The Montague Reporter

YEAR 22 – NO. 16

also serving Erving, Gill, Leverett and Wendell

\$1.50

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

MARCH 14, 2024

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Towns See Light at the End Of Hydro Relicensing Tunnel

By JEFF SINGLETON

TURNERS FALLS - The "long-awaited moment is here," wrote Andrea Donlon of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments to Montague town officials on March 1.

Donlon was referring to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)'s green light for the FirstLight power company to apply for a state water quality certification of its proposed federal license to operate the Turners Falls dam and power canal. This could be the last stage in a process that has lasted for over a decade.

"We thought that could have

begun as soon as last June," Montague town administrator Steve Ellis told the selectboard at its Monday meeting, referring to the water quality go-ahead. "The moment is finally here."

Ellis explained that the federal agency's declaration "kicks off" a process during which the state Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) will review First-Light's requested 50-year licenses for its hydroelectric projects at Turners Falls, as well as the Northfield Mountain pumped-storage station, to ensure that the agreements would not violate Massachusetts water quality standards.

see MONTAGUE page A8

A MOSSY CLIMB



From the Route 63 trailhead in Leverett, Mount Toby is quickly breathtaking. After passing a cataract and clambering up sharply through mosses and spring ferns, the hiker soon reaches the road that provides a more leisurely route to the summit.

GILL SELECTBOARD

Board Leaning Toward Declining Gift of House

By KATE SAVAGE

At their meeting on Monday, the Gill selectboard once more delayed the decision of whether to accept the property at 19 Boyle Road, a former schoolhouse which Renee Jenkins bequeathed to the town in her will.

Gill historical commission chair Kit Carpenter reported that the commission unanimously recommended against accepting the bequest. "We couldn't find a way to justify the expenses and the labor it would cost to renovate the house for another use," she said.

Carpenter added the commission

would like to honor the historical importance of the home and the families who lived there, whether through a plaque, a pamphlet, or a video of the historically relevant parts of the house.

Tupper Brown reported that another Gill resident is in the process of learning more from lawyers about how the town could take ownership of the home and potentially sell it.

Selectboard chair Randy Crochier disagreed with this option. "I think it would be morally wrong for the town of Gill to accept this and then sell it," he said. "I don't think

see GILL page A6

G-M SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Four Paras, One Teacher Cut to Balance School Budget

By MIKE JACKSON

GILL-MONTAGUE – From an initial shortfall of over \$702,000 in next year's budget after state educational aid revenue came in much lower than they expected, Gill-Montague regional school district administrators reduced the amount that will impact the staffing budget to about \$150,000. On Tuesday night, the school committee unanimously approved a final budget that will remove six positions – four first-grade paraprofessionals, one fourth-grade teacher, and a lunch monitor – from the staffing rolls.

According to superintendent Brian Beck, most of the reductions will be accomplished by moving staff into unfilled positions, though the lunch monitor may lose their job.

Heidi Schmidt, president of the Gill-Montague Educational Association (GMEA) staff union, told the Reporter she believed the fourth-grade teacher, one of three at Sheffield Elementary, was being offered an unfilled fifth-grade teaching position.

The net loss of four first-grade paraprofessionals at Hillcrest Elementary comes on the heels of a see GMRSD page A2

LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

ALPS Towns Concerned By High School **Staffing Cuts**

By GEORGE BRACE

Leverett's selectboard met with the town's school and finance committees on Tuesday to discuss revisions to the proposed FY'25 Leverett Elementary School (LES) budget and finalize the overall town budget ahead of a hearing scheduled for March 26. The board also heard an update on the status of the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District budget.

Last month the school committee presented a draft budget seeking a 6.21% increase in town funding over the current year. The selectboard responded by asking the committee to seek cuts "in the spirit of compromise" toward meeting the town's guidance of a maximum 2.5% increase in departmental budgets halfway.

The committee came back Tuesday with a revised budget of \$2,251,936, which would represent a 4.35% increase over FY'24. Committee members said they had gone through the budget line by line and identified six lines that could be reduced.

The lengthy and civil discussion that ensued among the three bodies

see LEVERETT page A7

'Every Day is Different!'



Turners Falls native Kimberly Williams built a thriving set of family-oriented enterprises – as well as the town's largest theater – before turning 40. From the sound of it, she isn't planning to slow down anytime soon.

By MIKE JACKSON

THE BIG PICTURE

TURNERS FALLS - "It's organized chaos," Kim Williams tells me early on in our tour of the Ja'Duke complex. "But it runs very smoothly." This phrase, it turns out, will come up repeatedly as Williams marches through the complex, unveiling seemingly endless facets of the business she began with her father in 2004, half a lifetime ago.

It is a Friday morning, and the Ja'Duke Preschool is in full swing. In the name of journalism we poke our head into some classrooms and cut through others. From a single room in 2007 the preschool has grown to 180 children – 120 a day, with a waitlist of over 90.

"If you know you're pregnant," she warns me, "your spouse or significant other should be your first call, and then the daycare should be the second call. It's that crazy. People are thinking about having a baby, they call us. We say 'Perfect, just put Baby Unknown and we'll get you on the list!"

The walls of each room are painted a different bold color, and Williams points out the clever ways the spaces transform each afternoon to accommodate the K-12 after-school program at the enterprise's heart, the Ja'Duke Center for the Performing Arts - and to serve as changing rooms for the Ja'Duke Theater.

Upstairs is a jaw-dropping storehouse of costumes, props, and early childhood toys, every item QR-coded for easy retrieval, and in the rear of the complex we find a full welding and wood workshop and a large machine digitally printing 40-by-17-foot sections of theater backdrop on vinyl.

Nick Waynelovich, Williams's father and the company's co-owner, sits supervising the printer. "Ja'Duke has a very unique philosophy about business - it's 'outsource nothing," he explains. "We were spending a lot of money on drops, and there's a market. We took it.... We bought our own floor machine and do our own carpets, because it cost a lot of money, and that way we are employing people around here."

A Turners Falls seamstress stitches four of these panels together to create each full backdrop, and there are 500 now boxed up and stored to be rented out to

theaters around the country.

Williams leads me through another door and we emerge at the rear of a gigantic stage, looking out at a 547-seat theater, a section of the complex built in 2018 and 2019. As a preschool class plays dance games on the stage, I am treated to a whistle-stop tour of the theater's high-tech sound and lighting gear.

"What happens if performers miss a cue?" I ask, squinting at the synchronizing software.

"Oh," Williams says, surprised at the question. "Nope. They don't miss cues. They're pretty solid."

And we haven't even gotten to the lobby café and ice cream scoop shop – or the driving school.

Besides these affiliated businesses, Ja'Duke is leasing upstairs spaces to Williams's brother John, who runs a music school as well as Tabata Songs, which re-records popular music for interval training for over a million YouTube subscribers, and her sister Lisa, the chief financial officer at Duracell.

My head is swimming by the time we sit down to the actual interview.

Williams's desk is centrally located and comfortingly cluttered, and signs stuck to the wall bear sound advice (Be Where Your Boots Are; Dreams Don't Work Unless You Do; Hockey Mom) and recent well-wishes (Happy Birthday Ms. Kim Love The Blue Room; Happy Birthday Kimboss from Your Fabulous Team!).

Williams was generous with her time, and I have had to greatly abridge the following transcript, and reorder and edit it for clarity.

MR: I'm just trying to get my head around the rate of expansion that you've gone through.

KW: It's very, very progressive... I began Ja'Duke in 2004 when I was a sophomore in college, as a tiny one-room dance studio in downtown Turners. We made our way up here in 2007, built half this building, started to expand, built a little bit more.

MR: Where were you downtown?

KW: We were in the Colle Opera House, in the basement. It was horrible: no windows, and it was this long room, which was terrible for dancers because you had no

see JA'DUKE page A4

Nevt Rest Thing To Scrolling TikTok

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The Montague Reporter

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August 2002

GMRSD from page A1

long collective bargaining period for the Unit C contract, under which these instructional assistants are represented, and amid ongoing complaints that understaffing the schools' paras this year has had a negative effect on working and educational conditions.

"Cutting math specialists will not support our students," Ramona LaTronica, a librarian in the district, warned the committee during the meeting's public comment period. "Cutting Grade 1 paraprofessionals and counselors will not support our students, cutting currently unfilled positions will not support our students – cutting positions, period, will not support our students."

Some confusion arose during the meeting as the budget presentation included the line "First Grade Instructional Asisstants (2 unfilled)" on the list of "Reductions."

"We're only cutting two paras?" Gill member Cristina Marcalow asked.

"There are only two people in positions that are filled currently," business manager Joanne Blier replied.

"There are no employees impacted by the two unfilled positions for the remainder of the year," Beck clarified, "but there are two employees who are currently working as first-grade paraprofessionals who would be offered another position in the district."

"There's two unfilled that will be removed," Marcalow summarized, "in addition to –"

"In addition to two more," said Blier.

"So it's actually four positions?"
"Yeah."

In response to a question from Montague member Wendy Thompson, Beck said the two currently working first-grade paras would be offered other paraprofessional positions in the district, and possibly even within Hillcrest Elementary.

The administrators explained their logic in pinpointing the fourth grade for the reduction from three to two teachers at Sheffield. The presentation included a chart of historical and projected class sizes, showing that this year's third grade is the smallest in the school. The projected count of 42, they said, could therefore be split into two classes of 21 rather than three of 14.

"[Sheffield principal] Kerry Heathwaite and I have already acknowledged that [for] fourth grade at Sheffield, we're not going to have any school choice positions open during next year, because we do have to effectively also manage that class size," Beck told the committee.

One other eliminated position – an unfilled behavioral analyst job at the middle and high school – was effectively balanced by the addition this spring of a new English language learner teacher. "The caseload substantially increased for ESL students with an addition of at least 20 students who have moved into the district [this year] who need additional support," Beck explained. "And that was immediate – we posted for that position right away, and within the last few weeks added on that support."

In the end, the school committee voted 9-0 to approve the final budget, with a general-fund expenditure of \$24,048,879, to go to the towns for approval at town meetings this spring.

"It's really the worst feeling to have to look at that much of a cut," said chair Jane Oakes. "I'm hoping we're going to come out the other side in another year."

"My vote will be coming from a place of seeing so much work done to make sure that head count was preserved," said Marcalow. "I really am appreciate of that as a community member."

"Some people come to us and wonder why we can't just spend more money." said Gill member Bill Tomb. "The reason is because we are not the people that are providing the money. We're only operating with what is given to us."

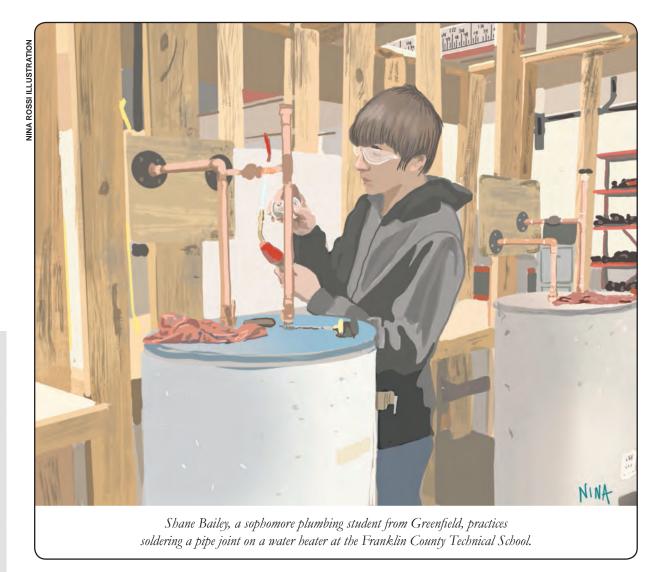
Schmidt told the *Reporter* that she worried about the impact of permanently reducing the staff ratio at the elementary school.

"It's already challenging with the numbers, the way they are right now, and so it's just going make it harder," she said. "People are really worried about how to make it work for the upcoming year, and the people that I've talked to have been very concerned. Hopefully we can keep the staff that we have."

Candidates interested in running for school committee this spring must take out papers and turn in signatures by April 1 in Gill and April 3 in Montague.

Clifford Spatcher, Lori-Lee Adams, and Carol Jacobs are all filling seats that will be up for election in Montague. In Gill, Marcalow is reaching the end of her term.

"I won't be running for my term
- I'm going to be taking a maternity leave," she announced. "If you know anyone in Gill, start talking to them – we would need a Gill representative."





Local Jewish Residents Call for Gaza Ceasefire

I am working with a small group of Jewish residents of Greenfield and Franklin County to write a letter and collect signatures to demonstrate support for a ceasefire resolution expected to be considered next week by the Greenfield City Council.

We are organizing Jewish support in Franklin County because the call for a ceasefire is being characterized by some as antisemitic, and the City Council has been getting a lot of pressure from outside our region.

I am heartbroken and outraged as a Jewish person joining with so many other voices desperately calling for the violence and siege Israel is inflicting on Palestinians in Gaza to stop.

Please sign this statement at www.tinyurl.com/GreenfieldCouncil if you would like to join us. Your name and address or precinct number will not be shared publicly at any time, only with organizers of the petition and the Greenfield City Council. Jewish residents of other towns in the county are invited to add their support:

"We ask the Greenfield City Council to vote in favor of a resolution for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza. We are signing onto this letter as Jewish residents of Greenfield and Franklin County.

"We hope that our community can come together to call for peace. We hope that our city, joining with the more than 70 other US municipalities that have passed ceasefire resolutions, can send a strong message to our state and federal decision

makers that this senseless loss of life must end. We view our support of a ceasefire as in alignment with our Jewish histories and values.

"As members of a people that has survived genocide and mass pogroms, we oppose attacking or mistreating innocent civilians of ANY faith, nationality, or ethnicity. We firmly reject the notion that calling for peace and for freedom, justice, and equality for Palestinians is antisemitic. Instead, for many of us, it is specifically because we are Jewish that speaking out is a necessity. We refuse to remain silent when atrocities are being committed.

"We urge you to join us in calling for an end to US complicity in the bombing and annihilation of Gaza and for the removal of obstacles to urgently needed humanitarian aid."

As of midday on Tuesday, March 12 we had 97 responses, representing even more people as many people had signed on behalf of their households.

Johanna Rosen Montague

Tegel: No Warning of Dropped Insurance

Baystate doctors will no longer accept United Healthcare AARP Medicare Advantage. This is the insurance for many, many seniors. Call and check if your doctor is covered under this program: 1(800)711-0646.

This includes all doctors in the Baystate Medical system, your specialists at Sanderson Street, etc. You will now incur high office visit costs, and your routine medication is in jeopardy. It may take months to find a physician, and your care is in flux.

As a result I have discussed with Patients Relations at Baystate Hospital, (413) 794-0000, of the huge medical crisis: the increase in patients in the ER, and patients' medications. So I recommend you call Baystate and state your concerns.

Patients were not notified of this change.

Betty Tegel Turners Falls

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Published weekly on Thursdays.

Every other week in July and August. No paper the fourth week of November, or the final week of December.

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Compiled by NINA ROSSI

Learn about the lifestyles of local nesting birds such as Eastern bluebirds, tree swallows, chickadees, nuthatches and house wrens at a presentation by Beth Bazler tonight, Thursday March 14, at 6 p.m. at the Northfield Mountain Recreation Center.

Staff and volunteers at the center have built and monitored nesting boxes for these species, and Bazler will talk about how human interventions have had both positive and negative impacts on Massachusetts bird populations. Learn about volunteer opportunities, such as making weekly visits to the boxes at the Center to count eggs or putting up bird boxes on your own property.

No registration is required. For adults and kids ages 10 and older.

Artspace in Greenfield offers a Spring Stamp Open Studio this Saturday, March 16 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Drop in any time for this all-ages, open-studio activity and make your own stamped floral artwork. There's a suggested donation of \$10.

Four new exhibits open at the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center this Saturday, March 16, with a party at 5 p.m. with music by DJ Producer Plug, Afghan food by Taza Bread, and a cash bar run by the Stone Church.

The works in the new exhibits explore topics such as the myths of the Zodiac, the relationship between humans and the natural world, the interplay between physical and psychological states of being, and the artistry of rapper Killah Priest. They'll be up until June 16.

Abdou Sarr will perform Senegalese music and dance this Saturday, March 16 at 7 p.m. at the Wendell Meetinghouse.

Sarr provides vocals and dance, with Thioko Afia Diagne on Sabar drums and Mountakha Latif on balaphone, playing both traditional and original songs with a strong

dance element. The performance is free, and all ages are welcome.

There's a French/Breton Jam **Session** at the Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls this Sunday, March 17, from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. This is an informal gathering of musicians playing traditional dance music from France and Brittany, commonly known as bal folk. It's not a performance but rather a coming together of musically minded friends, open to the public to come and go as they please.

For all ages, in the Great Hall.

St. Patrick's Day is this Sunday, March 17. Enjoy a free 3:30 p.m. showing of the 1996 Irish heritage movie Michael Collins while the corned beef simmers, courtesy of the Greenfield Garden Cinemas and Fitzgerald Real Estate.

There'll be a free concert by the Connecticut River Flute Choir at 2 p.m. this Sunday, March 17 in the Community Room of the Erving Library.

There's also a make-and-take Craft Day event at 1 p.m. with the Friends of the Library. Materials are provided. Register for a spot by calling (413) 423-3348.

LifePath is offering an online workshop on minor home modifications for aging in place next Tuesday, March 19 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Mark Devlin from LifePath's home safety program will discuss common home modifications that eliminate hazards, reduce risks, and increase access. Learn new ideas and determine how well your home is set up for aging in place through a guided review of a HomeFit/Safe@Home checklist. A question and answer period follows the presentation.

A \$5 registration fee is required; register at *tinyurl.com/home-mod*.

Youth Climate Action of Frankpark at 20 Sanderson Street, the Greenfield city offices, in Greenfield. They're interested in hearing ideas from community members about this space: What features, activities, plants, furniture, or other things would make you want to Looky Here Magazine Issue Two spend time there?

If you are interested in contributing to this brainstorm, stop by their table at 20 Sanderson Street next Tuesday, March 19, between 2:30 and 6 p.m. Can't make it then, but have ideas? Write to Peter at p.wackernagel@gmail.com.

The Rendezvous, at 78 Third Street in Turners Falls, is hosting a Pysanky egg decorating event led by Anne Harding next Tuesday, March 19 at 6:30 p.m. All supplies will be provided. This event is part of the programming surrounding the "New Roots in River Banks" exhibit, about Eastern European immigrants and their contributions in the valley, on view at the Discovery Center now through April.

The next Local Author reading on Wednesday, March 20 at the Montague Center Library features Kate Spencer reading from her recently published book, The Cat Who Walked the Camino at 6 p.m.

Spencer will talk about her trip to Spain, which inspired the story, as well as the process of writing, illustrating, and publishing the book.

The LAVA Center in Greenfield presents General House and Buildings, a live music project from local musician Steve Koziol, next Thursday, March 21 at 5:30 p.m.

This is a coffeehouse-style concert where you can hang out, draw, write, make art, and come and go as you please. There is a suggested donation of \$2 to \$5 (or \$1 for Card-to-Culture).

The Millers Falls Community Improvement Association will meet next Thursday, March 21 at 6:30 p.m. at the Millers library branch. "We will be discussing fundraising for redoing the mural as well as community events," they write. "Pitch in to make your village the best it can be!"

Looky Here in Greenfield is hosting back-to-back publication releases, with a new poetry book by Chris Weisman, The Timeless Point of Expansion of Bohemian Life, coming out first on Friday, lin County is planning a pocket March 22. The book, printed by Hannah Brookman on Looky's risograph, will be welcomed into

the world with music by Elie McAfee-Hahn during the celebration from 7 to 9 p.m.

Saturday, March 23 is when will be released, with a cupcake party from 1 to 3 p.m. There will be readings from contributing writers, and an admission fee of \$20 includes a copy of the magazine and a cupcake.

The Great Falls Coffeehouse concert series at the Discovery Center in Turners Falls begins a new year with All Cooped Up!, a concert by members of the Franklin County Musicians' Cooperative, on Saturday, March 23 at 7 p.m.

The "Coopsters" will mix it up in duos, solos, and small groups to provide a mix of folk, rock, country, Celtic, jazz, swing, and more. Refreshments will be available, and a \$6 to \$15 donation from adults is suggested; children are welcome to attend at no charge.

The Montague Public Libraries announced they are the recipient of a \$20,000 Libraries Transforming Communities grant to improve services for vision- and hearing-impaired patrons with collections and resources designed for them.

The libraries will be soliciting feedback from the community to help determine what these needs are. If you are interested in getting involved, contact director Caitlin Kelley at librarydirector@ montague-ma.gov.

The Gill-Montague Senior Center invites anyone 60 years of age or older to bring technology and device questions about smartphones, laptops, and tablets to a free weekly Senior Tech Time any Tuesday from 12:30 to 2 p.m. at the senior center, 62 Fifth Street in Turners Falls. No appointment is needed - just stop by with the device you need help with.

Aging With Humor and Grace is a monthly conversation group for elders in a spiritual frame of mind. The first session is Tuesday, April 9 at 10:30 a.m. at Faith Church, 331 Silver Street in Greenfield. All spiritual beliefs will be respected, and the group meets on the second Tuesday of each month. For more information, email undomesticatedmind@gmail.com.

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TURNERS FALLS CULTURAL DISTRICT **MEETING**

We had 80+ responses to the 2024 Cultural District Survey!

Join RiverCulture on THURSDAY, MARCH 21 6:30-7:30pm VIA ZOOM

To Discuss the Results

https://tinyurl.com/3x22d4wx

Learn About Summer Events and How You Can Plug Into the Excitement!

View the Agenda on the Town Calendar https://montague-ma.gov



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BOOK LAUNCH JOURNEYS OF VOICES & CHOICES by ERNIE BRILL SUN. APRIL 7TH • 3pm

66 AVENUE A • TURNERS FALLS

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

'Entertainment Brings Enrichment'

GILL-MONTAGUE - Enrichment is "meaningful instruction." Enrichment is not only academic, but can include Student Government, Physical Education, Music, and Art. At one time, "enrichments" were part of the day-to-day learning environment. They were included in the school budgets, but no longer!

In 2005, the Gill-Montague Education Fund accepted the challenge to enrich the lives of their students with an Annual Gala. Our Gala brings quality entertainment to our communities with a variety of performers and raises money to enrich the educational opportunities available to students.

With our Enrichment Grants,

every aspect of Gill-Montague students' education has been broadened with hands-on opportunities in technology, culinary arts, all-school plays, and field trips to the Hitchcock Center, Northfield Mountain, Sturbridge Village, New York City, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and various planetariums and aquariums.

The Enrichment Grants go beyond the ordinary field trips -- including a Broadway classroom, a Paris luncheon, a Hawaiian luau, and participating in environmental/ cultural programs, where they encounter a larger world as they integrate themselves into the communities. Beyond their own growth, students have become our "ambassadors of enrichment."

Our Galas have made possible over \$126,840 in Enrichment Grants. Each year when our Annual Report is filed with the Attorney General's Office, we are proud and energized to learn that more than 99% of the revenue earned is returned to our students. Our Gala is a wonderful opportunity to enjoy an amazing evening of entertainment and support Student Enrichment!

On Saturday, April 27 at 7 p.m., the GMEF is excited to welcome to the TFHS Theater, Piano Men: Double Bill - "Billy & Elton!". Anton Doran and The Tampa Bay All Stars will re-create the music of Billy Joel and Elton John with ma-

terial from all eras of each artist's career, presenting their biggest hits along with new generations of fan favorites, including Benny & the Jets, Tiny Dancer, Movin' Out, You May Be Right, I'm Still Standing, Piano Man, and many more.

Tickets are \$30 in advance, and \$35 at the door. They are available at Hillside Pizza in Bernardston, Weatherheads Store in Erving, World Eye Bookshop in Greenfield, Bobby's Hair & Nail in Northfield, Freedom Credit Union, Greenfield Savings Bank, and Scotty's in Turners Falls, and at www.thegmef.org.

For more information about our grants and the annual gala, go to www.thegmef.org.

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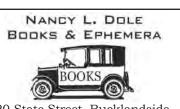
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JA'DUKE from page A1

depth, you could basically do things across the floor and that was about it. I taught dance full-time while I was going to college and opened this studio. The experience I had was like, "I'm good at dancing, and I think I'm a good teacher, so we'll see what happens..." and boom!

MR: And your dad had been doing Ja'Duke first?

KW: He started doing show musicals under the Ja'Duke name in 1997. He would do one musical a summer as Ja'Duke Productions, to help pay for college for his four kids, basically.... When I was 16 I started to choreograph for the musicals. I had the skill set, and that's sort of how I inserted myself into the mix.

I was doing dancing – the theater part of it came a little bit later. I went to a pretty high-level, high-expectation dance school in Easthampton. I actually went all the way to the world championships in Germany for dance, it was pretty intense.

And as a teenager my dance teachers would ask me to run classes, and run private lessons with the kids who were behind. I knew I had that gift of mentoring and helping people along, and so when I started actually teaching it came natural.

We basically incorporated in 2004 together as partners. I was living at college, Fitchburg State University, and teaching dance on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. My senior year we were building this building, and in 2007 we moved in.

We had a Phase Two basically planned out then, but we thought it would never happen: it was way far off, and so expensive. And then we were spending a lot of money renting other theaters - it was a pain point, because you're you're having to move your whole operations to a facility, and wasting so much time and money at that facility trying to get quality performance.

And then facilities started to not want to rent to us. It's tough with schools - you're working around their schedule, which makes sense, but they also don't love that you're in there, and I could see a future of not being able to to rent out.

So we started to walk down the road: What would it cost? What could the financing look like? And we just started to say, in a step of faith, "I think we gotta do this."

I also found out I was pregnant with my fourth at the same time, unexpectedly. We did all that in that year, and then we were open for six months to the day and COVID came.

MR: How many branches are there now?

KW: There's Preschool, Center, Theater, and Driving. And then my dad takes care of the backdrop scene shop and the fabrication – he handles all that and all of his employees, and I handle the four directors of those branches, who are lovely women. [They] report to me, and their employees report to them, so I basically only oversee the directors, which is really nice for me.

MR: Is there crossover in staffing between the school and the theater?

KW: Yep, the school and the Center have crossover. The Theater are sort their own thing.

Like, the teacher who's teaching dance works in the preschool twice a week, and then teaches dance three



"These blocks are for Matilda – we have a whole block plot where all the blocks move and they spell different stuff, it's pretty fun."

nights a week, so they basically get full-time hours by doing the cross.

MR: Does the preschool feed the Center?

KW: Everyone in the preschool gets singing, dancing, and acting every week. From toddlers up until they graduate, every week, they'll do the three disciplines. It looks different for every age and every class, but it's so good for their bodies and brains and development.

And that's something that makes this program very unique – some of these kids will never go on to be in the Center, but at a very critical time in their life they have experienced arts, so it's pretty cool.

MR: Do you have ways you're looking to expand capacity in the future?

KW: Yeah – a new building, a new facility. We've put in some offers to various buildings and it wasn't the right fit, but I would say in the next year there's definitely going to be a new building somewhere, basically replicating what we're doing here.

MR: Minus the theater?

KW: Correct. Because hopeful-We began construction in 2018. ly it'll be close enough that they can come here for their performances, right? It's expected that when you're going to perform you've gotta travel a little bit. They're spoiled here that they can run over and have their theater right here, you know, get to do their stage rotation and all that.

MR: How big is the payroll?

KW: We have 36 full-time equivalent [staff], so pretty big.

MR: Kind of not as many as I was expecting, though!

KW: We're hard workers. I do a lot – I'm still in the weeds. My dad is still in the weeds. We're not the type of people that are going to grow to be a huge corporation and step out.

And there is an "if I get hit by the bus" method where this could totally go on without me and it would be okay, but I like to feel like I have input and am needed sometimes. But more in a mentor way than in running a day-to-day business, if that makes sense.

Our lawyers and accountant said,

"You need a plan, because you can't do everything – you have four kids, and you need a way to be able to step out if you need to."

MR: To have all the work be role-based and well-documented can be a lot of work in and of itself.

KW: Yes. And I think with the idea of expanding, you have to be in a place where you can be away from this facility, if you're needed at the other facility. I think we're finally at a place of leadership where that's a reality, which is why I'm pretty serious about another facility.

Because, you're there. You can feel it. You can feel it in the vision, you can feel it on the leadership team, you can feel that drive.

MR: The leadership team being the four directors, and you? **KW:** And my dad.

MR: He's seeming like an ad-

junct – it's not a fifth branch, but –

KW: Yes, it's just not under my wing. I'm sure someday it will be -I fear that day. But that's his baby and he loves it, so it's great..... He's one of those people that when he's gone, you're gonna realize everything he did. He does so much that you can't quantify it, but he's also just in his own little world with his backdrops and loving life.

It's an interesting dynamic. But I think it's a needed dynamic, because at some point there's going to be an exit, and I'm going to be left with the balance. And I've got to figure that out.

MR: Are you a numbers person? **KW:** I majored in accounting. [Laughs.] I don't know....

When I start a new venture, I'm going to be the one doing it, and then I'm going to teach someone how to do it, and they're going to take it over. And I will just make sure it's getting done.

Which I don't really have a problem, these people do their job – like for the preschool, the director will handle all the licensing, all the enrollment, all the paperwork for that is a large portion of her job.

But I am a visionary through and through. Like, I am an entrepreneur, visionary at heart. I would not say I'm super - I think my husband would say I'm not detail-oriented.

MR: You're a delegator.

KW: I think that I surround myself with people who are detail-oriented, and my weaknesses are their strength. Which is why it's such a good team here – we genuinely care about each other and want to see each other succeed. Where they may have weaknesses, I can come in.

MR: Have you studied leadership directly? Do you read books on it?

KW: A lot of books. So many books. I listen to a lot of podcasts.

I majored in business management with an accounting concentration, but I've learned a lot from experiences – and I do look to other people who have been through similar things for wisdom and guidance.

But it's also one of those things that you get better at. The first time you do something, it's hard. And then you learn, like, how could I have done that better? How could I have approached that person in a different way, or how could I have mentored them in a different way? And then you get better at it.

MR: Who have your mentors been in leadership?

KW: Oh, that's a good question. So, closely, my dad is really good at leading people. He's a real good leader. In the beginning years, when I had to have tough conversations, he would lead them. And now I'm the one leading the tough conversations, so I've learned that from him.

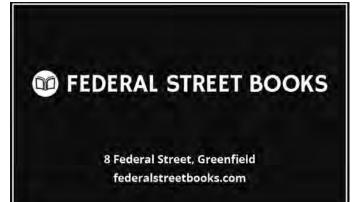
Oddly enough, I listen to a lot of pastors who concentrate in leadership. Because I feel like the church can be a very complicated place, and it's full of broken people and that's the world, and how they handle things can be a really good indication - because there's love and grace and forgiveness in that, and taking that into leadership is important, right?

It's not a it's not a dictatorship - you're working with people, and everyone is different and everyone's circumstances are different. So I glean a lot from that kind of leadership style.

MR: I imagine churches are actually, in a lot of cases, some of the closest institutions logistically to what you're doing here: you're doing schools, and food, and the show...

KW: Yeah! It is pretty interesting, see JA'DUKE next page

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JA'DUKE from previous page

I guess I never thought of it that way. But it makes sense that a lot of what I can learn is from that setup.

MR: That said, it seems like there's connections between the parts – there's kind of a pipeline that you have, in some ways.

KW: There's so much interconnected, and that's intentional - you never want to have the feeling of this branch is over here, and this branch is over there....You have all these people who have a common interest, and a common mission. So you have to get them all together and get them on the same page to that mission, which is to serve your community, to serve families, to be a hub in the community, an art space.

But what's crazy is you have to be intentional about creating that. That's not going to happen on its own, no way. You have to create intentional time for that to happen: through interactions, through things you set up to happen, outings or all-employee meetings or whatever you're going to do to create that.

MR: I'm thinking about what your dad said about "in-housing things," and I'm wondering about the driving school – was that because there were kids in Ja'Duke who hit driving school age, and a feeling in the community that this was was a need?

KW: You're hitting the nail on the head. Our mission is to serve families, right? And driving school was difficult, because there was really only one place to go, and the backlog was huge, and the service was what it was, and the price was enormous. So when we came in, and we basically slashed that, because now you have this competition, making it affordable.

MR: Famously, when there's more than one...

KW: And the thing was that it is hard to open a driving school. Extremely difficult. Way harder than a preschool. The weirdest, and stupidest, regulations you've ever experienced – basically, the way that you have to open a driving school is you have to have been at another driving school for two years, and then you can be the director of a new facility that you're opening.

So what that means is if I want to open a driving school, I can't unless, A, I go work for someone for two years and then I then stab them in the back and go open up another driving school, or B, I go poach someone, where I say "Hey, I can offer you this over here, to come work for us," and then we open a driving school under their directorship.

MR: Whoa. Is this just a Massachusetts thing?

KW: Mostly New England. New Hampshire is even worse – we tried to open a driving school in New Hampshire and it was worse than that. It could not work.

MR: Are you looking at other places in Mass.?

KW: Yes, for sure. If we open up another facility, we'll bring the driving school - once you open it, it's easy to put another branch. And now, since we've been open for five years, I'm a certified driving instructor myself, so I can now be the director.

And the other weird part is, the only way to become a certified driving instructor is to train with another driving school, but once you're in business for two years you can train your own drivers. So when I opened, I now had this director that came from another company, but now I needed drivers, and no one in this vicinity is going to train me, right? So I paid for three people to go to Boston, daily, for six months to get trained as driving instructors.

MR: So at this point, you have the robe and the wands and you can make more of them yourself.

KW: To me, to become a preschool teacher, you, you go to a class, right? You're going to a college class, you're getting experience, and then you get certified. That makes sense. So to be a driving instructor, the RMV or someone should put on a class of how do you teach driving?

MR: Have you considered setting up standalone driving schools in Western Mass.?

KW: No, it's not worth it. It's a lot of work liability. I guess if it was my passion, maybe, but... I just need a place for these kids to learn how to drive. We teach them well – I also want people to be good drivers.

MR: Are there other niches or markets that you have your eye on?

KW: We've talked about printing t-shirts, embroidery, because now we can do all that, but I'm not creating a website or anything for that, I'm just letting that lie and seeing where it goes.

MR: But if people need t-shirts they can give you a call?

KW: I can embroider some things. Hats, sweatshirts, pants. Jean jackets. You can do anything.

MR: Do you have weekends off? Is this a seven day a week thing for you?

KW: Oof. No. I don't know what this is. It's lot of work.

It's nice because I have flexibility – I have four children, I have to - but I think if you asked my husband that question, he'd say "She works a lot." But two of my children usually here with me.

MR: There's different ways you could take this question, but for you, what's Ja'Duke's role in town?

KW: I think so much is providing families with what they need. Driving, daycare, a place for their kids to go in the evening to do an activity. I ask myself, if Ja'Duke wasn't here, what would be missing from the town?

A lot. 120 slots of daycare, to start. 300 kids who are dancing in the evening, or doing performing arts in the evening. So I want the perception to be that we contribute, and that families thrive because we're here – we're contributing to that thriving of families. And I feel

like that is a perception.

If I'm speaking candidly, I think the split tax rate is difficult to get people into this town, because you're gonna pay more money to have a business in this town, and I don't know that you get your bang for your buck, in terms of location. That's difficult sometimes to wrap my head around: Why do I stay here? Why do we stay in this town?

But then I think back to like, okay, well, I grew up here, I'm rooted here. My kids are rooted here. And then I get out of that thought process, but that's a different that's a difficult piece of it.... The commercial rate is basically for FirstLight, because they make all this money, but then it's really taxing to people like us. Our tax bill is maybe \$70k for real estate property here - think about the overhead you have to generate in a small business just to pay for that.

MR: What's the terrain out there for daycare and pre-K? I've heard the NMH daycare is being run by the *Y now.... Schools do a little pre-K?*

KW: You can go to public schools at three years old. So at three years old you can stop going here and go to your public school.

There are some home childcares still, so some people choose that, but that's getting harder and harder to keep, because the regulations for home daycare are very difficult - and also the expectation for kindergarten is so great now that there needs to be education happening.

The Y is a big one... the Girls Club, Community Action / Head Start, those types of facilities are also large daycare centers.

MR: When you say that you wouldn't set up a standalone driving school off campus - when you think about another facility, are you thinking the Center and the school?

KW: Yes.

MR: You're on the EDIC [Economic Development and Industrial Corporation] - have you volunteered in other roles with the town?

KW: I was on the [assistant town administrator] hiring committee, the job that Walter [Ramsey] stepped into. That was a good experience, I got to meet a lot of people. I was on a couple things for the school - my kids go to Sunderland Elementary, so I was on those couple of those boards.

But I think as you get older, and you have four children and you're doing all this, you have to really make choices. And you have to say, I have gifts and I have skills and I want to make the most out of the time that I have - what is going to be the most useful, not only to the community, but to my family?



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PUBLIC HEARING

In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 138, General Laws, as amended, the Inhabitants of the Town of Montague are hereby notified that Dreamhouse Foods, Inc. d/b/a Dreamhouse, Jillian Fishman as manager, has applied for an All Alcoholic Beverages Liquor License (Restaurant).

The premises is located at 37 Third Street, Turners Falls, MA consisting of a first floor storefront on the north side of 3rd St., with a south facing entrance. ADA approved ramp to the front door, ADA approved bathroom on first floor. Premises will be used as a full service brunch restaurant. 15 seats at the bar, bench and chair seating along right wall of first floor. 10 foot deep enclosed, raised and fenced patio with seating for 15. Front entrance is sole entry and exit. Storage in basement to have locked cage for alcohol.

Date and place of hearing: Monday, March 25, 2024 at 6:34 P.M. via ZOOM See agenda link: www.montague-ma.gov/d/12333/Selectboard-Meeting

Montague License Commissioners

MR: And there's only 168 hours in a week...

INSURANCE

KW: And I wake up at 4 as it is, so I gotta get serious. I don't want to look back and say I never saw my kids. I want to be involved, and I want to be a good mom, and I want to be a good boss. And all those things correlate to each other. So there's certain things that I just say no to.

MR: And then there's things Ja'Duke is doing that are supporting other projects in the area.

KW: Yeah, so we do a huge fundraiser once a year for an organization. That's been really cool and fun, we Get a lot of people we don't usually get here.

MR: Why was NELCWIT chosen this year?

KW: We have an adult who does our shows, and her son goes to preschool here. Her mom was killed by an abuser when she was three years old. They had tried to do a craft fair in her memory to raise money for an organization, and it flopped. And so she came to us and said, "Me and my aunts really want to do something, and we want it to be big."

And we're like, "We got you." So she picked that organization, and it was great – and we did the performance in memory of her mom.

MR: Your model here is to really apply full capacity to something and do it right, once a year, instead of trying to do four...

KW: You've gotta put your resources in and have everyone lock in, and then you move on to the next thing. We produce a lot of shows, but they're eight-week projects, so Joseph is an eight-week project.

MR: How many a year? There's other companies renting the stage? KW: Other dance studios.

MR: You said that there's three big shows that you do.

KW: The Center does their three recitals a year: December, March, June. If you're in the Center, you're doing those three shows, no questions asked. And then the theater does other shows – we did A Christmas Story, Joseph, we're going to do Anything Goes in the summer those are additional opportunities.

To make it a little bit more confusing, in the Center we also produce children's musicals as a class. So when I talked about Matilda, those are kids who are in the Center who say "My interest is not tap dancing, my interest is being in the show." They're going to go into a threemonth workshop where they meet twice a week as a class, and they put on Matilda. And when they put on *Matilda*, it's going to be good....

It's a lot of moving pieces, but I always call it organized chaos. I don't know any other word. And I kind of thrive in that place –

MR: Why?

KW: I don't know, it just feels fun! You know, I feel like it's exciting. Every day is different. And you have some consistencies, which feels good. But then you have some other stuff where you're like, "What will happen today?"

MR: How do you push through when there's trouble? Is there a vibe? **KW:** I'm very optimistic, but also

direct. I'm going to say what needs to be said, but then I'm going to come alongside to help get through it. I'm not going to say "That's your problem, go figure it out."

There's problems every day, right? You should expect that, and you should expect that you're going to have to work at making the best out of those problems.

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GILL from page A1

that was the intent of why it was gifted to the town."

"If the person died without family, that would be one thing," Crochier later added. "But she has family right here in town."

Selectboard member Charles Gabriel agreed. "I feel she left it to us to preserve it as a school," he said. "After going through it, you can clearly see there's not much left of the school, and it's more of a home. ... Since there are next of kin, it would be morally and ethically wrong to just take it and flip it for some quick money for the town."

The board hopes to make a final decision at its next meeting on March 25.

Indefinite Nuisance

The board followed up on a dog named Max who was declared a "nuisance" in December 2023 after several reports of attacks. As all of the biting incidents occurred inside his home, owner Travis Johnson was ordered to post warning signs at all home and kennel entrances, isolate or muzzle his dog when visitors were in the house, and follow the recommendations of a dog trainer.

Finn Cross of Fox Hollow Dog Training attended to report that they had put Johnson's dogs through a "low-level reactivity program." "They are making progress," said Cross. They said Max's behavior stems from fear, and have referred Johnson to a further in-depth six-

month program with a specialist of fear-based reactive behavior and territoriality, which he will begin later this month.

Clouding claims of progress was Johnson's report of an additional biting incident since the previous hearing. Johnson explained that a contractor came onto his property, they got into a conversation, and the visitor went to the kennel gate. "I told him no, no, no, don't," said Johnson, "and he got nipped.... My heart dropped out of my damn leg when that happened."

Johnson reported that the victim received treatment at the emergency room for the bite, but didn't want to report it. "He kept telling me 'no, you don't have to tell anybody,"

said Johnson, but Johnson disclosed the incident to the town administrator and the animal control officer.

Liz Gardener, who identified herself as a friend of Johnson, attended the hearing to voice support for him and the dogs. "I've seen real progress with them," she said. "I know he's really putting in the time, and I don't think this incident takes anything away from that."

"The incident may be troubling," said Crochier, "but I think the reaction to it, and Travis's actions, mean a lot to me."

Selectboard member Greg Snedeker warned that additional complaints could cause them to meet again on the issue and take more serious action. "But I think you've got to let this play out and try to get the training, try to understand what the behavioral issues are, and try to address it first," he said.

The board voted unanimously to maintain the previous "nuisance dog" finding, with the same requirements as before, rather than escalating the animal's classification to "dangerous dog."

Elect or Appoint?

Should Gill's tax collector and treasurer continue to be elected positions, or should they be appointed by the selectboard? The board moved to put this question on the upcoming town meeting warrant and to include it as a ballot question for the May town election.

"I feel that the positions of tax collector and treasurer should be appointed," said Peter Turban, the current elected town treasurer, "because both roles involve jobs and tasks that the average person would have to go through a lot of training to understand. Both positions involve a lot of money, too, and if it's elected it could turn into a popularity contest - someone who knows everyone in town could get elected and have no experience. And we have no recall [process] here in town – they could take the money and run, or just get paid and not do anything.'

"Give them three years, they could devastate the town pretty good," agreed Crochier.

Crochier said the positions have changed greatly in recent decades, and making them appointed would allow the town to draw from a wider pool of applicants, including those who don't live in Gill. However, he also noted that past town meeting votes on the subject have rejected the change.

Turban pointed to a recent survey of towns served by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG), which found that 80% of towns appoint these positions and 20% elect them.

"The state prefers appointments, I think," said Snedeker. "And I totally understand – I lean that way too. Because it's too scary to wind up with someone in that position who doesn't know what they're doing and doesn't want to leave, either."

Town administrator Ray Purington noted that neither position is on the ballot this year, making it an ideal time for a ballot question.

Other Business

Purington said that it is time for the town to file as "intervenors" in the state's process of certifying the relicensing of the Northfield Mountain pumped storage project and Turners Falls dam. This step is necessary if the town wants to have

legal standing, though it's unclear how much the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) will consider local needs and requests.

Purington said the final draft of a motion to intervene will be ready by the next selectboard meeting. He also announced that now is the time for residents to submit comments to FERC, adding that the Connecticut River Conservancy has information about how to do this on its website.

The "three lynchpins" of The Gill Newsletter - Susan LaScala, Harry van Baaren, and Barbara Watson - are all stepping down after the May issue, putting the publication's future in doubt. The board thanked these long-term volunteers and put out a call for others to help create the newsletter.

Tim Batchelder has tendered his resignation as administrative clerk. "I really have been blessed having Tim as an assistant," said Purington. "His willingness to help has been fantastic. It's one of the key requirements of that position, and he has done it so very well." Purington said he would post a job announcement.

Brian Donahue was appointed to the town forest committee through June 2024.

> "We have no recall [process] here in town - they could take the money and run, or just get paid and not do anything."

Peter Turban, Gill treasurer

Janet Masucci of the cable advisory committee requested the purchase of a new switcher and recorder to film public meetings and other events for broadcast on MCTV. Until she was recently replaced by Batchelder, Masucci recorded all town meetings. "I want to change the part of the system that is so unreliable that it drove me crazy," she said. "I wasn't able to find anyone to replace me for a long time because it's complicated and unreliable."

The board approved the purchase of the equipment, which will be "under \$5,000." They also made "an impassioned plea for more members" of the cable committee, which currently only has two.

The state Chapter 90 program is providing Gill \$146,502 this year for transportation projects, similar to previous years. Purington said that additional funds could come in from the Fair Share Amendment (a.k.a. the Millionaires' Tax), but Crochier expressed skepticism that the town could depend on the state's largesse indefinitely. "You know it's going to be moved somewhere else," he said.

FRCOG is updating its Franklin County Bike Plan. A link on the town website leads to a survey and interactive map where residents can provide feedback about bicycle accessibility throughout the county.

For anyone with questions about their tech devices, the Gill-Montague Senior Center has tech dropin hours Tuesdays from 12:30 to 2 p.m., no appointment needed.

They also have a six-week computer laptop class for adults ages 60 and over who don't already have a working computer, have little or no computer skills, and would like to learn the basics. Those who complete all six classes get to keep the laptop computer they use in class.

NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Town Creeps Toward Hiring Accountant, Building Inspector

By JOSH HEINEMANN

It was a dark and foggy night. At least, that is what Justin Gale said as he left the March 6 Wendell selectboard meeting, after he was interviewed as a potential town building inspector, and faced a drive across the Millers River to his home in Warwick.

Gale grew up in Warwick as the son of a building inspector, served as a building inspector in Marlboro, and is now self-employed in remodeling. He comes with present inspector Phil Delorey's support, and said he is willing to continue Delorey's approach of helping people who are building their own structures.

Selectboard member Gillian Budine mentioned three concerns: relations with the public, availability, and licensure. Gale said, in answer to the first two, "If you're paying for a service, you should get it." He said he can work under his father's building commissioner license until he passes the test to become a commissioner himself.

Selectboard chair Laurie DiDonato said the board would discuss Gale's application at its next meeting. Town coordinator Glenn Johnson-Mussad agreed to collect his references.

Budine mentioned Wendell's present plumbing inspector, who has been missing in action or out of action. The town has an option of using inspectors supplied by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) as needed.

Battery Politics

Several citizens came to continue the ongoing discussion about New Leaf Energy's proposal to build a 100-MW battery system on forested land between Wendell Depot and New Salem roads.

Anna Gyorgy said that even if it were safe, the project was inappropriate for the location. The estimate for Massachusetts battery storage needs to reach net-zero CO₂ emissions is 1,000 MW. If built, the system would have Wendell providing one-tenth of the state's need. Electricity consumption in Wendell, Gyorgy pointed out, is nowhere close to one-tenth of the state's.

Town counsel has advised that the proposed bylaw submitted by No Assault & Battery (NAB), the citizens' group organized to oppose the project looks too much like a zoning bylaw to pass approval by the attorney general. Chris Queen and DiDonato discussed working with counsel to change the proposal to be more focused on health and safety, and look less like it addresses land use.

The timeline for action is determined by the state Department of Public Utilities (DPU). Planning board chair Molly Doody is in contact with the DPU and will know when the project is in front of them.

Johnson-Mussad said the town of Oakham was able to keep New Leaf out, and that the judge who ruled on that case is willing to chat with Wendell.

High School Fee Up 7.6%

Mahar Regional High School finance administrator Michelle Tontodonato and superintendent Elizabeth Zielinski delivered a long report on progress and conditions at the school, as well as two large anticipated capital expenses: \$1 million for new turf on the playing fields and \$5 million for a new roof. The old roof is not old enough to allow the school to apply for state reimbursement.

They concluded with a shorter talk about the budget, and Wendell's financial responsibility. With 42 students eligible for enrollment, the town's assessment is expected to rise 7.6% from the current year.

Among new developments at the school are a five-period, non-rotating day; courses including junior ROTC and Firefighter #1 and #2; dual enrollment at Greenfield Community College allowing up to 13 credits toward an associates degree; and practical assessment exploration systems (PAES) for life skills training.

The building has a "wall of fame" with pictures and stories of graduates who are making the school proud. A new 12-passenger van is expected to save \$50,000 a year in transportation costs for small field trips. The school is moving away from oil heat to propane.

Accounting

The accounting software FRCOG offers towns is becoming much more costly, and as part of Wendell's effort to contain expenses Johnson-Mussad said he and New Salem town coordinator Cathy Neal met with a salesperson from the St. Louis-based company Zobrio Cash Management Systems.

Zobrio provides fully-integrated cash management software, but he said neither town treasurer Carolyn Manley or Erin Degnan, Wendell's accountant at FR-COG, sees a need for full integration.

Manley said she had met with Degnan, who told her she would prefer working independently with Wendell, and possibly New Salem, to serving Wendell through FRCOG. She can start working independently using the current software, and has agreed to lock in a three-year employment agreement.

Manley has figured that Degnan's pay is low, but not the lowest in Franklin County, and she is not requesting benefits. FRCOG director of regional services Bob Dean has said she can bring her computer. Manley and the finance committee will meet March 18 and develop a compensation proposal to bring to the board.

Other Business

As project manager, Delorey said Wendell's former landfill was recently capped, but the work is not finished. The \$75,000 earmark is still in state hands, and close to another \$100,000 will be needed for fill to establish the final slope and finish the project.

Delorey expected to meet that week with the engineer for the Farley Road bridge to establish a cost for its repair. He said it might be a good test of the "One Stop for Growth" state portal, which directs towns' grant applications to the appropriate agencies.

There was an oil overfill at the police station, and after the cleanup the smell is still there. Delorey got Sandri Oil back for more cleanup earlier that day, but said he expected the smell to become more noticeable with warm weather. Rather than trying to clear the aroma himself he is having Sandri take responsibility.

Delorey said Manley assessed highway funds and found that the town does not need to add \$79,000 to next year's highway budget to cover the repair of the Mormon Hollow Road culvert. It looks like regular Chapter 90 highway funds and storm damage funding will allow full paving of Wendell Depot Road in June.

Delorey said he was exploring possibilities for senior housing.

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LEVERETT from page A1

was almost entirely devoted to a specific accounting issue. Fin com chair Phil Carter insisted that the school committee find a way to resolve a deficit of approximately \$76,000 in the school's health insurance expenditures, inadvertently created by a lack of communication between the school and town in prior years.

Carter was adamant that the town could not spend any money to resolve this deficit that was not properly appropriated, and that the current budget did not do so.

A satisfactory solution was not reached at the meeting, and the board recommended that members of the school and finance committees meet to create a mechanism to accomplish this task before finalizing the town budget.

High School Cuts

As an aside, Leverett school committee member Jessica Rocheleau notified the board that Tilman Wolf, the town's representative to the Amherst-Pelham regional school committee, had informed her that he learned last week that teacher and staff cuts were being proposed to address a \$1.6 million shortfall in the district's budget.

Rocheleau said the regional school committee had known about the shortfall for some time, but had believed cuts to balance the budget would be "palatable." She said the committee had felt "blindsided" by the cuts that were actually proposed by administrators the previous week, and was "upset."

The regional committee, she continued, had discussed asking the four member towns of the district, which include Leverett and Shutesbury, to make one-time contributions to cover some of the shortfall and avoid the cuts. The suggestion had been made, she said, that Leverett might lead the way by pledging \$60,000, potentially "unlocking" a proportional \$800,000 contribution from Amherst if they agreed to it.

These figures would equal the maximum 4% in yearly budget increase agreed to by the four towns, already reflected in the current budget.

"Let them be the leader," suggested selectboard member Patricia Duffy, noting that Leverett had already set the bar this year for the 4% increase in the district budget after Amherst had originally offered to increase its contribution by 2.5%.

Duffy, fin com member Nancy Grossman, and others said more details were needed before they could make any decisions.

The board suggested reaching out to the other towns for a special fourtown meeting to look for a solution.

Chair Vents Frustration

Selectboard chair Tom Hankinson said he had grown "somewhat frustrated" with the efforts to determine a future for the historic Field Library building, and suggested the town revisit the possibility of selling it.

He remarked that the community preservation commission (CPC) had recently rejected two proposals for work at the site, and that the ad hoc committee appointed in June 2022 to come up with a plan for the building had yet to do so.

"Between a committee that has not fulfilled their charge, and a [CPC] which is not interested in funding the preservation and protection of the building," he said, he felt "cornered."

Duffy and ad hoc committee

member Carol Heim responded that selling the building would be "premature," and that their committee needed more time for its work.

The selectboard agreed to meet with the committee for further discussion.

Other Business

Discussion continued from previous meetings of including money in the town budget to fund two new part-time positions, one at the library and one in the highway department, as well as a fourth full-time police officer. While questions were raised about each of the new positions, general sentiment remained in favor of their inclusion in the budget.

At the end of this discussion, the fin com voted 4-0, with one abstention, to recommend the overall budget to the selectboard, contingent on solving the aforementioned problem with the elementary school's health insurance deficit.

The selectboard unanimously voted to accept their recommendation.

Members of the Village of Light Ashram presented a petition calling for a resolution seeking an "immediate and permanent ceasefire" in Gaza to be included as a special article at town meeting on April 27.

GurujiMa, a teacher at the Ashram, outlined the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and suggested that Leverett join other towns in calling on the Biden administration to "take a strong moral and humanitarian stand." The resolution she presented recognized "the right of Israel to defend itself and exist in safety," but advocated for "an end to the killing of innocents, and the creation of an alternative

to the further decimation of the Gazan people."



TOWN OF LEVERETT **Hearing Notice - Proposed Bylaw Changes**

A public hearing will be held at Town hall on Tuesday, March 26, 2024 at 6:45 p.m. during the selectboard meeting to discuss proposed changes to the Code of Leverett": Remote access available through the Selectboard meeting link.

New wording proposed is bolded, with wording to be removed crossed out:

Chapter 24: Community Preservation Committee

24-1. Establishment

The Town of Leverett hereby establishes a Community Preservation Committee, consisting of seven (7) voting members pursuant to MGL Chapter 44B. The composition of the committee, the appointment authority, and the term of office for the committee members shall be as follows:

- One member of the Conservation Commission as designated by the Commis-
- One member of the Historical Commission as designated by the Commission
- for an initial term of one year and thereafter for a term of three years;
 One member of the Planning Board as designated by the Board for a term of three years;
- · One member of the Recreation Commission as designated by the Commis-
- One member to act in the capacity of, or perform like duties of, a member of a housing authority; this member is to be appointed by the Select Board for an initial term of one year and thereafter for a term of three ye
- One member of the Affordable Housing Trust as designated by the Trust for a term of three years;
- Two community members at-large to be appointed for an initial term of one year and thereafter for a term of three years.

24-2. Duties

1. The Community Preservation Committee shall study the needs, possibilities, and resources of the town regarding community preservation. The Committee shall consult with existing municipal boards, including the Conservation Commission, the Historical Commission, the Planning Board, the Recreation Commission, and the Housing Authority, Affordable Housing Trust, or persons acting in those capacities or performing like duties, in conducting such studies.

> A copy of the complete Code of Leverett is on file at the Town Clerk's office or at www.leverett.ma.us.

NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Two Big Capital Plan Wild Cards

By KEITH WATERS

The Erving selectboard held a meeting of its own, and also a joint meeting with members of the finance and capital planning committees, on Monday.

Town administrator Bryan Smith had a number of suggestions for the selectboard. "The Town is working with MassDOT on their redesign plans for Route 2 in Erving Center," he said.

Smith reported that the sidewalk between the eastern entrance to the Erving Paper mill and the driveway to the wastewater treatment facility is in bad condition, which makes it hard to maintain in the winter. Smith suggested the town remove it, as both Erving Paper and Stone Auto say that they do not use it. It is the eastmost sidewalk in the town of Erving.

Law and Policies

Results are nearly ready in the ongoing project to codify the bylaws of the town. Town clerk Richard Newton has been working on this project for some years, having started sometime after 2018 or 2019. The goal is to put all the bylaws and a bunch of other official records the town has created over the years into an easier to read, and amend, codified version.

Smith noticed a formatting error in one of the sections that he suggested the town send back for correction. The town is contracting with an outside service to write the laws' text. At the finalization of the work, this provider will return a bound book of the codified laws, as well as a digital version, and would host a searchable instance of the code if the town chooses to employ them.

Smith recommended the board request the company make the suggested changes, and the board agreed. The next step will be to send the code to town meeting for approval.

Two sections of the town's health safety plan policy have been updated and were presented for a second reading at the meeting. Selectboard member Jim Loynd offered some ways to make the language more specific in both sections, and they were approved.

Capital Planning

At the joint meeting, the finance committee recommended "almost \$1.5 million," as selectboard member Scott Bastarache put it, for the senior housing project - a \$448,188 town match toward the project itself, plus a million dollars for a new sewer pump station on Care Drive.

The fin com also suggested taking on the \$4 million project of demolishing the former International Paper (IP) mill complex, with an estimated \$3.4 million to come from the town. These two items made up the majority of the \$5.27 million list of recommended capital planning requests.

The source of the funds for these projects is yet to be determined, and the town is still accepting proposals for reuse of the IP mill. Some outside funding may be available for the senior housing pump station project, but at this time it is unclear how much.

Besides these two projects, the other seven recommended requests totalled \$423,600. These were led by \$130,000 toward security upgrades at the police station and \$100,000 to replace a plow truck.

"We're not working for us, we're working for you," fin com member Daniel Hammock said. "Whether or not you agree with what we recommend, it's up to you. That's why we have an open town meeting – it's your money."

Other Business

A couple of ten-year-long agreements are lapsing this year: one with the town of Montague for treatment of wastewater from Millers Falls, and one with the Frankin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority for the administration of Erving's housing rehabilitation revolving loan program.

Smith has recommended the board request authorization of new ten-year agreements in both cases.

Fence and tennis court paving will be removed from the Veterans Field renovation project. They are beyond repair, according to highway department superintendent Glenn McCrory. The resulting holes will be filled with soil and planted with grass.

PIONEER VALLEY **MAKES IT TO SEMIS**



Pioneer Valley Regional School's Hugh Cyhowski leans into Drury defender Sammy Moorman in the MIAA Division 5 quarterfinal game last Saturday in Northfield. Following their 54-44 win over the Blue Devils, the Panthers advanced to a semifinal match against New Mission, a small Boston public high school, in Worcester on Wednesday night. New Mission won that match, 60-47.

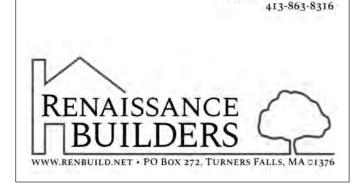
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MONTAGUE from page A1

FirstLight is expected to file these applications within 60 days of FERC's announcement, which would be by April 22, and Mass-DEP would then have a year to issue a certificate, which may place conditions on the certification.

According to the state website, "within weeks" after FirstLight files its water quality applications, there will commence a period for written public comment and two virtual public hearings. "Due to heightened public interest in this project, MassDEP will extend the comment period beyond the 21 days typically offered for WQC applications to 35 days," the statement reads.

Ellis said the town of Montague must file a "motion to intervene" with FERC by April 22 if it wishes to have legal standing during the next phase of the process. He stressed that the board would need to consider what areas would be subject to local input, noting that most elements of the recreational and "fish and flow" settlements Montague and other local towns have already signed with the company would be out of bounds.

Questions involving soil erosion and historical resources, Ellis said, could be subjects for further input. The town would work with lawyers through the FRCOG to determine what topics would be eligible and develop a motion to intervene.

Janel Nockleby, chair of the town's historical commission, said she had not seen a report on the historic resources in the project area potentially being discussed. Ellis said he would send her a copy and pledged to list her as someone who would receive "ongoing notices."

FirstLight Power was purchased in 2016 by a Canadian public pension investment firm, PSP Investments. In 2019 the company split its application for a new license into two projects: the Turners Falls Project, which includes the Turners Falls-Gill Dam, the Turners Falls power canal, two hydroelectric stations, and the "Turners Falls Impoundment" - the Connecticut River from the dam to Vernon, Vermont – and the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage project, an artificial lake on Northfield Mountain which stores water pumped from the river and then releases it for hydropower when the electrical grid needs it.

The company is the largest taxpayer in Montague.

Waste Management

In related news, Clean Water Facility (CWF) superintendent Chelsey Little requested the board's approval of a \$6,000 grant from the state Department of Energy Resources to investigate the feasibility of installing an electric-generating turbine in the pipe that sends effluent into the Connecticut River.

The board approved the grant award. Little told the Reporter that in the 1970s the facility had an older version of the technology, which produced electricity.

The board also awarded a \$248,793 contract to Inovair, a Kansas-based company, to upgrade the aeration in the CWF's secondary treatment system. Little said the project is funded by a grant Mass-DEP awarded Montague over four years ago, which was originally to build a solar array at the plant but subsequently "evolved into upgrading our aeration blowers."

The CWF, she said, was able to keep the cost of the project within the grant amount by simplifying a "massive [electrical] panel that had all these bells and whistles in it."

Little also reviewed the data on the plant's discharge for February. The monthly data, which includes the percentages of biological material and "suspended solids" removed before sending treated water into the Connecticut, met all criteria required under the facility's permit.

The board approved the use of public property for an April 22 Earth Day celebration that will focus on a sign on the adjacent bike path portraying the CWF's functions.

Blacksmithing

The board authorized parks and recreation director Jon Dobosz to add \$1,500 from the cost overrun account to a March 2023 appropriation by a special town meeting to evaluate the historic blacksmith shop in the Montague Center Park.

An initial request for proposals (RFP) was unsuccessful. Dobosz said his department had now found a consultant to conduct the evaluation, who will focus on "Task One" of the RFP, which involves estimating the original construction dates for sections of the building, documenting "existing conditions," and judging its structural integrity.

Agriculture?

The board approved a "community services agreement" with the Monday, March 18.

Worcester-based nonprofit RCAP Solutions, which will provide free technical assistance in writing a proposal to the US Department of Agriculture for a grant to help fund a new police cruiser.

"They have a pretty good handle on this program," said assistant town administrator Walter Ramsey, who introduced the proposal, "and they know all the actors at the USDA, so it seems like a no-brainer."

Ellis noted that the town would need to make the "full appropriation," which appears as a line item in the police budget, to be eligible for the grant.

Ramsey said the grant would be for "up to" \$40,000, while a police cruiser now costs "\$70,000-ish."

Other Business

Wearing their "personnel board" hats, the selectboard appointed Eric Cole to the position of truck driver/ laborer at the public works department, and finance committee member Dorinda Bell-Upp and their own member Matt Lord to a subcommittee overseeing the development of an agreement combining the Gill-Montague and Pioneer Valley regional school districts.

Lord noted that the expiration date of the regional agreement committee - "until finished" - was "very foreboding."

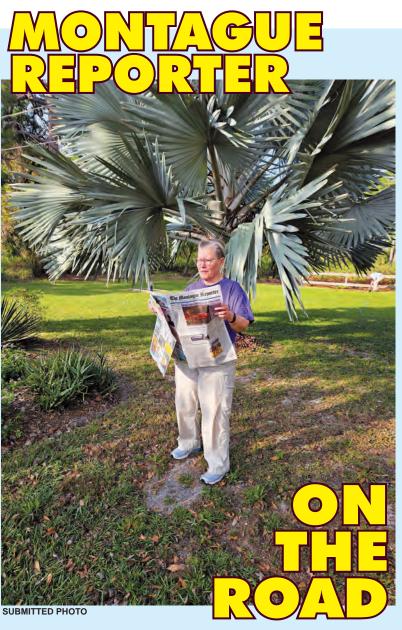
The board renewed Montague's two-year agreement with the Upper Pioneer Valley Veterans' Services District. Ellis said the new agreement would not significantly change the annual assessment from the district, which is budgeted at \$20,445 in the current year. He also mentioned that the district is looking for a representative from Montague on its advisory board.

Executive assistant Wendy Bogusz reported on progress troubleshooting hybrid meetings of the board. "This is on the agenda because of our fiasco last week," she said, when the meeting's Zoom connection cut in and out repeatedly.

Bogusz said a representative from Suzer IT, the company hired to oversee Montague's internet technology, ran some tests and "believes he has fixed the problem." He also offered to attend the next hybrid meeting in April to help with the setup. The board seemed to approve this development without a formal vote.

The next selectboard meeting will be held





Joan Pillsbury of Gill took time out from admiring alligators, enjoying ibis, and chuckling at frolicking dolphins to have a look at our January 18 issue while visiting relatives in Florida.

(Going somewhere? Send photos to editor@montaguereporter.org!)



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Above: Sunshine and shadow at the Barton Cove bike path terminus.

Furniture With a Purpose

By EVELYN AUGUSTO

TURNERS FALLS - Woodworker Tom Mann, like the furniture he refurbishes, has lived more than one life.

FEATURES@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

Retired from the career he intentionally designed – a life of corporate sales within the financial software industry – Tom now spends his 40-plus-hour work week reclaiming "orphaned" dressers, desks, and tables and offering them a new life, at a fraction of today's cost, to the unsuspecting consumer.

Customers are pleasantly surprised by Tom's unfailing gift for recognizing a particular piece of furniture's usefulness, appreciating its uniqueness, enhancing its beauty, and re-imagining its potential.

"Yeah," Tom chuckles, "I'm kinda recovering from the sins of the corporate world, and practicing a life of paying it forward. It's been really interesting to go from handling corporate deals - with several hundred pages of contracts, and several months of negotiating terms to push for a sale – to a five-minute encounter with a guy holding a tag



Tom Mann, with two dressers recovered out of a local barn.

sale on a Saturday morning: A couple of questions, an offered price, a handshake and voilà! That's it."

For many years Tom was simply an avid antique collector, scouring weekend estate sales, thrift shops, and Salvation Army locations in towns like Athol, Northampton, and Brattleboro.

"In my travels searching for the eclectic items I collected," he says, "I came to realize a more satisfying purpose: restoring discarded, sometimes broken furniture and finding new families to claim them. I discovered that I liked doing that work much more than simply

see **FURNITURE** page B2

OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER

That One Spring Training...

By GARY SANDERSON

GREENFIELD - March daybreak. Frosty. Spring in the air.

Calm and clear. Brooks rattling – one a soothing roar, the other a gurgling whisper. Endless dawn sky blushing to a soft, warm blue. Soon the glitter of frosted lawns would vanish under the first rays of sun peeking over the eastern horizon.

The perfect time for an introspective walk around the neighborhood.

I'm not sure what it was near the midpoint of that daily ramble that triggered thoughts of baseball. Probably the season. Maybe sweet, sharp cardinal chirps near and far. Perhaps the invigorating cool air filling my lungs, the exercise revving my heartbeat and circulation. Reminds me of a doctor's advice in recent years. Discussing my mangled knees, he told me "motion is lotion." I was living it.

Alone with fleeting thoughts, I flittered back a half-century to my short, undistinguished UMass baseball career, derailed before it blossomed due to misbehavior when it was mostly cool. Walking a quick pace, I went back to places I love to revisit. From indoor Curry Hicks Cage practice and its dim batting cage, to our weeklong spring-training trip to Miami Beach, to Sunshine State incidents that greased my exit skids, and most of all to a dramatic home run that ultimately, if you can imagine, sealed my demise.

The year was 1974, my 21st birthday a few months away. I was fit and fast, strong, sturdy and perilously untamed. Sometimes I wonder how I survived. But here I sit, undaunted and unashamed.

Wild times were in the air in '74. The Massachusetts drinking age had been lowered to 18 the previous year. Infirmary lines of young college women awaiting birth-control-pill prescriptions were long. Booze and drugs flowed a raging torrent every night of the week. Temptation lurked in every shady campus corner. Young and frisky, I just got caught up in it. My fault. No regrets.

Count me among many voluntary victims of Sixties and Seventies excesses, when barhopping

and partying were not only tolerated, but encouraged. So was challenging authority. Now I'm pretty much done with all of it. Except, well, I still tend to buck authority when the situation calls for it.

MARCH 14, 2024

Though I have for many decades been a storyteller, the tale I'm about to tell has never been told in print. There's a simple reason. We were sworn to secrecy by our coach, Franklin County's own Richard "Dick" Bergquist from Orange. He demanded that what had unfolded on our curfew-free final night on South Beach should stay on South Beach. No reason to air our dirty laundry at home.

Till now I have honored his request. But he's been dead five years and the story can finally be told. Nonetheless, why name my old friends and teammates? Unnecessary.

Our vow to secrecy concerned an unfortunate late-night incident at a strip joint a block or two up Collins Avenue from our beachfront Nautilus Hotel - home to many spunky Big Apple widows living the life with bling and bravado to spare.

On an after-midnight walk back toward the hotel after our final night on the town, my Vietnam-vet teammate and I spotted blinking blue lights and commotion within sight of our hotel. We crossed the street to discover two of our scholarship pitchers – one a senior, the other a freshman – handcuffed and getting loaded into the caged back seat of a cruiser. They were under arrest, on their way to the slammer, and would need bail for release. The charge was drunk and disorderly conduct for vulgar exchanges with a stripper.

A few of our teammates had, like us, found their way to the scene, and we decided to join other teammates in an adjacent bar to ponder strategy. Maybe we could pool what little money we had left to spring our teammates from jail before the coach caught wind of their arrest.

No such luck.

We hadn't even begun pooling our money before our coach walked through the door with the trainer and a captain. They were rounding up players to escort back

see VALLEY VIEW page B8

Celebration of Heritage

TURNERS FALLS - Photojournalist Joe R. Parzych attended Saturday's reception for the New Roots in River Banks exhibit at the Great Falls Discovery Center. The exhibit, presented by the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, highlights Polish and other Eastern European immigrants' stories and their contributions in the Connecticut River Valley.

Susan Urban of West Springfield (at right) was on hand at the event teaching creative activities. Urban provides workshops and demonstrations on Polish crafts and culture including wycinanki, pisanki, costume, music, and dance.





Pet the Week



'MIDNIGHT MUSHROOM'

Do you believe in love at first sight? That's how it is with this sweet boy, Midnight Mushroom. One look into his eyes and you'll be smitten with this playful, loving, cuddly boy.

Midnight Mushroom's person went into a nursing home and he went to live with her daughter temporarily. There were children in the home, ages 1, 4 and 7 and he just adored the kids! We're not sure if he's lived with other cats but were told that he was stressed out by the resident dogs. This boy loves head

pets but when it comes to the belly, imagine there's a "Do not disturb" tattoo on that tummy.

Sometimes he likes to be picked up. You've got to be in the mood to have your paws dangling in midair. This soft boy is accustomed to being an indoor kitty.

If you're ready to adopt, 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.

FURNITURE from page B1

buying antiques, which I already had a barn full of."

Interestingly enough, Tom had been repairing and refinishing furniture for himself for years, "up-cycling" as a hobbyist. He uses unwanted items found at tag sales: the discarded cans of latex paint, the sandpaper and carpentry tools he finds have helped him, ironically, "go green"!

"I've rescued several tons of furniture and many, many gallons of polyvinyls from the local landfills," Tom admits. "But the most rewarding part of my work is teaching people about good-quality furniture and fine hardwood, like cherry, maple, oak and walnut. This generation of consumers, the IKEA generation, is missing out on these treasures because they simply didn't know what great furniture is. My customers do now!"

Tom continues: "There's nothing like witnessing the joy of a granddaughter who had brought me her grandmother's aged and neglected dresser, only to return to a piece of furniture that has been transformed! I have come to understand that a lot of Gen Y and X folks think older wood furniture belongs in grandma's house; I try to preserve history while reimaging style. I use color



Mann's "after" photos of the dressers he found in the barn on Page B1.

in today's decor."

"For me, each piece of old furniture is a blank canvas." Tom adds. "Restoring furniture is my art form!"

Tom's business, A Mann Furniture Design, typically donates a percentage of its profit to children's charities like St. Jude's and local nonprofits like the Regional Dog Shelter in Montague and the Greenfield YMCA. He has now partnered with the YMCA to do even more in 2024 with a new program called Furniture For Friends.

"We remain grateful and humbled by his 2023 awesome support

accents to highlight each piece to fit of our Y's mission and vision: to love, care, and serve for all of Franklin County," says Franklin County YMCA CEO Grady Vigneau.

> Working out of the historic former DPW garage at the end of Avenue A, now the restored Nova Works building, Tom welcomes donations or an opportunity to purchase old furniture. He is not concerned about "sticky drawers, dust, scratches, or missing hardware," - all he is looking for is "good bones."

Call or message him at (413) 770-4077, and watch for the launch of "Furniture and Friends" through Greenfield YMCA.



By CASEY WAIT

TURNERS FALLS – Dear Readers, this week marks the fifth anniversary of the WHO's declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since March 2020 an estimated 7,004,699 people worldwide have died from the novel coronavirus. Many millions more have been and are continuing to be debilitated by Long Covid. Still more are nursing the wounds of grief, isolation, and trauma inflicted by the poor management of the pandemic.

Since August, there have been at least 1,000 weekly COVID deaths in the United States. In December, I knew over 20 people locally who fell ill with COVID all in the same week! I myself tested positive for COVID at the beginning of January – and was barely recovered when I caught it again in mid-February. I likely caught the virus the second time while at the doctor, having a nasty post-viral rash looked at.

All of this is to say, despite the White House declaring the end of the public health emergency last May, the situation with regards to COVID remains fairly dire – particularly for those of us who are immunocompromised.

Last week, while I was still quarantined with my second COVID infection in as many months, the CDC updated its COVID-19 isolation guidance saying that even if you are still testing positive, you are free to go back into the world if you "feel better." Just like the last time they updated these guidelines – when they changed the quarantine isolation time from 10 to five days – they made this decision with an eye to protecting the economy, not protecting us.

The CDC also announced its approval of another booster shot for those 65 and over. "It did not approve a booster for other people in high-risk categories," wrote the People's CDC, "because they didn't bother studying the benefits and risks in these groups."

My back-to-back infections this winter hit me hard emotionally as well as physically. It's getting harder and harder to see a future in this world for me and others like me. I've told friends that it feels like the immunocompromised are being forced between two bad options: do all we can to remain physically safe, and face social and emotional death – and maybe get sick anyways because even the doctor's office, which we can't avoid, isn't safe - or see the people we love and feed our spirits but accept dying young due to inevitable, constant reinfection.

There must be other options I haven't thought of yet - things are rarely so black and white. But in my darkest moments, I admit I feel incredibly trapped and scared and angry.

I've lost count of the number of times I've used this column as a soapbox from which to shout at readers to keep caring, but here I am, doing it again: Please care! And please show that care through basic action. Mask in public; require masks in your business/events/parties/organizing meetings; become a nerd for air quality, and build DIY air filters for your office/classroom/community space/shop; place accessibility at the center of your organizing efforts, regardless of the central cause.

Join a Mask Bloc, the People's CDC, or Long Covid Justice. March, protest, post, and/or shout in solidarity with the March 15 Long Covid Awareness Day March in Washington, DC. Demand the CDC reinstate its five-day COVID isolation policy. Send a letter to the White House and your elected officials through the People's CDC's Action Network, which you can find at peoplescdc.org.

To all my comrades organizing for a ceasefire in Gaza, remember that this struggle is one of disability justice as well. In the words of the People's CDC, "we must continue to contact our elected officials to demand a ceasefire in Gaza, and we must continue to wear and require the wearing of high-quality respirators such as N95s and KN95s at protests and within organizing spaces."

COVID-19 is with us for the foreseeable future, but that doesn't mean there's nothing to be done to improve the situation and protect ourselves and each other. I already do literally everything I can think of to avoid getting sick, and have still gotten the godforsaken virus seven times.

The immunocompromised cannot get through this ongoing struggle alone. Collective action on a mass scale is the only way I can see getting through the coming years alive. There is no such thing as individual personal responsibility in a viral pandemic – we're either all safe, or none of us are. And the already vulnerable feel the impact first and hardest.

With love and rage,

Your Sick Friend

Senior Center Activities MARCH 18 THROUGH 22

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.

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.

GILL and MONTAGUE

The Gill Montague Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Mondays through Fridays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information please call 863-9357.

Monday 3/18

10:15 a.m. Aerobics 11 a.m. Chair Exercise Tuesday 3/19 9 a.m. Chair Yoga 9:30 a.m. Tuesday Knitters 10 a.m. Zumba Lite 11 a.m. Money Matters 3 p.m. Tai Chi Wednesday 3/20

9 a.m. Veterans' Help Hours

10:15 a.m. Aerobics 12 p.m. Bring Your Lunch Bingo 1 p.m. Food Pantry 4:15 p.m. Mat Yoga Thursday 3/21 1 p.m. Pitch Friday 3/22 Closed for tax preparation. By appointment only. Call 863-9357 for information.

ERVING

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

Monday 3/18

9 a.m. Interval Workout 10 a.m. Seated Dance 12 p.m. Pitch Cards Tuesday 3/19 9 a.m. Good For U Workout 10 a.m. Line Dancing 11 a.m. Social Stringers Wednesday 3/20 9 a.m. Strength & Conditioning 10:15 a.m. Chair Aerobics 11:30 a.m. Bring Your Lunch Bingo Thursday 3/21 9 a.m. Barre Fusion

Friday 3/22 9 a.m. Quilting & Open Sew

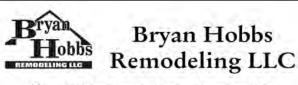
10 a.m. Pilates Flow

12 p.m. Easter Brunch

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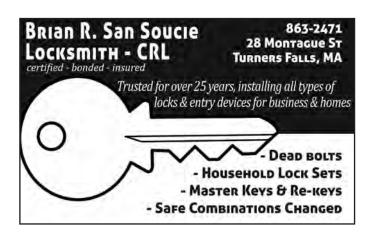
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FAQs for the Modern Lover

By MANDY MUDBALLZ

FRANKLIN COUNTY - It's Friday afternoon and the ill-timed weekly call with Mom and Pops/ Mom and Mom/Mom, Mom, and Pops/etc. is fast approaching.

You know that the time has come to tell them about the person you've been dating, but you also know that their response to the ambiguous descriptor of long-term low-commitment distance girlfriend will make you say "okay, Boomer." They do not understand the need in this day and age to relish in the comforts of a steady relationship while maintaining the ability to meet a prospective new Mx. Right at the Finders Collective open hours.

Here at The Montague Reporter, we understand that discussing your romantic life with your well-meaning but tragically unhip parents can turn into a farkakte mess, and quickly. Therefore, due to popular demand, I have created a guide to discussing modern dating with those who raised you but whose understanding of your life has waned since you flew the coop at 18 and accidentally got addicted to cigarettes.

I have compiled a list of potential questions that will likely blare through your Airpods as you walk, bike, or rollerblade down the Canalside Rail Trail after you let the cat out of the bag about your situationship to your parents, along with answers that will return their blood pressure to 120/80.

Question #1: So is he or isn't he your boyfriend?

Answer #1: No. I have taken to using the term "not-boyfriend" to describe him, though I have found that he likes that even less than the word "boyfriend." We are dating, though. But not daaaaating. We split a CSA share.

Question #2: How'd you meet? Answer #2: We met at a skillshare. First, we were paired up at a juggling workshop led by a sevenyear-old. Then, at the second session, "Lessons From an Astrology Doula," when she piped up to say "I'm also an Aires rising," I knew I had to start casually investing my time in her.

(You and I both know that you met on Grindr and decided to see each other outside of your bedroom after tagging Poet's Seat Tower together, but telling this to The Parents is a surefire way to get written out of the will and have them covering up the mirrors. Stick with the skillshare, which makes you seem resourceful and also like the real person you met at the skillshare is

actually interested in you. I'll be waiting for you, Luke. It's not too late for us. Don't move to Burlington and start a carpentry business. There's wood here! Some of the best!)

Question #3: What do you like about them?

Answer #3: They know all of the good swim spots, they're an expert in lactofermentation, they graduated summa cum laude from Philppe Gaulier clown college in Paris, and heir band, 30 Or 40 Marmots, blows. You know, they're a punk!

Question #3A: Huh, a punk? Back in my day punks had mohawks and studded leather jackets. This person just seems like they smell kind of bad?

Answer #3A: You don't know the half of it! Every breath they breathe is punk! They sleep dreaming of mosh pits! They wake excited to practice radical inclusivity! They make art out of trash! They have five bisexual transgender roommates! They purposefully live in a dump! They shower in PBR every night! They buy their food already expired! They're in the worst band imaginable! Sammy got too good at guitar - they kicked them the hell out! And they smell kind of bad! That's part of it!

Question #4: Does he have a

Answer #4: Yes (no).

Question #5: She Jewish? **Answer #5:** What do *you* think?

True Love Will Find You In The End (TLWFYITE),

Mandy Mudballz

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Fighting Neighbors; Ducks Disrupted; Banana Snatched; Cars Vs. Barrier, Gate; Mystery Arrows; Nap Reported

Monday, 3/4

the Food City parking lot she's letting them run all and on scene. this afternoon. She did not around and into the wacall at the time of the inci- ter, and it's disrupting the needs to call insurance.

8:13 p.m. Caller from Ave- an said she has special pernue A advises there is a gas mission from the PD that odor in the building. Shel- her dogs do not need to be burne Control advised. on leash. Officer advised. TFFD on scene.

Tuesday, 3/5

spoke with the caller and has moved along now. Street reports a tote con- Main Road. taining seat covers and Thursday, 3/7 her porch. Report taken.

en. School evacuating. Transferred to Shelburne line. Officer advised. Control. TFFD on scene. 3:12 a.m. Caller from Confirmed false alarm.

the wrong direction and wall. She would like a call Report taken.

Wednesday, 3/6

enue A states that the female who lives below him but did leave some money. is fighting with some guy in her apartment. Lots of yelling and swearing. Un- ployee. No active trespass Caller advises house is founded.

253 Farmacy; trash room porting that the red and smoke coming out of vent trol advised. outer door. Officer advises green traffic lights at Av- stacks in roof, bathroom 11:47 a.m. Report of large building secure.

that there is the smell of time. Officer observed shutting down Coolidge notified. gas inside a Fifth Street lights and they were work- Avenue. Officer advises 2:39 p.m. 911 caller rebuilding. Caller pulled fire ing fine. alarms so everyone would Shelburne Control.

back on the leash, the wom-Person has moved along.

1:04 a.m. Caller from Third Nouria states that there Street reports a male and has been a car in the parkfemale yelling and scream- ing lot with a male party ing in the upstairs apart- sitting in the driver's seat ment. Officers made con- since 7:15 this morning. tact with apartment resi- Officer advises male party dents and advised them of was waiting for someone the complaint. They also who never showed up. He advised her of her options. 2:37 p.m. Assisting Gill

4:08 a.m. Caller from L PD with warrant arrest on

floor mats was stolen from 2:58 a.m. 911 open line from Rastallis Street; lot 8:08 a.m. Fire alarm of static. Upon callback, sounding within Turners recording states number Falls High School. Report not in service. No histoof smoke within the kitch- ry in house with number. Probable water issue in the

Cumberland Farms states 10:31 a.m. Caller from that a female who has West Main Street states been trespassed from the her neighbor called her at business showed up and work and told her a truck is making a coffee. She went up Church Street in was asked to leave and wouldn't; just started to while she was inside Turndamaged her retaining cause a disturbance. Caller called back stating feback to discuss. Officer male did leave but did not went to check out damage; pay for her coffee and she will call caller back now. may have swiped something else on the way out the door. Officer located 12:03 a.m. Caller from Av- female, who had a coffee in her hand and ate a banana Officers heading to initial location to speak with em- white smoke; no flames. order located.

11:30 a.m. Another motor- and vents. light is stuck on at Ave- porting minor two-car ferred to an officer.

5:46 p.m. Caller states she a woman has two dogs off even when the green light thinks her car was hit in leash on Migratory Way; comes on. DPW notified

Friday, 3/8

12:14 a.m. Caller from East dent. Caller aware this will ducks. When she asked Main Street reports that be on record and that she the woman to put the dogs a newer Chevy truck described as black and lifted keeps going by the involved location making a lot of noise. No plate provided, but caller states it has woken him and his wife up. Ve-63. Unable to locate. 7:33 a.m. 911 caller from

> Fourth Street requesting police assistance to get into some items. His girlfriend has locked him out and she is not on the lease. Peace restored. Advised of options. 8:01 a.m. 911 caller reports that he hit a Jersey barrier and the car went up on the barrier; he has hurt his back. Vehicle and operator located on Solar cer's arrival, noise was at a Avenue. Operator complaining of back pain. Vehicle may be leaking oil or of complaint. gas. FD and ambulance responding. Rau's requested for tow. Officer requesting DPW respond to pick up the Jersey barrier after the car is removed. DPW now on scene. Report taken.

11:09 a.m. Caller states that someone hit her car and did some damage to it ers Falls High School using the pool. It was determined that the caller hit a steel gate and was not hit by another vehicle. Investigated. 11:56 a.m. 911 caller rehouse on Coolidge Avenue to do work on the flooring and when he opened the door, there was a lot of

11:28 a.m. Caller states that nue A and Seventh Street, accident at Avenue A and Third Street. No injuries. Report taken.

5:12 p.m. Heard over ra-

dio; motorcycle accident on Route 2 in Gill near the Wagon Wheel. Officer en route to assist. Route 2 at the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge being closed down. 5:24 p.m. Multiple alarms sounding at Silvio O. Conte Anadromous Fish Research Center. Alarm 12:09 p.m. Caller from hicle headed towards Route company requesting to cancel response; they received the proper passcode from an employee. 11:21 p.m. 911 caller from his apartment and retrieve School Street states there is a lot of noise coming from the involved location. Caller believes there is some type of college party happening and states there are about ten people. Officer spoke with a small

Saturday, 3/9

2:52 p.m. Caller from Stevens Street found a dead raccoon in his backyard. Advised caller that animal control officer is off duty, but he could call him Monday morning and ask about animal disposal.

group of people who are

having a party. Upon offi-

minimum. Party contained

to inside building. Advised

4:35 p.m. Caller states that there are two people on motorized minibikes riding very fast on the bike path near First Street. Unable to locate.

Sunday, 3/10

8:54 a.m. Caller from Old porting that he arrived at a Greenfield Road states that two arrows were shot into his yard overnight. Report taken.

9:57 a.m. Caller from Dewolf Road reports that the neighbor's smoke detector vacant. Transferred to has been sounding for 30 4:50 a.m. Burglar alarm at 10:39 a.m. Motorist re- Control. Officer advises minutes. Shelburne Con-

enue A and Seventh Street vent stack, and fan stack. pothole on Turners Falls-9:24 a.m. 911 caller states are both on at the same Control advises. Officer is Gill Bridge. MassDOT

smoke coming out of gable porting vehicle weaving in and out of travel lane on evacuate. Transferred to ist reporting that the red 2:38 p.m. 911 caller re- Turners Falls Road. Re-

> 3 p.m. 911 caller from Bulkley Street states that a man was walking down the street, went into the woods across from his house, set up a hammock, and is now lying in the hammock. You can see it from the road. Referred to an officer.

3:55 p.m. Caller from Meadow Road states that officers were at his house earlier asking his sister about arrows found in the area; he wasn't home, but he knows who is doing it and wants officers at his house to discuss and have it taken care of. Officer spoke to male party; states he does not own a bow or arrows and does not know who's doing it.

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West Along the River

LEGENDS OF THE SUMMER OF 1942

By DAVID BRULE

TURNERS FALLS – The Turners Falls High School baseball team won the State Championship on June 20, 1942. That team was inducted into the Western Massachusetts Baseball Hall of Fame last Thursday.

The 1942 TFHS team and their winning season were brilliantly profiled by Richard Andersen in his article, "A Team for the Ages Reaches the Hall of Fame," in the February 1 *Montague Reporter*.

The following is a reprint of the article I wrote for the *Reporter* in June 2012, after interviewing the late Walter Kostanski and his wife Virginia about that championship season. In this article I also reported on the team's 70th reunion, which was held on June 5, 2012.

It was a fine June day, just last week, when I made my way along a quiet Crocker Avenue and turned onto Davis Street. A fine June day, that is, meaning rain showers every hour, followed by bright sunshine, causing the tree-lined streets to glisten, before the rain came back drumming on the newly green leaves of the maples.

Up the steps to the Kostanski home I went. The doorbell rang, the door opened, and a warm welcome by Virginia Kostanski. Our man Walter waited inside, ready to talk baseball. For we are coming up on the date of June 20th when, in 1942, Walter and his teammates had played a game in Fenway Park, forever celebrated in this town.

I wanted to talk to Walter to get a sense of what it was like that day, before the surviving members of the team gathered for their reunion the following noon. Eventually we got around to baseball, but before that we talked about everything under the sun. Walter is a Millers Falls boy, where I have deep roots, and although a generation separates us, there are plenty of village characters, family relations, and oral history that we have in common. Virginia herself was exceptional in recalling details of those days when everyone knew everyone, and for that matter, it seemed like everyone had family connections!

The occasion that prompted my visit was the upcoming 70th reunion of the Turners Falls High School baseball team that won the State Championship back in 1942.

If you know your history, and there are still many around here who lived through it, 1942 was a dark year indeed, called by some historians The Year That Tried Men's Souls. Things were going badly for America in the Pacific and in Europe. Pearl Harbor had been attacked in December of 1941. Hitler's

troops had stormed through Europe, and were preparing to invade England. At home, gas rationing, food rationing, and the draft were changing everyone's daily existence. The Greatest Generation was gearing up for its greatest challenge.

Against this ominous background, the sports teams in our town were providing welcome distraction and respite from the bad news. Especially the TFHS baseball team. The Turners juggernaut was plowing through the competition; the Powertown team was knocking off adversaries left and right.

The effort was headed by two dominant twirlers, Walter Kostanski and Artie Burke, backed by canny and effective base running. "We had good pitching, and good speed on base," Walter says. By the time the play-offs came around, Walt had 73 strikeouts and three shutouts, Artie Burke had fanned 32, while his teammates, especially Hennick Welcome, Tanny Bourdeau, and Chucky Mucha, had stolen a total of 51 bases!

"We had speed! A lot of those guys were on the track team too, and they knew how to run, you'd better believe it!" adds Walter.

Turners began the playoff march to Fenway Park by defeating Amherst 1-0 in the semis, then knocking off West Springfield, and taking the Western Mass Championship by handily beating Classical of Springfield 8-4.

The stage was set to face Arlington High School in Fenway Park on June 20. It has to be noted here that in those days there were no divisions in schoolboy sports based on school size, or town population. It was a free-for-all, and the best teams in the state were matched up to slug it out. So small but powerful Turners was slated to take on the big city town of Arlington.

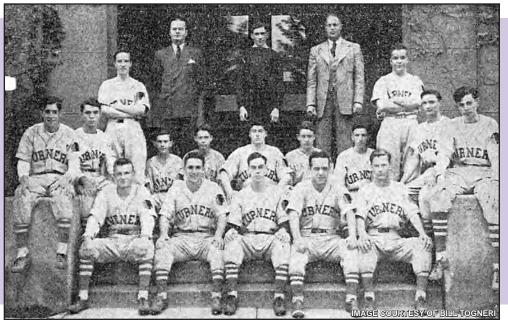
Much has been written about that great battle in Fenway. The Turners teams, under coach Earl Lorden, had already made the finals in 1937 and 1940, losing in heartbreaking defeats to Lynn English and then Belmont. This time they were determined, and destined to take it all.

They arrived in Boston by bus, the day before the game, and after spending the night on the seventh floor of the Lenox Hotel (for good luck!) the team was rested and ready for action. Turners fans had taken up a collection so that the team could take the trip to Boston the night before and get some sleep for the game. The Arlington boys, of course, slept at home.

June 20 turned out to be a beautiful day when the game started at 3:00 p.m. The line-up listed the following: Tanny Bourdeau, shortstop; Artie Burke, right field and pitcher; Hennick Welcome, catcher; Ted Mucha, third base; Walt Kostanski, starting pitcher; Mike



Walter Kostanski, in a 2014 file photo.



A photo of the 1942 Turners Falls squad from the Boston Traveler. Front row, l-r: Mike Meleski, Harvey Welcome, Art Burke, Paul Whiteman, Ed Mleczko. Second row: Fran Bourdeau, Ted Mucha, George Bush, Alvin Dresser, Ken Hilliard, John Bassett, Ed Neipp, Ray Zukowski, John Togneri. Standing: Ed Czarneski, headmaster George Wrightson, manager John O'Connell, coach Earl Lorden, and Bill Martin. ("Walter Kostanski, a star pitcher, was absent when the photo was taken," the Traveler noted.)

Milewski, center; Ray Zukowski, center; Paul Whiteman, left; Ed Mleczko, second base; John Togneri, first base.

Also on the roster and eager for action were younger players Jack Bassett, George Bush, Ray Hilliard, Bill Martin, and Edward Neipp.

Quickly things took a turn for the worse for the Powertown team, and they were behind 4-0 by the seventh inning. But then the tide turned, and the game headed for one of those thrilling, pulse-pounding Hollywood endings.

In the seventh Mleczko doubled, bringing in a run. Then, in the eighth, hits by Bourdeau, Kostanski, and Mucha set up a chance to add to the score. Gump Zukowski stepped up to the plate and knocked a powerful double that caromed off the left field wall to bring the runners home, and the score was tied.

By the bottom of the ninth, the tension continued. It looked like the game would go extra innings when Burke got on board with a single. Then mighty Welcome stepped up to the plate and powered a fat pitch into a soaring triple off the center field wall, driving in Burke while pandemonium broke out in the stands. Burke made his way around the bases, pouring on the speed, heading for home.

Jack Mullen, the home plate umpire, threw a body block on one Turners fan, just to clear the way so that Burke could cross the plate to make it official!

Newspaper accounts of the jubilation that followed describe the scene as Turners fans swarmed the field, but that celebration was dwarfed by the welcome the team received back in Powertown. After a hearty meal, during which the team devoured late-edition newspaper accounts of their victory, they caught the last train home, going west. Kostanski described the long ride on the "milk train," which stopped in every station along the way, but the boys had a little more room when they dropped soldiers off in Ayer for Fort Devens. "Besides, in those days, trains ran on coal and I tell you, it was a smoky, sooty ride and it smelled pretty bad," recalls Kostanski.

Meanwhile, the word among Turners fans back home was spreading fast. Much in the tradition of Paul Revere, the word spread through the five villages to gather at the Turners fire station at 1:45 a.m. to head out for the Greenfield train station.

Townspeople organized a parade: fire chief Charles Earley got the hook and ladder ready to lead the caravan over to Greenfield, and the police there granted permission for the procession, the only condition being that the revelers "refrain from using sirens and horns when passing the hospital."

The organizers had even scrambled to find a band for the parade. After scouring the town for musicians and finding none available, someone remembered that a Cowboy band was playing at the Rhythm Inn, and they were recruited on the spot to provide the music!

The train arrived around 2:00 a.m. and all was dark. The team disembarked the train and suddenly all the lights came on and more than 1,000 townspeople in over 210 cars burst into cheers.

It was to be a sleepless night for the ball team! With the fire truck leading the way the cavalcade left the station, quieted down when they passed the hospital in respectful silence, then resumed the noisy celebration filing down over Canada Hill, across the bridge, down Avenue A, Seventh Street and L Street, up to Crocker Avenue and back downtown to gather under the arc light in front of McCarthy's, the clothier on the Avenue.

Burke was called on to give a speech, but finding few words, he decided to start the crowd singing the "Alma Mater" of TFHS, while many of the players dried their eyes. It was reported that Lorden called himself the "luckiest man in New England" that night. Others noted this was the most spontaneous celebration locally since the Armistice in 1918 that ended WWI.

One sport wag, who clearly had his eye on the ball, wrote: "Many styles of ladies' pajamas were noted on the streets of Turners even as late as 4:00 a.m. Some had coats over the gaily-colored print material, and some did not bother to cover up the attractive material and chassis..." End quote!

That was then, 70 years ago.

So last Friday, the 8th of June, seven surviving members of the team got together for lunch, as they do every five years, at Frank Prondecki's French King Restaurant. Attending were George Bush, Mike Milewski, Ted Mucha, Paul Whiteman, Gump Zukowski, and Walter Kostanski. Teammates Jack Bassett and John Togneri were unable to attend.

George Richason, the assistant coach of the '42 team and still teaching chemistry at UMass, proved to be the eldest, at 93! Also present was Joel Lorden, son of coach Earl Lorden, and Kostanski remarked he could see a lot of the elder Lorden in the son. "Same gestures and shoulder shrugs as the Coach," chuckled Walt.

Brian Miner, currently working on a book dedicated to the '42 team, presented the group with an inscribed brick from Fenway, with words to commemorate the team: "State Champs June 20th, 1942. The Boys of Summer." In the Dwight Evans section of the field, a similar plaque is placed, to recall the Turners 1942 victory, a legendary game for the ages.

1942, 2012 – and now 2024. The boys of the 1942 team have now all passed on, except for one member, the enduring George Bush.

Mr. Bush has been destined to be the last man who was there for that historic day in June 1942 when, in the darkest days of the early war, the sun shone bright on the young men who would soon be headed off to war.

They all came back, having lived through some of the worst years of the American Republic. They spent fruitful lives, played important roles in their communities, maybe really only regular lives out of the limelight – we can't know all their stories.

But for that one season, that one day in June, they were young, brilliant, and on top of the world.

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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: Auto Partitas, twelve little trios of mixed-media works inspired by automotive parts, by Nina Rossi. Through April.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: New Roots in River Banks, an exhibit on Polish and other Eastern European immigration stories and their contributions in the Connecticut River Valley. Through April 28.

Montague Center Library: Robert Callery, paintings and mixed

Sawmill River Arts, Montague: Sara Casilio, paintings on Duralar, through April.

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: Karie Neal, paintings and mixed media artwork depicting animals, flowers, landscapes, and birds.

Through April, with a reception Saturday, April 6 from 1 to 3 p.m.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: My Inner Joy, mixed-media artworks by Nese Uysal, through March.

Artspace, Greenfield: Teen Art Show, young artists from high schools across Franklin County showing two- and three-dimensional work, through March 15.

Looky Here, Greenfield: Between You and Me, portraits by Maria Sparrow, through March 29. Closing reception March 29.

Gallery A3, Amherst: Pairings, works by Martha Braun and Rochelle Shicoff, through March.

Shelburne Arts Coop, Shelburne Falls: Dare to Dream, group show by member artists, through March.

Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne: Lou Wallach: Photographs, black-and-white images of the natural world, through April 28.

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: Physiotasmagorical: The Implicit Body, group exhibit exploring corporeal secrets at the intersection of the clinical and the imaginary. Through March 30.

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.

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.

LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here's the way it was on March 13, 2014: News from the Montague

Beneficial 'Blight' Tag

Reporter's archive.

Montague town planner Walter Ramsey expressed dismay this week that no bidders had come forth in response to the town's Request for Proposals (RFP) to acquire and redevelop three buildings in Millers Falls.

The Powers Block properties were being offered for a nominal fee under the Commercial Homesteading Program, an economic development effort designed to bring these buildings and the adjacent land back onto the tax rolls.

The next step is to prepare a report, according to federal guidelines, to designate the area as "slum and blight," a prelude for the town to receive federal funds for façade improvements, better handicapped access and expanded parking. A key goal is to attract investment in the Powers Block.

Wendell Folks Can Live Simply

On Monday, the Wendell board of health approved a conservation-oriented housing variance process that allows for alternative water, heating, and waste disposal systems. Under the variance process, the board of health plans to sign off on the building or occupancy permit for an owner-occupied home that meets the standards of the state sanitary code, but lacks electricity or running water.

ARTIST PROFILE

Linda Longtoe Sheehan

ABENAKIART.ORG IMAGE

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – I am interested in Native American things, which is why I have gone to two Native American dance events at Greenfield Community College hosted by the Nolumbeka Project. At the second one, called the Eastern Woodland Social Dance, I found Linda Longtoe Sheehan selling her jewelry, and thought she would be a nice idea for a profile, so I took her

card for her jewelry company, Two Otters.

She told me she thought the event was very nice, and agreed with me that it was popular with people. "They advertise that very well," she said.

As for her jewelry, she and her husband Roger Longtoe Sheehan make the pieces together. Two Otters haven't been around for a long time. She is part of the Native American tribe called the Elnu Abenaki, and her husband is the chief. Their home base is in Brattleboro, Vermont, and a cultural center is being built there by the tribe.

The company's name came up through a friend of hers named Julia, and she herself wanted a name with otters in it. "Otters mean a lot to me," she said.

Native Americans like her jewelry very much, and

small beads made from shells. She also makes them with silver and other beads. "I make my jewelry out of all kinds of things," she told me. "We are gathering more and doing more stuff."

The time it takes her to make each piece varies. "I can make a piece in a half hour, or three to nine months, depending on what it is," was her answer. She also told me that her jewelry goes for anywhere from a

dollar fifty to a thousand dollars. "It could be more, depending on an order," she said.

It sounds like a decent business to have to your name. She sells the jewelry part-time in her own store, which has been around for a couple of years. She has also done pow-wows, including the Dartmouth Pow Wow, and her jewelry is sold at the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum in Vermont, which hosts Native American events.

Other events she has done include the Pocumtuck Homelands Festival in Turners Falls, and she mentioned that she has done a lot of events in Massachusetts.

I found out on the Vermont Abenaki Artists Association's website (abenakiart.org) that she is known as Wampum Woman, because apparently this is her specialshe said a lot of her jewelry is made from wampum, ty when it comes to jewelry. I found this quite beautiful.

20 YEARS AGO

Here's the way it was on March 11, 2004: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

Herbicide Concerns

Dale C. Moss, a G Street resident, founded People Against Toxic Herbicides (PATH) due to concerns regarding Northeast Utilities' spraying of herbicides along the canal.

Moss's letter to the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture cited the lack of well-publicized public forums; the wide range of dates for spraying; and the quality of safety tests for glyphosate and metsulfuron methyl, the two herbicides being used, sometimes within 100 feet of a public water supply.

The department responded listing reasons why "the Bureau does not believe you have presented sufficient information to warrant a moratorium on the use of herbicides either along the canal or in populated areas."

Nuclear Power Concerns

The Gill-Montague school committee formally went on record in favor of an independent safety assessment of the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant in Vernon, Vermont. Energy Corporation, the plant's owner, has requested authorization to boost power production at the 31-year-old nuclear facility by 20%.

With nine votes in favor and one abstention, the committee endorsed a letter saying, "We feel it is unwise and irresponsible to approve an increase in power for an old plant without a thorough and independent safety assessment."

150 YEARS AGO

Here's the way it was on March 4, 1874: News from the Turners Falls Reporter's archive.

Local Matters

The Urban Dramatic Club is preparing for another entertainment.

Rist must like the muddy walking if everybody likes his rubber boots as well as we do.

Let us suggest to our theatrical club that they give an exhibition for the benefit of our public library scheme.

Conductor Miller's pleasant face greets passengers by the trains leaving our depot. Mr. Thorp still remains on the branch.

The ice left the river at this point on Thursday morning. Had it not been for Commodore Smith there would doubtless have been some cussin' about the ferry accommodations.

Messrs. Clapp & Co. have made Turners Falls quite a depot for the shipment of Butter, for which they command the best prices. Their net return on shipments last week gave from 39 to 42 cents.

A.C. Lewis has sold his coal business to Newton Dibble, who will increase his facilities and continue the business. Mr. Lewis will continue the fire wood business, adding all kinds of hardwood to his edgings.

Mr. Bailey has done much for our High School, and we hope to see an expression of appreciation, in crowded houses, on Monday and Tuesday evenings, when his pupils will give entertainments at the Town Hall, for the purpose of raising money to purchase apparatus for the school. The programmes for both evenings are very enjoyable.

Messrs. R.B. Campbell and Chas. Hazelton have men at work digging the cellar for a block of three houses on Fourth Street. The block will be a fine one, of brick, ground plan 60 x 35 feet. Each house will contain seven rooms, with all the conveniences for a home. There has been a sad need of just such houses and we hope the gentlemen will not stop with one block.

The attention of the Road Commissioners is called to the holes and wash-outs in our streets.















PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Wampum earrings made by Linda Longtoe Sheehan.

Hold the Foam: Free Recycling for Styrofoam

FRANKLIN COUNTY - The Franklin County Solid Waste Management District is collaborating with Leverett, Montague, Northfield, and Wendell to hold special collections for blocky "Styrofoam" packing material each Saturday in April, from 9 a.m. to noon: April 6, 13, 20, and 27. These events are only open to residents of these four towns.

These special recycling collections will only accept white blocky packing material and coolers made of expanded polystyrene foam (EPS or PS #6), commonly known as "Styrofoam." Volunteers will review the materials each resident brings and may reject unacceptable items. Foam items must be clean and dry. Before bringing materials, residents will need to remove any tape, labels, cardboard, or wood.

These collections will not accept food-related "Styrofoam" items such

as cups, plates, bowls, trays, egg cartons, or take-out containers. Other items that will not be accepted: wet/ dirty materials, #4 (LDPE) foam packaging material, foam insulation board (XPS), or packing peanuts. The UPS Store in Greenfield accepts clean, dry peanuts for reuse. Foam materials of any type are not accepted in household recycling programs.

On Saturday mornings in April residents of Leverett, Montague, Northfield, and Wendell may bring materials to their transfer station. A permit is not required; nor is pre-registration. Space is limited and first come, first served.

Locations are: Leverett Transfer Station, 5 Cemetery Road, Leverett; Montague Transfer Station, 11 Sandy Lane, Turners Falls; Northfield Transfer Station, 31 Caldwell Road, Northfield; and Wendell Transfer Station, 341 New Salem Road,

Wendell. The Montague collection is open to residents of Montague and its villages: Turners Falls, Lake Pleasant, Millers Falls, Montague Center, and Montague City.

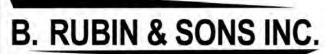
This effort builds on the success of the 2023 collection, where events in Montague and Northfield together diverted 90 cubic yards of foam from the landfill. Materials collected at these events are recycled at Gold Circuit E-Cycling in Agawam. The foam is densified and ultimately recycled into picture frames, molding, or building insulation. MI-BOX Moving & Storage supports this project with discounted rates.

For more information, contact the District office at info@franklincountywastedistrict.org or (413) 772-2438. MA Relay for the hearing impaired: 711 or 1 (800) 439-2370 (TTY/TDD). The District is an equal opportunity provider.

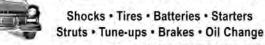
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It is difficult to get the news from poems yet men die miserably every day for lack of what is found there.

- William Carlos Williams

edited by Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno Readers are invited to send poems to the Montague Reporter at: 177 Avenue A Turners Falls, MA 01376 or to: poetry@montaguereporter.org

Our March Poetry Page

Letter From the Editor

Your quasi artistic Constructions are Quite flawed in Many respects. Your perspectives Are not well defined And their execution Is dull and in an Uninteresting form. What makes you think Anyone would benefit From such crudely Concocted structures? Only a naïve barbarian Without any skills Whatsoever could Have conjured them. They are half things, Not whole things Which a mature Being needs to sink Its teeth into. We couldn't even Wash the floor with These scattershot Expressions, produced By a fragmented mind, Badly in need of Reconfiguring if that Is even possible.

- Horatio Talbot
Amherst

Remember

The perpendicular
Morning leans against
The expectations of
Noontime receiving
The irregular anticipations
Of evening catching
Bright octagonal minutes
By the thousands from
The corpuscular past.

- W.C. Gosnell Amherst

Writer's Detour

The night before she began the poem with a Vieux Carre helped with a dite of weed In the morning, folding The map of the Maritimes stretched out on the couch, she could "drive her finger" along the way to Le Goulet without intoxication. The tide was high everyday.

She stroked peninsulas where nobody belonged and was cheered to not then be alone.

He had stretched a big piece of paper and pen across the table for her to "do the math" in her head.

Code for "write your poem and quit yanking the chain about it." Any and each immutable sound sent her way was keenly assigned the lick of authority causing inspired discomfort. Resistance.

Her finger grew keen to fit – somewhere on the map – inspired, delicious, procrastination and to wonder for the rest of the day.

"I am not sure where you are going" he said.

I do not know where I am going. I will tell you at the end.

Then I will know where I was going.

– Edna French Montague

Annerst

Strange Day

The weather is pathological today. It's hearing voices from another era. Roller skating all day in underground Tunnels was the norm back then and World leaders spoke in tongues at the Drop of a hat.

The wind is singing an old vaudeville tune This morning that only it recalls the lyrics to And the sun on the lake is the pattern of an Ostrich's feathers.

It's evident that a new species is making its Way through town now since forty-seven Ambassadors on sabbatical have made it A point to sing along with the sound Of the wind.

Horatio TalbotAmherst

Lost Song

You left out the Most important part. But isn't it the most Important parts that Always get left out? They talk backwards To themselves in The wild night, sing Lost songs out of tune In an abandoned theater, And like refugees on the Run from a hostile country, They hide in the balconies At night telling each other War stories in the dark. These ununionized, misplaced Workers are left out fallen leaves Eating forgotten memories For breakfast every day. Fortunately, they light the Theater lights for shivering Children on cold evenings So the key players wont trip In the shadows and surging Waters speeding past the

> - W.C. Gosnell Amherst

Grim Paris

Charles Baudelaire Has been contemplating Suicide again. He had another Argument with His mother. She let Charles know In no uncertain terms That she would not Give him an extra Fifty francs per month To buy more Opium. "Why don't you go out And get a job instead Of wasting your time Writing that gut wrenchingly Depressing poetry" she'd Say to him over and over Again in her letters. "But mother, you don't Understand me. My new work in infused With the spirit of the new American writer Edgar Alan Poe" he'd say as he finished Editing another diatribe About Jeanne Duval his live in Mistress. "And get rid of that horrid Woman you're living with Who wont stop stealing Your things, and cheer up Charles, Syphilis wont kill you" She'd say for the hundredth time While letting the cat out The back door.

Horatio TalbotAmherst

Contributors' Notes:

Horatio Talbot, from Amherst, has a following on his YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/@HoratioTalbot771_a W.C. Gosnell's previous work has appeared in the Montague Reporter, Soundings East, The Portland Review, Black River Review, and others.

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

GUSTAVE CAILLEBOTTE, CHRYSANTHEMUMS IN THE GARDEN AT PETIT-GENNEVILLIERS (1893)



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Makeshift stage.







S & ENTERTAIN

The Reporter is looking for volunteers to help us curate this listing. Interested? Contact us at editor@montaguereporter.org!

FRIDAY, MARCH 15

Bookends, Florence: Ides of March Cover Show with Orange & Amber, Wishbone Zoe, Norma Dream, more. \$. 6 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: Play, Gorgons, \$, 7 p.m.; Jimmy Just Quit, \$, 8:30 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: Viqueen, Jeopardy, Outlourdes, Woundlicker. \$. 7 p.m.

Tori Town, Holyoke: Dowsing Rod, Grazer, Sleep Destroyer, Sapien Joyride. 7 p.m.

Hutghi's, Westfield: Anthropophagous, I Destroyer, Ritual Clearing, Compress. \$. 7 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Adam Ezra Group, The Mallett Brothers Band. \$. 8 p.m.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: Lost Film, Small Pond, bobbie. \$. 8 p.m.

90 King St., Northampton: Dowsing Rod, Grazer, Sleep Destroyer, Sapien Joyride. \$. 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Jeff Unfortunately, Fugue State, Ad.ul.t. No cover. 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, MARCH 16

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: Mud Season feat. The Dave Bulley Band, Woody & The Rebel Alliance, SpaceBar, more. \$. 12 p.m.

Mount Toby Friends Meetinghouse. Leverett: Tim Grimm, Nate Borofsky. \$. 7 p.m.

Wendell Meetinghouse, Wendell: Jaam Ak Salaam feat. Thioko Afia Diagne, Mountakha Latif, and Abdou Sarr. Free. 7 p.m.

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: Play, Gorgons, \$, 7 p.m.; Jimmy Just Quit, \$, 8:30 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: Burly Girlies, Kalliope Jones, Rusty Mullet, Street Trash, Film & Gender. \$. 7 p.m.

Bombyx Center for Arts & Equity, Florence: Haley Heynderickx, Tim Baker. \$. 7 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: Olde Bard, dollflower, PMS, Hard-Car. \$. 8 p.m.

90 King Street, Northampton: Valley Gals, Wet Bastards, Ian St. George, Owen Manure. \$. 8 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turn-Molly Hatchet. \$. 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: DJ Autoplay. No cover. 9:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, MARCH 17

Hawks & Reed: Play, Gorgons, \$. 2 p.m

Belltower Records, North Adams: Tom Carter, Paul LaBrecque, Bulle. \$. 4 p.m.

Bombyx Center, Florence: Red Baraat. \$. 7 p.m.

Nova Arts, Keene: Horse Lords, Ka Baird, Know Your Program. \$. 7 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Pioneer Valley Jazz Shares presents Anna Webber's Shimmer Wince. \$. 7:30 p.m.

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

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20

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

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Wes Brown with Jill Connolly and Eugene Uman. No cover. 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 22

Stone Church, Brattleboro: Coati Pop, Orange Peel Mystic, Dutch Experts, Match, Mevius. \$. 6:30 p.m.

ers Falls: Danny and Greg. No cover. 7 p.m.

Marigold Theater, Easthamp-

ton: Ogre, Murder (sword), Eyre House Ruins. \$. 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, MARCH 23

10 Forward, Greenfield: Scotia, Nitu, Biproduct, Bitcrushr, Space Camp, Joi Avery, Madel. Benefit for Defend the Forest Bail Fund. \$. 7 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: Best of the '70s. \$. 7 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: Myk Freedman and Jesse Olsen Bay, Myrtle Street Klezmer. No cover. 9:30 p.m.

TUESDAY, MARCH 26

Parlor Room, Northampton: Sam Amidon. \$. 7:30 p.m.

THURSDAY, MARCH 28

Brick House. Turners Falls: Webb Crawford / Max Hamel / Stella Silbert trio, Lean. \$. 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, MARCH 29

Mystery Train, Amherst: Kath Bloom, Bulle, Primitive Accumulation. \$. 5 p.m.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: A Midsummer Night's Dream. \$. 7:30 p.m.

Shutesbury Athletic Club: Wildcat O'Halloran. \$. 8 p.m.

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

looking forward...

SATURDAY, MARCH 30

Stone Church, Brattleboro: Rubblebucket. \$. 7 p.m.

THURSDAY, APRIL 4

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: Kassa Overall. \$. 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 6

Belltower Records, North Adams: Kohoutek, Heavenly Bodies, Wendy Eisenberg, Erica Dawn Lyle. \$. 6 p.m.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: Harm, Paper Bee, Alyssa Kai and Dead Girls, Grammerhorn Wren. \$. 7 p.m.

MONDAY, APRIL 15

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: Ruth Garbus Trio, Bernice. \$. 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, APRIL 21

Holyoke Media, Holyoke: Flywheel Arts presents Dear Nora. Ruth Garbus Trio. bobbie. \$. 7 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 1

Easthampton: Daily Op, R.A.P Ferreira, Cavalier, DJ Quills. \$. 8:30 p.m.

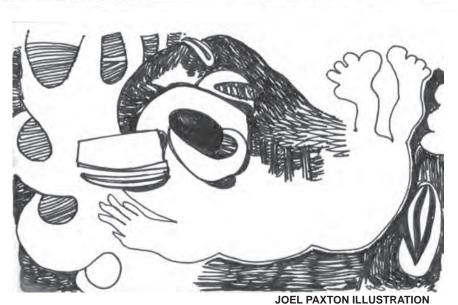
FRIDAY, MAY 10

The Drake, Amherst: Frankie Cosmos, Katie von Schleicher. \$. 8 p.m.

JAN ATAMIAN ILLUSTRATION







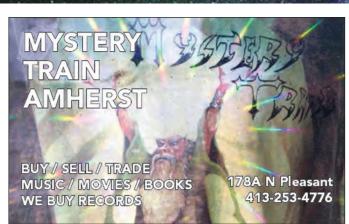
Jornet Tulman un atamian



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Montague Community Television News

Airport Info Sesh

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

TURNERS FALLS - An info session about the Turners Falls Municipal Airport was held over Zoom on March 7, in advance of this Thursday's special town meeting. MCTV has the recording up on our Vimeo page, alongside the Montague fin com meeting from March 6 and the Gill and Montague selectboard meetings from March 11.

If you come to MCTV for the meetings, we've got you covered. But if you enjoy watching works from local filmmakers or coverage of local events, we need your help in producing more content. All community members are encouraged to submit their videos to be aired on

Channel 9 and featured on our Vimeo page. That means you! If you have ideas for films, MCTV is always available to assist in local video production as well. Cameras, tripods, and lighting equipment are available for checkout, and filming and editing assistance can be provided.

And if you're looking for more ways to get involved, consider joining the MCTV Board. 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. Find videos and more on our website, montaguetv.org.

VALLEY VIEW from page B1 to the hotel. I had never seen the

coach so angry.

After taking a call from police, he had gone looking for the captains and found one of them passed out on the white, sandy beach beside a cooler, a pile of empties, and two equally inebriated spring-break college coeds. It was a scene straight out of the movie Animal House or Hunter S. Thompson Fear and Loathing debauchery, spiking his ire.

Uh-oh. Crisis mode. The wheels had flown off the wagon.

The first mistake I made was to spend much of the short walk back to our hotel chatting with the coach as only a foolhardy drunk would. Though I don't remember the conversation, I'm sure it was typical drunken babble that only irritated him. Have you ever been a sober listener to a drunk? I have, and I shudder to think of it.

When we arrived at the hotel we were ordered to our rooms. The party was over. Coach was ashamed of us. He scheduled an early-morning, pre-sendoff, conference-room meeting before our departure to Miami International Airport. Eight o'clock sharp. "And don't be a second late!" he barked, before driving one of our rented three-seater station wagons to negotiate the release of his two jailed pitchers.

Coach's anger hadn't subsided for our morning meeting. We should be thankful, he warned us, that he didn't have time to reassemble a roster. Never had he been a party to such

unacceptable spring-trip conduct.

I think we returned to Bradley International Airport and Amherst on a Sunday. We had five days of typical cold, windy conditions to prepare for our Saturday home opener against Springfield College at Earl Lorden Field. The Springfield and Northampton newspapers previewing the game and season published a starting lineup for the opener. I was batting fifth and playing right field.

It was to be my first regular-season game in Amherst, delayed a couple of years by injury and other issues too complicated to quickly explain. The wait had been long. I was so psyched that I even went to bed early the night before the game - a rare event.

On the day of the game, I put on uniform No. 12 in the Boyden Gym locker room and walked through the tunnel and on to distant Lorden Field for batting practice and warmups. There the starting lineup was posted on the dugout bat rack, where I discovered my name stricken from the five hole and replaced by a teammate.

My blood boiled. I approached the coach for an explanation. He told me Springfield was going with a righty, so he opted for a left-handed hitter. I couldn't hide my anger.

Seething in the dugout for the first pitch, I removed myself from potential conflict by going to the batting cage along the left-field the count in my favor, and smoked mediately removed from the lineup line. I wanted to cool down and take a waist-high fastball, away, up the and handed a seven-game suspen-

delivered by a teammate feeding the JUGS pitching machine. When done tuning my stroke, I returned to the dugout sullen and ready to explode. I felt like I had been done dirty and was hoping for an oppor-

tunity to swing the bat.

My chance finally came in the bottom of the seventh inning. Trailing 5-1 with two outs, two runners on base and a lefty reliever on the mound, Bergquist called my name from the third-base coaching box he occupied. He wanted me to hit for the player who'd taken my spot in the original lineup.

Totally focused, I took my stance in the batter's box, worked out my frustrations on baseballs right-field power alley. I knew I sion for my defiant "hand-shake." I

hit it sweet but wasn't sure it had enough lift to clear the green, eightfoot, wooden fence. So, thinking triple as I burst out of the batter's box, I rounded second base at full speed.

Facing Bergquist, I saw he was signaling home run by circling his hand above his head. Time to slow down. It had cleared the fence over the 375-foot sign. As I rounded third base, Bergquist offered me his congratulatory right hand, which I whacked with all my might on my way to teammates awaiting me at the plate.

For all intents and purposes, that glorious moment was the end of my promising UMass career. I was imhad showed him up on center stage, he charged. I finished the season on the roster, but was used sparingly, and could never get comfortable in that unfamiliar role.

I guess it just wasn't meant to be. School and baseball never mixed well for me.

Season over, I dropped out and took a job as a land surveyor. A year later, I went on the road as a professional fundraiser traveling the land. I returned to college a couple of times, lastly in UMass' progressive University Without Walls program.

It worked for me.

Gary Sanderson lives in Greenfield. Questions and comments welcome at gary@ oldtavernfarm.com.



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