would allow battery facilities of less than 1 MW by right, subject only to state, local and federal regulations. It would have the licensing board regulate systems of between 1 to 10 MW, and forbid any installations of over 10 MW.

According to the proposed bylaw an applicant must address wetlands regulations, provide an emergency operations plan (EOP) and a hazard mitigation analysis (HMA), and cover initial and annual training for firefighting personnel. The applicant must provide a description of battery chemicals and components and an air dispersion model for the event of a “thermal runaway” of over half of its cells, a detailed description of the manpower needed for an emergency response, \$100 million in liability insurance, and an escrow account for the eventual removal, disposal, and restoration of the site.

The licensing board may seek the services of an independent consultant, also paid for by the applicant, to advise it on technical aspects of engineering, environmental preservation, traffic, public safety, convenience, and welfare.

Gyorgy said Massachusetts law written in the 1980s forbade towns from limiting solar installations, but that since then states have been approaching a conclusion that features that mitigate CO₂ emissions – i.e., forests –

should not be sacrificed for solar development.

The two board members present voted to send the proposed bylaw to town counsel and gather feedback.

Other Business

Johnson-Mussad relayed a request from fire chief Joe Cuneo for him and the whole selectboard to complete an online incident command system training. The board agreed that all of its members should join him and take the training together at a time when all can gather at the town offices.

Instead of paying property tax for the land it owns in Wendell, Massachusetts Audubon has traditionally offered an annual campership for a Wendell student to its Wildwood overnight camp. Applicants have been asked to submit essays on the importance of nature, and the selectboard has chosen the winner, or two winners in years when two positions were offered.

Participation has dropped in recent years, and this year the overnight camp is not available. Instead, this year Mass Audubon offered to put resources towards education at Swift River School. Budine said she thought the change is a good use of their resources.

Board members signed to accept a grant for fire safety equipment, and appointed Jan Stiefel and Linda Hickman to the Council on Aging. They waived the town hall use fee for a celebration of Nan Riebschlaeger’s life on Sunday, February 25.



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Amanda Gorman, *The Hill We Climb*

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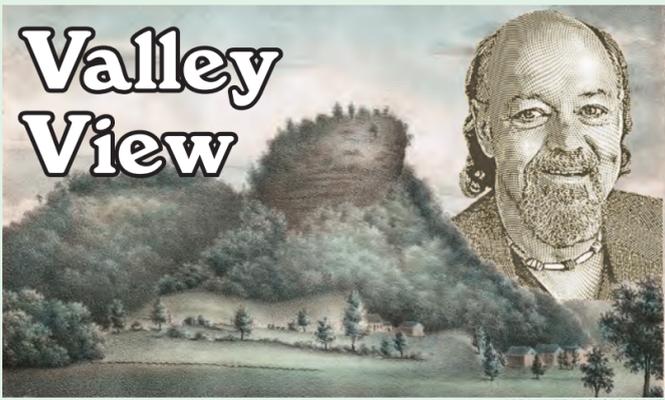
MIKE JACKSON PHOTO

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FEBRUARY 15, 2024

Above: From the viewing platform above the pumped-storage reservoir on Northfield Mountain.



ORRA WHITE HITCHCOCK PRINT

There to Fish, Not Fight

By GARY SANDERSON

GREENFIELD – Two recent meetings I chose to attend pulled my focus to Connecticut River Basin fisheries and, more specifically, those of our own Pioneer Valley – a topic I have explored in depth over the years, be it with books, scientific reports, fishing rods, shotguns, or paddles in hand.

First came the January 17 meeting of the Connecticut River Fish Restoration Cooperative Technical Committee (CRFRCTC) at the Conte Lab in Montague City. Then the February 7 Battlefield Grant Advisory Committee (BFAC) meeting at Montague town hall’s meeting room in Turners Falls. The first gathering stirred my curiosity about the status of majestic, endangered Connecticut River Atlantic sturgeon. The second drew my attention to ancient, temporary, Native American fishing villages built each spring near waterfalls and manmade weirs and traps on the Connecticut and its tributaries.

Soon after the BFAC meeting, I emailed Ken Sprinkle, project leader of the Connecticut River Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office in Sunderland, for an Atlantic sturgeon status report. I was surprised to learn that the large anadromous fish still exists in the Connecticut, though barely.

Sprinkle sent me links to informative online sources, primarily reviewing recent Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) efforts to tag, monitor, and further understand a population in peril. Atlantic sturgeon populations reach back 200 million years. Individuals can live 100 years and reach 16 feet in length.

I was surprised to learn of the ongoing Connecticut sturgeon initiative, which I had either seen and forgotten or, more likely, totally missed. My antennae have not been alert to Atlantic sturgeon news in these days dominated by the “save-the-shortnose-sturgeon” campaign championed by vociferous local gadfly Karl Meyer. Given Mr. Meyer’s loud, repetitive, activist wail, one could be excused for being unaware that grander Atlantic sturgeon share the river with

their shortnose kin.

My Atlantic sturgeon interest was recently elevated by reading 18th-century Swedish naturalist Peter Kalm’s fascinating *Travels into North America*, probably the best natural-history account of 1750 northeastern America on record. During canoe explorations up the Delaware and Hudson rivers, Kalm observed many gargantuan, prehistoric-looking Atlantic sturgeon patrolling the shallows and intermittently leaping “a fathom” – six feet – out of the water.

Had a contemporaneous investigator made a similar trip up our Connecticut River, this same Atlantic sturgeon spectacle would have unfolded. The massive fish are, like Atlantic salmon and American shad, anadromous, which means they are born in freshwater, live as adults in saltwater, and return to their natal freshwater streams to spawn. Shortnose sturgeon, on the other hand, while also identified as anadromous, spend most of their lives in rivers and tend to cling to the shoreline when they do venture into the ocean.

Judging from the material Sprinkle sent me, I would not expect a bright future for Connecticut River Atlantic sturgeon. Researchers are, however, gathering and studying progeny, so it’s not hopeless. Sadly, however, that’s about the best outlook one can have regarding the future of Connecticut River Atlantic sturgeon, and the plight of shortnose is no different. A warming climate and water pollution are the major factors weighing heavily against restoration.

Which brings us to the Battlefield Grant meeting that brings us back to the final days of indigenous Connecticut River fishing encampments like the one attacked by Captain William Turner’s troop of King Philip’s War militia in the predawn hours of that fateful day of May 19, 1676.

The peaceful village would have looked like others traditionally built and inhabited each spring at the Connecticut River’s three “Great Falls”, today known as Bellows Falls, Turners Falls, and South Hadley Falls. Similar camps would have been found at lesser

see **VALLEY VIEW** page B4

From the Archives...

In The Neighborhood

By MARY FEENEY

TURNERS FALLS – The woman who lives diagonally across grew up here and has lived here without a break. The house she’s in now is not the one she grew up in. She grew up on our side of the street. When she was young she didn’t dream she would one day live across the street in the “old guy’s” house. He was fine though, and she came to

consider him part of his porch in the summer. Sitting out there for him was a regular thing. An affable guy, sweet, a gentleman and a bookie at the races in Hinsdale who liked Mustang convertibles and owned one after another. Summer afternoons he’d fall asleep on his porch, his head cocked to the side, a bowl of popcorn in his lap, listening to the Red Sox game on the radio. He told stories about the World Series

The *Montague Reporter* ran this piece by Mary Feeney about life on her Turners Falls street twenty years ago this week – February 19, 2004. We decided it should be read again.

– Eds.

games, reliving each one with joy as if he had actually been there. He loaned us his ancient rotating fan one searing July night. It weighed about thirty pounds and with the lights out it felt like there was a bat circling the room, the air current was strong and the sound so steady. We returned it after one night because we dreaded breaking it and losing his respect.

The day we saw black suited men crawling slowly over his lawn on their way around the back of his house, they were drawing a gurney behind them. Out he came behind them, feet first. A gauze veil was pulled across the sweet and peaceable vision of summer from another time and ended a connection we felt to the World Series. After

see **ARCHIVES** page B5



ARIEL JONES PHOTO

Another from the vault: a group portrait by the late photographer Ariel Jones for a *Faces and Places* item on “the first 80-degree day in Turners Falls,” April 2005.

BOOK REVIEW

Ragnar Jónasson and Katrin Jakobsdóttir, *Reykjavík* (Minotaur Books, 2023)

By CLAIRE HOPLEY

LEVERETT – The one-word title of this novel announces that Iceland’s capital Reykjavík is rather more than just a setting for the mystery of what has happened to 15-year-old Lára Marteinsdóttir.

Lára took a summer job working as domestic help to a couple spending time on Videy, an otherwise uninhabited island off Reykjavík’s coast. When Lára stops phoning her parents they are alarmed. Her employer Óttar Óskarsson says she simply decided to leave her job early – much to his chagrin, and much to her parents’ disbelief. Leaving would be unlike conscientious, hard-working Lára. When she is nowhere to be found a young policeman Kristján Kristjánsson goes to the island to interview Óttar and his wife Ólöf, a charmless couple who insist she simply walked out.

The year is 1956, and when the novel jumps to 1966 Kristján is still mulling Lára’s disappearance, which has become a *cause célèbre* in Iceland. Is she alive, perhaps living elsewhere under another name? Or is she dead? Was she murdered? Surely not by Óttar. He’s a famous lawyer, a member of Iceland’s highest court. It couldn’t have been him, nor, indeed, the melancholy elusive Ólöf.

There is nobody else on the island, so where is Lára? Kristján’s intuition is that she is alive.

The tale moves to 1976, by which

time Kristján is being interviewed by a journalist about his first encounter with Óttar and the search of the island when Lára didn’t return. The last section of the book is set in 1986, an important year for Iceland: it was the 200th anniversary of the founding of Reykjavík. Then the tiny capital on the edge of the Arctic became the center of world attention when Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev met there for groundbreaking talks on nuclear arms limitation.

By this time Kristján is close to retirement – though he hasn’t forgotten Lára. Nonetheless the task of investigating Lára’s disappearance has fallen to investigative journalists who have kept it in the public consciousness, though none has unraveled the mystery.

Now a bright young reporter, Valur Róbertsson, is convinced that he’s close to the truth and commits

to solving the mystery by the end of the very week of the birthday celebrations. He has discovered that Óttar had a circle of boyhood friends who used to meet on Videy for an annual get-together. Now they’re all well-established in life. One is a developer who got rich as the city expanded. Another is a wholesaler who similarly benefited from the city’s growth. He’s married to a successful actress.

Another is Valur’s boss, editor of the paper Valur works for. He’s happy to promote Valur’s story, trailing it all week in the newspaper so the pressure is on Valur

see **BOOK REVIEW** page B8



Pet of the Week



'MOLLY'

Are you ready to welcome a furry friend into your life? Look no further – Molly is eagerly awaiting her next home! Molly has beautiful black fur with adorable tan spots on her belly.

Molly is not your average rabbit – she's a Holland Lop, a breed known for its gentle nature and distinctive lop ears that add an extra touch of charm. This little lady is not just a pretty face; she's also incredibly easy to pick up and handle. Remember, adopting Molly is

not just gaining a pet; it's gaining a loyal companion who will fill your days with joy and affection.

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If you're ready to adopt Molly, you can come in during open adoption hours Tuesdays through Saturdays, 12:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. For more information, call (413) 781-4000 or visit www.dakinhumane.org.



By LEE WICKS

MONTAGUE – When I first learned of Memory Cafes, I thought they would be places for people to share memories, much like oral history projects or gatherings of memoir writers. I was wrong.

Memory Cafes, which can be found all over the state, the country, and the world, provide pressure-free environments where people with memory loss from Alzheimer's, dementia, injury, stroke, or any other reason and their caretakers can come together without any pressure to remember anything. Though proximity to others might spark some memories and reminiscences, it is not an expectation.

The three nearby Memory Cafes are all low-pressure social gatherings that may include snacks, calm music, and entertainment. They provide a welcome change of scene for people with memory loss and a respite from the isolation that many caregivers experience. Caregivers have a chance to meet with others who are doing this vital work, and the people with memory loss can experience the shared warmth of human connection.

Memory Cafes are currently operating at senior centers in Northfield, Greenfield, and Shelburne Falls. Roberta Potter, director of the Gill-Montague senior center, said she would love to offer one, but doesn't have the necessary space. She spoke to LifePath about doing one, but learned it wouldn't work because the center is open to the public from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., and a Memory Cafe needs private space.

New Cafes are starting all the time, and one can check the national directory at www.memorycafedirectory.com to find one.

The format is welcoming and inclusive. It has been so valuable to some caregivers that they have become volunteers, said Colleen Letourneau, director of the Northfield senior center, where she hosts a monthly cafe.

"They are grateful for the comfort Memory Cafes offered to them in their time of need," she added. "Caring for someone with memory loss can be a 24/7 job. You can't let the person out of your sight. It is a gift to gather with others and get away from the isolation for a while."

Letourneau said she remembers a caretaker who was afraid she would not be able to persuade the person she was caring for to go out. People



Northfield senior center director Colleen Letourneau says Memory Cafes can become comforting routines, both for people living with memory loss and their caretakers.

with memory loss are often unsettled by new surroundings and reluctant to try anything new. It takes a lot of reassurance. This particular caregiver succeeded, and the Memory Cafe, with its comforting routine, became a regular event once a month for the rest of the receiver's life.

Letourneau is particularly pleased with hearing-enhanced adaptations at the Northfield senior center that help elders communicate. Special coils have been installed in the floor and the ceiling to augment sounds. They help people with hearing aids and those without.

She noted recent studies linking hearing loss to dementia. "When people can't hear well, they begin to tune out, their brains stop processing new information, and they drift away from conversations," she explained. "The probability of developing dementia increases by 50%." The technology at the center helps people hear one another, a performer, or someone making a presentation.

On my visit, Letourneau also showed me the outdoor pavilion at the center where Cafes will meet in the spring and summer. Students from Franklin County Technical School (FCTS) have built raised garden beds, and flowers will line the path to the seating area. Participants will be surrounded by beauty and birdsong.

Like every senior center director I have met while writing these columns, Letourneau radiated caring and enthusiasm for her work. While there's ample news about social isolation among elders, local elders and their caregivers should be comforted by knowing there is

also a lot of compassion and individuals eager to help, and that they are looking at national movements like Village-to-Village networks and international models like the Memory Cafes for ideas.

Memory Cafes began in the Netherlands, where a Dutch psychiatrist introduced the concept in 1997. He was looking for a way to address the stigma often attached to people with memory loss. Dementia and other conditions were not talked about. It caused suffering for caregivers and their loved ones. It wasn't long before memory Cafes spread across Europe eventually finding their way to the United States and came to include people with memory loss of all kinds.

The format for all Memory Cafes is consistent, and I suspect this is intentional. Knowing exactly what to expect is comforting, and allows people who move or travel to find a new Cafe nearby and make a seamless transition.

The cafes in Northfield, Shelburne Falls, and Greenfield operate in a similar fashion, and meet once a month on different days. The respective senior center directors have coordinated their offerings. All are welcome free of charge, and you do not need to live in town to attend a Cafe, but participants must register before attending. Numbers are limited depending on space and staffing.

To register or ask for additional information:

In Northfield, call (413) 498-2186 and ask for Colleen.

In Shelburne Falls (the West County Cafe), call (413) 625-2502 and ask for Teddy.

In Greenfield, call (413) 772-1517 and speak to the person at the front desk.

In other business: Roberta Potter wants readers to know that the Montague Wood Bank still has wood available for low-income Montague residents; the senior center still has some appointments with AARP Tax Aide volunteers for free tax return preparation; and the tech help drop-in session from 12:30 to 2 p.m. is still running every Tuesday with the FCTS info technology students and faculty. This is the place to go if you need help with your smart phone, computer, or iPad.



The setup at the Northfield senior center.

Senior Center Activities FEBRUARY 19 THROUGH 23

WENDELL

Foot care clinic is the first Wednesday of each month. Call Katie Nolan at (978) 544-2306 for information or appointments.

For Senior Health Rides, please contact Nancy Spittle at (978) 544-6760.

ERVING

Open Mondays through Fridays from 8:30 am to 3 p.m. Daily snacks and coffee. Fitness room and pool table open.

Monday 2/19

Closed

Tuesday 2/20

9 a.m. Good For U Workout
10 a.m. Line Dancing
11 a.m. Social Stringers

Wednesday 2/21

9 a.m. Strength & Conditioning
10:15 a.m. Chair Aerobics
11:30 a.m. Bring Your Lunch Bingo

Thursday 2/22

9 a.m. Barre Fusion
10 a.m. Pilates Flow

Friday 2/23

9 a.m. Quilting & Open Sew

GILL and MONTAGUE

The Gill Montague Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Mondays through Fridays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Lunch is available Tuesday through Thursday. For more information please call 863-9357.

information please call 863-9357.

Monday 2/19

10:15 a.m. Aerobics
10:15 a.m. Outdoor Chair Yoga (weather permitting)

Tuesday 2/20

9 a.m. Chair Yoga
9:30 a.m. Tuesday Knitters
10 a.m. Zumba Lite
11 a.m. Money Matters

12:30 p.m. Tech Help Drop In
3 p.m. Tai Chi

Wednesday 2/21

9 a.m. Veterans' Help Hours
10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise

11:45 a.m. Friends' Meeting
12 p.m. Bring Your Lunch Bingo
1 p.m. Food Pantry

Thursday 2/22

4:15 p.m. Mat Yoga
1 p.m. Pitch
3:30 p.m. Tech 4 Seniors Class

Friday 2/23

10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
12 p.m. Pizza Party

LEVERETT

Chair Yoga classes are held on Wednesdays at 10 a.m., hybrid, at the town hall and on Zoom. Foot care clinic is held monthly.

For more information, contact the Leverett COA at (413) 548-1022 x 2, or coa@leverett.ma.us.

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EXHIBITS

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Rivers of Franklin County*, geology-inspired, map-based art by Joe Kopera, through April 15.

LOOT, Turners Falls: *Paintings and Prints* by Amy Chilton, colorful geometric paintings and fine art prints, through February.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *On the Ground and In the Air and Inbetween*, Amy Dawn Kotel, through February 23.

Sawmill River Arts, Montague: *Small Works Exhibit and Sale*, annual community art show featuring works smaller than ten inches square. Through February 26.

Montague Center Library: *Robert Gallery, Paintings and Mixed Media*, through February. Reception on Monday, February 26 from 5 to 7 p.m.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *Faces of Medicine*, Black women physicians in Franklin County. Opening reception this Friday, February 16 at 6 p.m., followed by a documentary of the same name about the work of Black female doctors in the US, including Dr. Rose Cesar of Baystate Franklin, at 7 p.m.

Artspace, Greenfield: *Teen Art Show*, Young artists from Franklin County show two and three-dimensional work from high schools across the county. Opening reception this Friday, February 16 at 5 p.m. Through March 15.

Looky Here, Greenfield: *Portraits by Maria Sparrow*, through March 29. Opening reception Wednesday, February 28 from 5 to 8 p.m.; closing reception March 29.

Leverett Library, Leverett: *Jen Lambert Solo Show*, monoprints and paintings, through February.

Gallery A3, Amherst: *The Dance of Dementia*, by Cheryl Rezendes, through March 2.

Shelburne Arts Coop, Shelburne Falls: *Love at First Sight*, group show by member artists, through February 26.

Arts Bank, Shelburne Falls: *Volcanix II*, Christin Couture's woodcuts on Pellon fabric of the Popocatepetl volcano. By chance or appointment: redtinebluefire@gmail.com.

A.P.E. Gallery, Northampton: *Sanctuary*, exhibit featuring Sharon Carty, in quilting arts; Joyce Maxner, in felted arts; and K. Paul M. in drawing, painting, and collage arts. Through February 18. *Women in The Book Arts: Mind, Memory, and Mycelium*, artists working in print and book arts to explore the beauty and complexity of the brain and memory, February 21 through March 3.

Tabor Art Gallery, Mount Holyoke College: *Geo-Spec: Cultural Introspection Wealth*. Raishad J. Glover works with mediums such as lenticular printing, graphite powder, beeswax, dura-trans/backlit film, analog and digital photography, and LED lights. Through March 20, with a reception Thursday, March 7 from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Eagle Hill Cultural Center, Hardwick: *Ohio's Appalachia: Faces & Families, 1972-1974*, photographs by Vern McClish comprising "an ode to a forgotten people." Through March.

D'Amour Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield: *A Gathering: Works from Contemporary Black American Ceramic Artists*, through March 24.

Springfield Science Museum, Springfield: *Ways of My Ancestors: We Are Nipmuc. We Are the Freshwater People*. New installation celebrating the diverse culture of the Nipmuc, featuring photography by Scott Strong Hawk Foster and Andre StrongBearHeart Gaines, Jr. Through February 25.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

'Whites Only Town'; Stolen Motorcycle; Store Fight; Teens Happy and Uninjured; Slurs Added to Banner

Monday, 2/5

3:02 p.m. Multiple calls reporting a minor accident in front of Town Hall. EMS requested for neck pain.

4:55 p.m. Control advised they received a call from a party who stated that she answered an advertisement regarding a vehicle for sale and used Venmo to send \$500 to a male party, but hasn't heard from him. Officer spoke with caller, who stated she is waiting for Charlemont PD to be on duty tomorrow to try to make contact with the male party. Advised to come to station tomorrow to fill out a statement if Charlemont PD cannot locate him.

6:28 p.m. Caller states that she was parked in the area of Fifth Street dropping a friend off when a bald male with a beard came up to her vehicle and started yelling at her and threatening her. He told her that this is a "whites only" town. He was driving an older dark-colored diesel truck with a lot of stuff in the back. Referred to an officer.

Tuesday, 2/6

4:34 p.m. Caller states he wants to report a hit and run that just occurred on L Street. Party filling out statement. Officer advises that they checked the camera in the area, which was looking right at the vehicle, and there isn't anything showing.

7:58 p.m. Report of threatening/harassment on Lake Pleasant Road.

Advised of options.

10:06 p.m. A 59-year-old Lake Pleasant man was arrested on a probation warrant.

Wednesday, 2/7

8:18 a.m. 911 caller from Central Street reporting that she hit a parked car with her car. No injuries. Officer requesting Rau's for tow of one vehicle.

10:30 a.m. 911 caller smelling propane in a home on East Mineral Road. Transferred to Shelburne Control.

4:43 p.m. Caller from East Main Street states that there is a male party outside the building who matches the description of a male who has been making threats toward the residents. Involved male party has an active warrant. Officer spoke to a few people on scene who are aware of the involved party; he was not seen in the area.

7:55 p.m. Party from Seventh Street into station to speak with an officer about harassing behavior from her neighbors. Advised of options.

11:36 p.m. Caller reports female yelling and hitting wall at Keith Apartments. Officer advises no answer at door; all quiet upon arrival. Female could be heard walking around.

Thursday, 2/8

9:32 a.m. 911 caller from Vladish Avenue states that a man in a two-door Honda pulled up to their house and started taking pictures of the house. The male party got back in the car and left. Caller unsure as to why he was there. Area checked; nothing found.

10:35 a.m. Walk-in reporting that he believes that a female friend he had a disagreement with last night came into his house this morning and stole a large sum of cash. Report taken. Officer checking area for cameras.

11:53 a.m. Caller states that someone broke into a storage unit on J Street and now an old motorcycle is missing. Report taken.

3:50 p.m. Caller states that she was involved in a car accident in the Salvation Army parking lot around 1 p.m. today and was unaware she was supposed to call the police to report. She has the name and phone number of the other individual but needs to speak to an officer for insurance purposes. Referred to an officer.

6:12 p.m. Caller states there is a car on the golf course at Thomas Memorial Country Club. All officers on foot attempting to make contact. Officer requesting Gill for perimeter check. Officers made contact with registered owner. Cancel Gill units. Requesting tow to remove car and EMS evaluation.

Party transported home; car will remain on golf course until morning, then a plan will be made with Rau's for removal.

Friday, 2/9

8:16 a.m. FirstLight Power requesting assistance from police checking what appears to be a homeless encampment on Power Street. Services rendered.

9 a.m. Caller states that there is a needle and some empty "packets" on the ground in the Bookmill parking lot. Needle disposed of in sharps container. Discovered on the ground near needle were "tear offs" from the tops of bags, not empty bags. Disposed of properly.

1:15 p.m. Walk-in reporting a serious threat that was made to FRTA from an employee. Advised of options.

3:14 p.m. 911 call reporting fight between adult and juvenile at Aubuchon Hardware. Knife seen. Reported injury; possibly a stabbing. EMS en route. Officers going to house of registered owner of vehicle that fled the scene.

Truck in driveway of house. Officer requesting additional units to house. Party taken into custody. Video footage received from Aubuchon. Officer talking to Walgreens now.

Additional party called in stating he broke up the fight and has pictures and information to pass off to an officer. A 40-year-old Turners Falls man was arrested and charged with assault with a dangerous weapon; disorderly conduct; disturbing the peace; civil rights violation; and assault and battery on a police officer.

4:39 p.m. Immediate threat paperwork received for immediate suspension of a license. Officer attempting to serve paperwork on Fairway Avenue. No answer at door.

4:44 p.m. Another threat received from East Main Street at 12:15 p.m. coming from female party: "I'm taking matters in my own way now with an automatic. You don't do nothin, today is the last day." Caller states she does not believe it's the actual female making these threats but she cannot be sure. Officers advised. Caller advises messages have been forwarded to detective.

6:16 p.m. Walk-in requesting to speak to an officer regarding a hit-and-run accident on Avenue A involving her son and her car. Copy of note left on vehicle brought in. Female party will be using the parking lot as a safe place for trans-action of new tail lights.

6:39 p.m. Caller from Seventh Street states she wants officers to come tell her neighbors they aren't

allowed to bother her anymore. Caller states every 20 minutes they are coming outside and yelling at her front door, making threats, and calling her names. States she's scared of what they will do. Referred to an officer.

Saturday, 2/10

12:59 a.m. Greenfield PD requesting female officer for search. Services rendered.

1:33 a.m. Caller from Broadway reports he can see a campfire near Hannegan Brook that leads into the lake. Officer advises she did not see anything in the immediate area of the caller's location; believes she saw a quick glimpse of light across the body of water. MCFD advises people on shore with flashlights.

7:43 a.m. Standing by on Sandy Lane to assist FRTA staff if needed.

8:50 a.m. Immediate threat notice served in hand on Fairway Avenue.

5:03 p.m. Caller states that five teenagers appeared to be beating up one other teenager at Fourth and L Streets. Officers advise nothing showing in area. Officer checked Unity Park; there were up to 10 teenagers there who appeared happy and uninjured.

7:52 p.m. Caller from Seventh Street states that her neighbors are outside her door threatening her again. Advised of options.

8:27 p.m. Caller from Seventh Street states that her neighbor has been harassing her and her daughter and accusing her daughter of stealing from her, which the caller says is not possible. Caller will seek a harassment prevention order on Monday.

Sunday, 2/11

11:28 a.m. Caller requesting hanging sign be removed from White Bridge; states racial slurs are written on it. Officer advises that a COVID activism sign that was hung on the White Bridge for approximately a week was defaced at some point. Sign removed due to defacement. DPW will dispose of sign.

5:45 p.m. Caller states that she hit a deer on Montague City Road. Deer is still nearby and moving. There is damage to her vehicle. Deer dispatched. Message left for DPW. Rau's en route for tow.

6:22 p.m. Caller from Nouria states that a male was walking around the parking lot punching things and knocking things over, yelling and cussing on the phone with someone. Officer advises that the involved party is upset about an incident that happened in Gill. He is with two other people. They have been moved along.

EVENT PREVIEW

An 'Arc-a-Palooza' at the Shea

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – One of my favorite topics to write about is concerts around my area. I found one happening this Saturday, February 17 at the Shea Theater in Turners Falls that interests me nicely. It's a fundraising event to benefit the United Arc, a human services organization located in Turners Falls and supporting adults and youth in Western Massachusetts. It's called Arc-a-Palooza, and local bands will be part of the performance.

The music will include performances from T.J & the Peepers, Hyfy, John Waynelovich, Bordertown, and what is billed as the "premiere performance" of Alex Casavant. There will be a fifty-fifty raffle drawing, where half of money in there goes to the winner and the other to the Arc, and then something called a "special collaborative number" to close the show out.

The person I managed to get a hold of to learn more about this event, and not just get some info off the Shea's website, was Sandra Vecchio, an event and communication generalist at the United Arc. She told me she has been at the Arc, which she called a "fine organization," for five years.

As to why they are holding a concert to raise funds, she said, "We feel music is something that everybody appreciates. Most people gravitate to and appreciate music. So a music event is a nice thing to do."

This would be the first Arc-a-Palooza that the or-



ganization is holding. Bordertown, a duo that plays Americana music, became a part of the event due to one of its members being an Arc staff member. It went down a similar way with T.J & the Peepers playing the annual picnic that the place holds for the individuals they support.

Vecchio told me that a man named Fred Warren, the executive director of the United Arc, came up with the name of the concert, and that an event committee made the decision to have the bands they are having at it. The whole concert is going to be two hours long.

Vecchio added that "it took several weeks to organize," and that "the Shea Theater was also happy to help with the event."

As for Arc-a-Palooza happening again, Vecchio said that in connection with it being popular enough, "we hope to make it an annual event."

I would say the last song is probably going to be cool enough to help make that happen. I learned that it is going to be "a number where some of the individuals we support will be with the bands. Everybody is on stage singing, which they are very enthusiastic about." That is what they meant by the special collaborative number!

Arc-a-Palooza starts at 7 p.m. this Saturday, February 17 at the Shea Theater Arts Center in Turners Falls. Tickets are \$10 to \$50, sliding scale. Information and tickets are available at sheatheater.org.

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VALLEY VIEW from page B1 falls, like Rock Dam in Montague City and Enfield Falls in northern Connecticut. A fourth set of forgotten falls on the Connecticut mainstem existed at a sharp turn in the river between North Hatfield's Bashin and North Hadley. That once-rocky site is now submerged under Holyoke Dam backwater.

These ancient seasonal villages took advantage of natural constrictions, falls and rapids that slowed the progress of upstream-running migrant fish gathered in settling pools, where they were easily dip-netted, speared, and shot with arrows. Contributing to bountiful spring harvests were manmade traps and weirs, where fish were also easy prey. The sought-after fish were shad, salmon, herring, and sturgeon, likely including smaller shortnose.

When the BFAC discussion ventured into educational goals, my thoughts went immediately to the battleground's deep history as an ancient fishery. Yes, metal-detecting experts are reconstructing the battlefield and its retreat-route skirmishes by following the path of spent 17th-century bullets. But that's only a Eurocentric sliver of the infamous "Falls Fight" tale – a triumphant narrative about mayhem and massacre that turned King Philip's War in the colonials' favor.

The Native American people slaughtered by some of my own ancestors that day were there to fish, not fight. They had built temporary riverside shelters and workshops aimed at catching, preparing, and preserving salubrious fish after a long winter.

The indigenous inhabitants knew the drill from experience dating back thousands of years. They'd select the best fish to feast on, and preserve the rest for storage. In a celebratory process saluting nature's bounty, there would be song, dance and games, fireside storytelling and negotiation, matchmaking and lovemaking with newfound lifetime mates.

Men, women and children were there. They knew their chores and performed them well at a safe place of high spirit and peace. There the creator had placed a river obstruction, which had to be portaged around by canoe travelers. It became a sacred, hunter-gatherer site that invited harmony and diplomacy.

Not nearly enough is known about the makeup of this fishing village, its many stations and diverse activities. Never a sketch, a detailed recollection or description of the fileting and butterflying stations. Not a word about nighttime, torchlight-spearing parties or day-

time dip-netters. No discussion of trap construction and repair. It's sad that no one who was there that fateful day recorded the layout, the contraptions and their functions.

Anthropology and ethnology were then unknown fields of study. What the attackers saw through their twisted Christian lens was a riverside Satan's Village occupied by copper-colored Devils incarnate. Their mission was mayhem, ridding their New World of the evil, sleeping "savages" – their word, not mine.

Upon returning home from the battlefield meeting, a new source awaited me at home. Rev. J.H. Temple's *History of Palmer* had arrived by mail the previous day. I snagged it on eBay and was eager to go through it before placing it in my library next to the former (1845-53) Whately minister's histories of that town, Northfield, and North Brookfield. The price and condition were right, so I chased it.

I respect Temple as a careful, thorough, late 19th-century historian. Though I never considered it during the buying process, I also recognized Temple as one historian who displayed more than a passing interest in our valley's indigenous people.

He didn't disappoint in the Palmer book, immediately digging into the topic and describing Native American fishing practices on the rivers traversing the Hampden County town. We're talking about rivers like the Swift, Ware, and Chicopee, to name a few, and many smaller feeder streams in what is basically now the Quabbin watershed. Native Americans fished all of these streams for anadromous fish, and some of their V-shaped weirs were still clearly visible in Temple's time.

New to me was his description of downstream-facing weirs with basket traps at the apex, designed to catch spawning survivors returning to the ocean. I'll take him at his word for now, but must check other sources about Native American fishing practices on rivers in Maine, New York, the Maritimes, and the West Coast to see if I missed or forgot something.

Targeting fish returning to the ocean after spawning makes little sense to me for a number of reasons. First and foremost is the sporadic tempo of the downstream migration, not to mention the exhausted physical condition of spawning survivors. Why target random, wobbly returnees that are spent and sparse, when vigorous upstream travelers are larger, healthier, more plentiful, and much better eating?

Stay tuned.



Montague Community Television News

Sunglasses at Night

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

TURNERS FALLS – Who remembers when "Neon Wave" played the Shea on October 28? The '80s New Wave tribute band had a special surprise during "Sunglasses at Night," and you may be able to see it in MCTV's coverage of the concert.

We also have new meeting uploads from the Gill selectboard, the Montague selectboard and the GMRSD school committee that are available on our Vimeo page and will be airing on Channel 9 as well.

If you have any ideas for films, MCTV is always available to as-

sist in local video production as well. Cameras, tripods, and lighting equipment are available for check-out, and filming and editing assistance can be provided. And if you're looking for more ways to get involved, consider joining the MCTV Board. If you would like to stop in for a meeting, even just to check the vibe, email infomontaguetv@gmail.com for a link to the Zoom.

Contact us at (413) 863-9200 or infomontaguetv@gmail.com, follow us on Facebook, or find us on Instagram @[montaguecommunitytv](https://www.instagram.com/montaguecommunitytv). Find videos and more on our website, montaguetv.org.

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Bald Eagle Snagged; Plane Crash; Ducks; Stuck Hyundai

Tuesday, 1/2

5:04 a.m. Medical emergency, West Gill Road.
1:48 and 7:07 p.m. Served warrants, Walnut Street.
7:13 p.m. Medical emergency, Main Road.
10:23 p.m. Medical emergency, French King Highway.

Wednesday, 1/3

9:33 a.m. Unattended bicycle found leaning on the guardrails near the monument at the end of the Turners Falls-Gill bridge.
4:13 p.m. Welfare check, Main Road.
6:50 p.m. Officer requested, Walnut Street.
7:49 p.m. Disabled tractor trailer unit in French King Bridge rest area. Not a hazard; town *en route*.

Friday, 1/5

6:36 p.m. Parking complaint, French King Highway.
Saturday, 1/6
6:17 p.m. Assisted Bernardston PD, Huckle Hill Road.
9:23 p.m. Medical emergency, Walnut Street.

Sunday, 1/7

12:24 p.m. Welfare check, Walnut Street.
1:46 p.m. Medical emergency, West Gill Road.
2:04 p.m. Vehicle slid off the road into a ditch, Peterson Way and the French King Highway.
9:34 p.m. Fire alarm, Main Road.

Monday, 1/8

10:46 a.m. Alarm, Barton Cove Road.
12:22 p.m. Medical emergency, Mount Hermon Road.
4:17 p.m. Loose dog, West Gill Road.

Tuesday, 1/9

9:36 a.m. Assisted another agency, Main Road.
12:10 p.m. Medical emergency, Main Road.
12:30 p.m. Lockout reported, French King Highway. Keys brought to scene prior to assist.
6:32 p.m. Truck went off the road and hit some ledge, Chappell Drive and the French King Highway. No injuries.

Wednesday, 1/10

1:33 a.m. Fire alarm, Main Road.
6:54 a.m. 911 call with static on the line, Mount Hermon Road.
4:10 p.m. Suspicious vehicle, Hoe Shop Road.

Checked on vehicle parked in the roadway.
8:30 p.m. 911 call from a 911 prefix phone with an open line and no voice contact, Walnut Street.

Thursday, 1/11
4:06 p.m. Caller advises she broke down in the intersection by Leaf Joy. She was able to pull over and park in the driveway nearby.

Friday, 1/12
4:45 p.m. Removed two metal window screens out of Main Road.
8:39 p.m. Assisted Montague PD, Seventh Street. Montague dispatch asked Gill to check on a report of a male party in the road with a cart yelling for help.

8:50 p.m. Restraining order violation, Chappell Drive.
Saturday, 1/13
3:33 a.m. Fire alarm, Dickerson Road.
10:02 a.m. Bald eagle caught in a fishing line, Oak Street. Officer states the bird made it to shore and is not tangled up.
10:03 a.m. Assist Erving PD with welfare check, French King Highway.

1:51 p.m. Loose dog reported, Main Road. ACO to be contacted for follow up.
Sunday, 1/14
1:43 a.m. Fire alarm, French King Highway.
3:50 a.m. Medical emergency, West Gill Road.
11:08 a.m. Loose dog complaint, Bennett Brook and Mount Hermon Station roads.
11:29 a.m. Aircraft emergency/crash, Barton and Country Club roads, Greenfield. Assisted with checking areas in Bernardston.

1:54 p.m. Two dogs running in and out of the road, West Gill and Main roads.
2:17 p.m. Live wires down and a tree almost struck a vehicle, French King Highway.
2:41 p.m. Three-vehicle crash, West Gill and Main roads. No injuries.
4:49 p.m. Tree fell on wires and lowered lines over the road, Main Road.

Tuesday, 1/16
11 a.m. Paperwork service, Chappell Drive.
2:30 p.m. Caller advises a group of ducks have shown up at his residence and keep walking into the road, French King Highway.

3:16 p.m. Snow removal complaint at station.
5:55 p.m. Van stuck in driveway, Main Road.

Wednesday, 1/17
8:32 a.m. Caller reports he lost his wallet a few days ago, North Cross Road.
1:17 p.m. Hyundai Elantra reported stuck on unplowed road, Peterson Way. Almost out of gas.
2:20 p.m. Medical emergency, Walnut Street.
5:08 p.m. Assisted citizen, Main Road, with a business complaint about retrieving an ATV.

Thursday, 1/18
3:17 a.m. Assisted Montague PD with accident, Montague City Road.
3:17 p.m. Loose horse, Boyle Road.

3:40 p.m. Assisted Bernardston PD with search, Parmenter Road.
3:45 p.m. Two-vehicle accident, Boyle Road. No injuries. Parties exchanged information and one left. The other stayed on scene to report to the PD.
Saturday, 1/20
2 a.m. Abandoned 911 call, Walnut Street.
10:34 a.m. Two-vehicle accident, Turners Falls-Gill Bridge. No injuries. One vehicle left the scene.

7:10 p.m. 911 call, Boyle Road. Caller on daughter's phone. Phone frozen and clicked button accidentally.
8:30 p.m. Assisted Greenfield PD, Bascom Road. Road closed due to crash on the Greenfield side of the bridge.
Monday, 1/22
2:42 p.m. Suspicious vehicle reported, Main Road. Spoke with operator who was taking a nap while waiting for someone.
2:50 p.m. Harassment prevention order served in hand at station.

Tuesday, 1/23
10:02 a.m. Disabled vehicle, Main Road.
3:20 p.m. Caller advises her dog got loose, Center Road.
Wednesday, 1/24
11:34 a.m. Attempting to capture a lost dog, Main Road.
6:11 p.m. Welfare check, Main Road. Checked on a pedestrian walking in fog and rain. Offered a ride, but walker was all set.

Thursday, 1/25
1:55 p.m. Loose dog report, Main and West Gill roads.

1:56 p.m. Officer requested, Main Road. Neighbor noise complaint.

8:56 p.m. Welfare check, French King Bridge area.

Friday, 1/26
3:14 a.m. Medical emergency, Walnut Street.

12:05 p.m. Caller requested call from an officer to discuss harassing phone calls.
4:21 p.m. Assist Bernardston PD with medical emergency, Eden Trail Branch Road.

Saturday, 1/27
9:01 a.m. Fire alarm, West Gill Road.

6:50 p.m. Assisted Erving PD, West Main Street. Multiple vehicles with tire damage due to a pothole.

Sunday, 1/28
12:32 a.m. Medical emergency, Memorial Grove Road.

11:35 a.m. Assisted Northfield PD with accident with injuries, South Mountain Road. Vehicle with driver and two children rolled several times. Vehicle about 15 feet off the road up against a tree.
7:04 p.m. Assisted Montague PD with accident, South Prospect Street. Montague dispatch transferred a crash detection call for a one-car accident. Two subjects are injured.

Monday, 1/29
11:59 a.m. Caller reports a tree on state property fell on his ATV while plowing snow, French King Highway.
1:09 p.m. Caller reports her Ford Fusion is disabled, Main Road.
3:45 p.m. One-car accident report, Main Road. Door is wedged and vehicle is smoking. Possible injuries.

Wednesday, 1/31
7:59 a.m. Welfare check, French King Bridge area.

10:04 a.m. Two people reported walking in a field leaving their vehicle parked next to the road, Munn's Ferry Road. Caller does not know who they are and states they don't have permission to walk on the property.

12:15 p.m. Online harassment report, Elm Street.
4:43 p.m. Caller advises she has an ongoing noise issue with her downstairs neighbor, Main Road.

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ARCHIVES from page B1

he was rolled out on the gurney, savagely bumping along on the grass, that house went through its own changes.

The woman who lives diagonally across got married and her husband moved in even though he was from Northampton, rather amazing too because not many people from Northampton had moved here but us. This street has been her living room since she was about ten and she's easy about the street. Soon she will move to a country house and we will miss her because nobody can get away with much on the street because of her. Right outside her kitchen window half the action on the street happens. Some of it not so good. She flings the window open and yells "Would you like me to get you a room?" to the teens smoking dope and necking in the soft summer evenings in the schoolyard. Even if the aggravation is coming from a young 6'2" guy her voice will bring the whole street's attention to witness and deter any further action. She's been a godsend.

She's been the policer since she was ten, and we will surely miss her when she goes to the country. We will find ways to bring her back on summer nights when the young people forget that tree belts to them are our front lawns, and the racket from the clusters of swearing teens walking in the middle of the street calls us to our windows. We will think of her and wonder if she would have gone out and told them, "Shut up I can't stand listening to you!" In the country she will have to talk even louder in order for her neighbors to hear her; she will be prepared.

People who buy a place in an



ARIEL JONES PHOTO

Another group portrait from Ariel Jones's 2005 series.

affordable town tend to stay. And, when the years pass, the years build upon one another and slowly the fabric of a neighborhood is evident. It is evident the first time somebody talks about "What happened to those guys in the brick house on the corner?" It is evident because the shape of it, the texture of it, is seen as new people move in and it changes. They don't fit for a while and so you know it has a different shape. The balance of a neighborhood is fragile, and when it rests upon the people who have been there, it is a "whole piece" of life. And the new people come, add newness to it and we don't recognize it again for a while. We watch the fumbling for comfort and place that new people go through, as anybody would. For one thing, when big yellow bins of mixed recyclables and trash sit on the curb for days it sticks out like a sore thumb. New people don't get trash day right.

Her mother who lives next door has the same acute eye for deviance, having three children and raising

them, some of the time on her own. But mostly her recognition of normalcy was sharpened having grown up in New York like me and riding the subways as a child. It was thrilling if our parents didn't know we were riding the marvelous, delicious trains to hell and back never knowing from one minute to the next if we would live through it, or if we would live through the screaming after we had been tattled on by someone in the apartment building. "You could have been killed! You could have been kidnapped! Somebody could have dropped a bomb and where would you be but in there on the subway!!!" Our parents were immigrants, and after the war the bomb figured prominently as the fantastical, cautionary imagery for us. For our parents it was a godsend that worked.

It is important to know the fabric and the history of your own street if you tend to stay in one place, and in order to do that you really have to smoke a cigarette now and again. Of course you shouldn't,

but that is when the histories are shared. People on their porch smoking a cigarette and lifting off into a dreamy time when a car that is new (really just strange) drives by. Or a new face walks down the street and we lower our voices. And the stranger reminds us like a ghost of somebody who lived here. Somebody who left and whose end is unfinished, and so we wonder about them.

Her mother's other daughter lives two doors up the street and has two kids of her own. She left and came back because of unspoken circumstances and she is saving her nickels for her return to North Carolina. But there is something of a consolation at being able to share her two kids with their grandmother, and auntie and uncle. The kids are better natured. Her sitting out on the front stoop to talk and smoke with her mother is now part of the fabric she didn't know she would have wanted.

People who tend to stay in an affordable place accommodate to it, adjust to the texture of it as it is being created. Our street is an accommodating community. Like so many, we ended up here. We wouldn't have said yes if someone asked "Did we intend to ever stay here?" But something wove us into a fabric, here. It is very unlike better-heeled intentional communities. Here we have long lines at the convenience store: people buying scratch tickets, and young kids buying shiny red hotdogs for dinner to go along with the cup o' noodles on the side, balancing basketballs on their hips as they ride their bikes towards the park. It is wild to see them, passionately zooming by in the summer evenings. In intentional communi-

We asked Mary, who still lives there, what is different or the same.

She started with this "observation which is symbolic, too":

"DoorDash delivers to folks within 12 feet of our house, whom I have never met, likely owing – at the very least – to my representing a different demographic, and probably then too to different schedules. When DoorDash has made an error, and delivered to my porch, the food has been on the porch for two-plus days: we don't know who the intended recipients are, or where in that house (what floor, and which mailbox) a note should go."

Mary continued: "Not so much "smoking" on porches – a unifying feature! And not so many children playing ball in the street. There is some nostalgia, as expected, though the slow rolling cars sliding up the street are not missed."

If this jogs for you any desire to write about your own neighborhood here, today or in past memories, we love this stuff and think it's a good use of our shared community newspaper.

Send to editor@montaguereporter.org, mail to 177 Avenue A in Turners Falls, or call (413) 863-8666 to arrange pickup.

– Eds.

ties there aren't re-cycled bicycles leaning on buildings anticipating a flotilla of young boys streaming from the bait shop and heading for the river on a good fishing day.



FROM A TEEN'S POINT OF VIEW

Traditions of the Inuit People

By FINTAN ANDREW JONES

MONTAGUE – A week or so ago, in my Human Geography class – where I get lots of ideas to write about – we had to fill out a packet on native groups all over the world, and what elements make them unique. We were doing research on Jimmy Nelson's photography website.

There were lots of Siberian and native groups in the Arctic Circle. I have always been fascinated with groups that live in extreme conditions, especially the cold, and I got the idea to research and write about the Inuit people.

The Inuit are indigenous people who live in the Subarctic and Arctic regions of Canada and some parts of Russia. They speak many languages. Art is very common in the Inuit culture – they make things such as carvings, textiles, and throat signs. The Inuit eat lots of things in their surrounding environment, such as Arctic char, seals, polar bears, and caribou; they consume lots of fat yet remain healthy, thanks to adaptations over thousands of years.

A typical day for the traditional Inuit would be hunting during the day and making weapons in the evening. They would also eat throughout the day. At night, they would shelter in tents made of animal skins or igloos.

These are the basic activities that would happen, but there are many other things that they do for fun during the day. Many of the Inuit play a version of football, which could help them build endurance and strength. They also make dolls by carving bones and using scraps of animal skin.

Delving more into their home situation, they have two main types of houses. The first is for the winter, when the climate is extremely harsh and they need thick houses to keep them warm. These would usually consist of animal skins and ice blocks, as mentioned before. The northernmost Inuit would rely on igloos, which they learned from other northern indigenous groups; the southern Inuit relied on tents made of ani-

mal skins, held up by wood and anchored by ice blocks.

Their summer homes are very similar to the southern Inuits' housing in the winter. Most of the furniture in their houses is also made either from wood or ice blocks and covered in animal skins.

In terms of their food situation, there is hunting and gathering, meat and fish preservation, and caribou and seal hunting. Hunters and gatherers are always on the move, following animal herds that cycle through many locations. If an Inuit group wants to be more settled, they can fish and gather meat in the summer around them and eat off of the frozen food in the winter. During this fishing and hunting time, they eat excess caribou and seal meat they came across. Caribou and seals also offer oil to fuel their lamps.

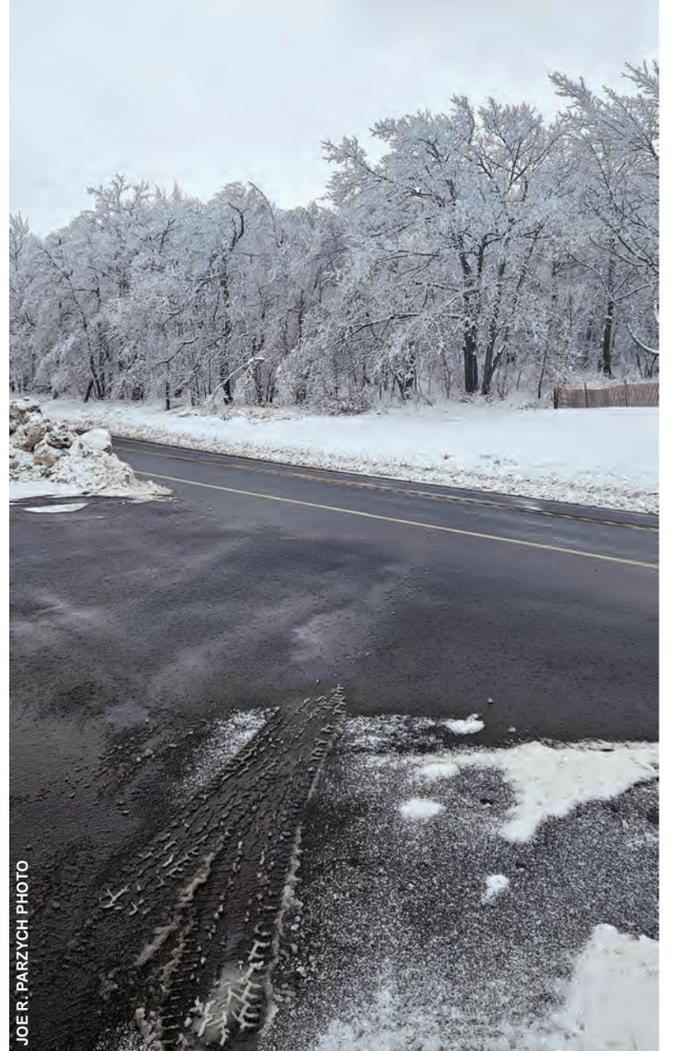
The Inuit have developed many different inventions to help them in their lives. Combining many different animal skins, they have created a warm waterproof jacket that is very useful for fishermen who fish in freezing waters. They have made snow goggles to help with the sun's glare on the Arctic plains, which keep people from becoming "snow blind."

They have also made dog sleds to help get around faster and transport materials. Specific groups along the coast have also made fishing kayaks to help them fish safer and more efficiently. Probably their best invention is the *inukshuk*, a unique stone landmark that tells the Inuit groups where they are in the Arctic plains. Some have cultural symbols on them; some are filled with carvings to communicate from afar; and some even mark good fishing spots.

I find this so interesting, and there is so much I want to know more about. I think it is so cool how they are able to navigate the Arctic without getting lost or sick.

My next article is again inspired by the stuff I am learning about in school. I will be writing about the Roman Empire, and some things that made it so successful – or not – as well as some ways the world would be very different today if the Roman Empire didn't exist.

FACES & PLACES



Our photo beat guy, Joe R. Parzych, took this "wonderful breath of the winter landscape" earlier this month while traveling to the town of Florida. "All through the town, not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse," Joe reported.

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The Children's Page

YONDERNOD ILLUSTRATION

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15

90 King Street, Northampton: *Hedgewitch, Frogtones Frogget, Rebecca Schrader & Marie Carroll*. \$ 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16

Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *Stealing Frequencies*. No cover. 7 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Cinemastorm* double feature: *Road House* (1989) and *Point Break* (1991). Free. 7:30 p.m.

The Drake, Amherst: *Ted Leo*. \$ 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Padded Waltz Lite, Doonward Spiral*. No cover. 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Cadmi-um, Blandest, Bug Slam, I Have No Mouth, Film and Gender*. \$ 6 p.m.

ToriTown, Holyoke: *Bikethrasher, The Buddy System Forever, Nodderly*. \$ 6:30 p.m.

Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *The Bromantics*. No cover. 7 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Arc-A-Palooza*, United Arc benefit, feat. *TJ & the Peepers, Hyfy, Bordertown, John Waynelovich, and Alex Casevant*. \$ 7 p.m.

Mount Toby Friends Meeting-house, Leverett: *Lara Herscovitch*. \$ 7 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Mephiskapheles, The Prozacs, Threat Level Burgundy, Green Street Fiends*. \$ 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Chris Goudreau, The Frost Heaves & HaLeS*. No cover. 9:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18

Bombyx Center, Florence: *Ladysmith Black Mambazo*. \$ 3 p.m. & 7 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Rat Bath, Silvie's Okay, Bubble Scary*. \$ 7 p.m.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20

90 King Street, Northampton: *Frank Hurricane, Otto Benson*. \$ 8 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Wes Brown & Friends*. No cover. 8 p.m.

Parlor Room, Northampton: *Matt Pond PA, Alexa Rose*. \$ 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22

Shea Theater, Turners Falls:

50th Anniversary Celebration of Lovejoy's Nuclear War. Documentary screening, *Montague Marching Band*. \$ 7 p.m.

Holyoke Media, Holyoke: *Tomas Fujiwara's 7 Poets Trio, Tomeka Reid Quartet*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Two Step Night with Les Taiauts, The Honky Tonk Angels*. Free. 7 p.m.

The Drake, Amherst: *Native Sun, Dead Tooth, The Baxbys*. \$ 8 p.m.

90 King Street, Northampton: *Film & Gender, Bubble Scary, Sgraffito Kill, KO Queen*. \$ 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Bluegrass and Beyond*. No cover. 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24

Bookends, Florence: *Yiddish Labor Anthems Sing-A-Long*. By donation. Benefit. 4 p.m.

ToriTown, Holyoke: *Vices Inc., Plague Dad, Bugslam, Rain House*. \$ 6:30 p.m.

Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *Tracy and Company*. No cover. 7 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Fashion Show & Gala*. \$ 7 p.m.

The Clark, Williamstown: *Ice Rasta, Father Hotep*. \$ 7 p.m.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *Ezzy P, Hardcar*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *An Evening With the Cowboy Junkies*. \$ 8 p.m.

Club B10, North Adams: *Johana Hedva*. \$ 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Aradia, LeSaint*. No cover. 9:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25

Bombyx Center, Florence: *Re-birth Brass Band*. \$ 7 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28

Carney Auditorium, UMass Amherst: The Performance Project's *First Generation* presents *Mother Tongue*. Free. 5 p.m.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 29

Bombyx Center, Florence: *Bill Frisell Three* feat. *Gregory Tardy, Rudy Royston*. \$ 6:30 p.m.

90 King St., Northampton: *Wildflower, Magick Lantern, Julia Sabbagh, Holy Basil*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 1

Nova Arts, Keene: *Wildflower, Mike Gangloff & Liam Grant, Caitlin Wilder*. \$ 7 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Pe-rennial, Trophy Wife, Bubble Scary*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Puddles Pity Party*. \$ 8 p.m.

looking forward...

SATURDAY, MARCH 2

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Thus Love, Flossing, Petra-core*. \$ 7 p.m.

SUNDAY, MARCH 3

Holyoke Media, Holyoke: *Flywheel Arts* presents *Mike Gangloff, Liam Grant, Frozen Corn*. \$ 7 p.m.

SUNDAY, MARCH 17

Academy of Music, Northampton: *Richard Thompson*. \$ 8 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *Nadah El Shazly, Eve Essex*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 29

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Goblet, The Leafies You Gave Me, Hot Dirt, Cheap City*. \$ 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, APRIL 26

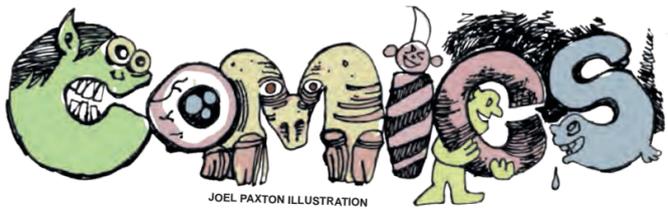
Nova Arts, Keene: *Michael Hurley, Stella Kola*. \$ 7 p.m.

THURSDAY, MAY 9

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

FRIDAY, MAY 10

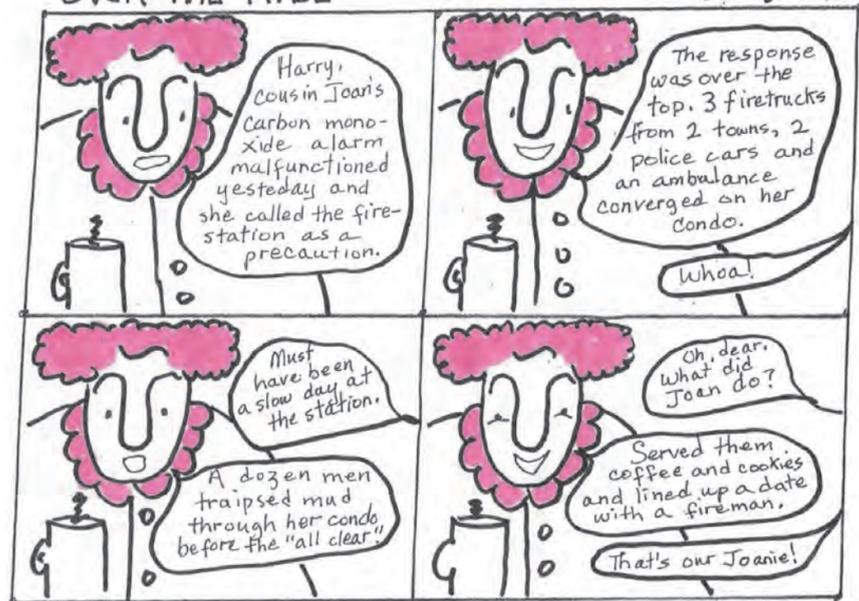
Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Rickie Lee Jones*. \$ 8 p.m.



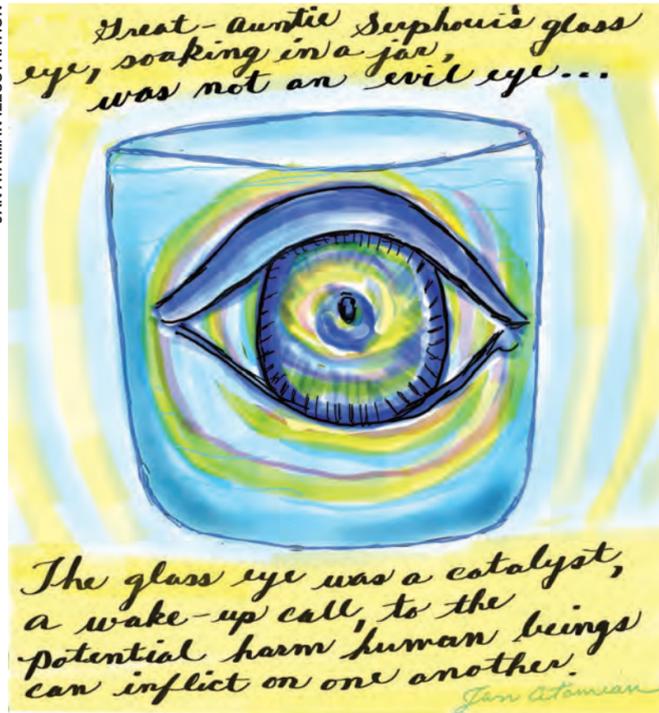
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The Montague Reporter Podcast

BOOK REVIEW from page B1

to make good on his promised answer to the mystery. It doesn't come. The mystery is eventually solved – not without some alarming plot developments – but by the time we get the big reveal, interest in it takes second place to interest in the city.

The exploration of Reykjavik and its people gives this novel substance. Each dated section shows the city changing. In 1956 the iconic modern cathedral has only just broken ground. In 1966 Icelanders are thrilled to get television finally. In every decade more and more houses are being built.

Now over 60% of Iceland's population of 360,000 live in Reykjavik or in its suburbs, most of them prosperously, and some, like Óttar and Ólöf, very much so. As are their friends. The city has a thriving culture of cafés and performances and art exhibitions. It's a happening place for twenty-somethings like Valur and his sister Sunna, who, like so many people in the city, have been drawn there from Iceland's scatter of tiny towns and isolated farmsteads.

The authors are well-equipped to write about this. Katrin Jakobsdóttir wrote a thesis on Icelandic crime writer Arnaldur Indriðason, then worked as a freelance writer and editor, became a member of Parliament, and since 2017 has been Iceland's Prime Minister. Who better to tell the story of the capital city?

Her co-author, Ragnar Jónasson, has published best-selling novels, many of them translated into other languages. He has also translated 14 of Agatha Christie's novels

into Icelandic. Indeed, *Reykjavik* is dedicated to Christie, who wrote 66 detective novels and numerous short stories, and is credited by the authors with having "inspired our love of detective stories."

One of the elements that *Reykjavik* shares with Christie's novels is its setting in the well-established upper-middle-class. In Christie's case this is often the great and good of English village life; in the case of *Reykjavik*, it is the commercial and political establishment of Iceland's capital.

In *Reykjavik* and in Christie's books the younger generation are the up-and-comers. They're smart, energetic, and often plagued with anxieties. Unfortunately, bad things sometimes happen to them, and that changes the course of the story,

Like Christie, Jónasson and Jakobsdóttir scatter crumbs of information along the way. In retrospect, had these been seized, the solution to the mystery would have perhaps been revealed. As it is, these authors are happy enough to spirit the answer out of some unsuspected bag, and while the character, Kristján, Valur, and others have been trying so hard to identify has been a presence throughout the novel, readers may not find this *dénouement* quite convincing.

Indeed, as a crime story the tale of Lára's disappearance lacks substance on its own, as do many of Christie's tales. Christie typically props them up with one of her charismatic amateur detectives – Hercule Poirot, for example, or that brainy old lady Miss Marple. Jónasson and Jakobsdóttir focus on

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different people each trying to find the answer to the disappearance. This diffuses the potential fascination of any single one of them. Instead, fascination is left to their city, which increases in breadth and sheer emotional density as we read.

Beginning with the medieval sagas – mythic records of Iceland's early history – Iceland has a tradition of noir fiction, exemplified in the work of Indriðason and in Jónasson's own novels. Though he co-authored *Reykjavik*, Scandinavian

blackness does not characterize its tone. The energy of the city pervades the book, while the mystery of Lára's disappearance is a dark streak in its history, reminding us that things are not always what they appear to be.



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