

The Montague Reporter

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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

MARCH 28, 2024

GILL SELECTBOARD

Gift of House Blossoms Into Royal Headache For Town Hall

By KATE SAVAGE

At Monday's well-attended Gill selectboard meeting, the board heard conflicting requests for dealing with the former one-room schoolhouse on Boyle Road, which the late Renee Jenkins bequeathed to the town. At issue is whether to accept the gift and sell the home, or to reject it and return it to her heirs.

Sue Kramer, who attended with her lawyer Sam Lovejoy, argued that the town should sell the property to her. Kramer owns 16 acres of recreational-use land abutting Jenkins's lot on two sides. A letter she sent to the selectboard outlines a longstanding boundary dispute on the land. Kramer claims that a survey showed her property includes the home's backyard, with a garage straddling the boundary line.

Kramer said that in the 1990s, the Jenkins family told her they now owned the land they were using through adverse possession. She says she tried to sell that land to the family, but her offer was rejected.

Kramer's letter suggests that perhaps Jenkins left the lot to the town because she didn't want to give her heirs "a barely-livable, possibly unsellable piece of property with a potential lawsuit hanging over it. She didn't want to pass on a headache to them." Selling the house to her, Kramer said, would allow the town

see GILL page A5

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Cameras May Have Located Cause of Water Infiltration

By JEFF SINGLETON

"There are no definitive findings, which is why there is no mention of the plan moving forward at this time," Montague public works superintendent Tom Bergeron wrote last week to the town's selectboard.

Bergeron was referring to camera inspections of two "lateral" pipes that feed into the Millers Falls sewer system and are suspected of being the sources for large amounts of water that, combined with sanitary waste, have overwhelmed the Erving plant where sewage from Millers is treated. The "overage" from this extra water is projected to cost the town of Montague nearly \$95,000 this year.

Bergeron's report suggested a new dead end in the town's ongoing effort to identify the source of the "infiltration and inflow" into the Millers sewers. But by the time he came before the selectboard Monday night, the DPW chief appeared to have an analysis and a game plan for addressing the problem in the coming months. A subcontractor with a camera suitable for inspecting the smaller lateral pipes that connect homes and other buildings to the sewer system may have struck gold.

The pipes the company inspected are at 12 and 20 Federal Street, the see MONTAGUE page A6

Consultants See Demand for Housing, Recommend 'Village Center' on Farren Lot



HUGH FINNERTY PHOTO

The study recommends building an "inter-block mix of single-family, duplex, and small apartment buildings" on the lot.

By JEFF SINGLETON

MONTAGUE CITY – New housing, new commercial space, and even a new route for the bike path are all under consideration for the former Farren Care Center property on Montague City Road.

The Montague planning board announced last week that next

Tuesday it will discuss a 51-page "Market Analysis and Development Strategy" for the property. Town planner Maureen Pollock told the Reporter that the announcement was sent to Montague City residents, and that time will be set aside at the meeting for public input about the options the study proposes.

The Farren lot is currently owned

by Trinity Health of New England Senior Communities, which has demolished most of the structures on the site and plans to gift the land and one small building to the town.

At Tuesday's meeting, which will be held at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom, the board will "review the report findings and recommendations"

see FARREN page A6

LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Jump In School District Costs Punted to May Town Meeting

By GEORGE BRACE

After a late-in-the-game increase in the Amherst-Pelham high school district's request to its member towns, Leverett's selectboard and finance committee struggled Tuesday night to recommend a townwide budget for FY'25. The fin com deadlocked over the issue, while the selectboard decided to recommend a budget that did not include the increase, with a proviso that town meeting should consider it separately.

While a number of other items were discussed at the hearing, including whether to add a fourth full-time police officer, Tuesday's hearing focused largely on the request to increase Leverett's contribution to the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District's FY'25 budget by \$126,361, or 8.2% over the current year.

A town budget endorsed by the Leverett selectboard on March 12 had included a 4% increase in the regional school assessment, but two days later the Amherst regional school committee (RSC) rejected the district budget that assessment had been based on, voting in favor of a larger budget.

see LEVERETT page A4

Agency Chipping Away at Fuel Aid Backlog

By SARAH ROBERTSON

GREENFIELD – With the arrival of spring, the regional nonprofit that processes requests for fuel assistance is still working through an overwhelming number of applications, but reports that it is making faster progress than it did last year.

Community Action Pioneer Valley (CAPV), through which money from the federally-funded Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is distributed to residents in Franklin and Hampshire

counties, also serves as the central hub for a network of housing and shelter providers. The organization has faced challenges on both fronts stemming from complications with staffing and online application portals.

Last year vacant application certifier positions and problems with new software introduced by the state to certify LIHEAP applications caused a months-long fuel assistance backlog across the region, and similar problems continued this winter.

In January the Reporter reported that CAPV had see FUEL page A7

WENDELL SELECTBOARD

Wendellites Amenable to Smaller-Scale Energy Storage

By JOSH HEINEMANN

The Wendell selectboard had two battery issues on their March 20 agenda.

The first, and less fraught, was an offer by Nexamp, a self-described clean energy company with headquarters in Boston and operations in Lawrence, to form a partnership with Wendell to put batteries in private homes and in municipal buildings. These batteries would maintain the buildings' functions when the grid's supply of electricity is interrupted, and also supply electricity to the grid during peak demand times, offsetting the need for more generating capacity and more wires.

Leverett citizen Bill Stubblefield said that this kind of dispersed storage is more appropriate than the proposed 100-megawatt battery energy storage system (BESS) proposed by New Leaf Energy. He then said Nexamp is the company working on the large solar project in Shutesbury, and that it is a good idea to check the company.

The highway garage and fire station solar installation would do well if it had a battery system, said selectboard chair Laurie DiDonato.

see WENDELL page A8

OPENING VOLLEYS



DAVID HOITT PHOTOS

Great Falls Middle School athlete Olivia Wolbach (left) and Franklin Tech's Avery Heathwaite (right) warm up during an early spring practice of the Turners Falls High School tennis team on Tuesday.

Our 984th Attempt To Describe This Place

Illustration: Charmed Clerk.....A2	Icy Twigs Shine.....B1	M/M/M: Wheatie's Old Glow.....B4
Two Letters to the Editors.....A2, A3	Dank Original Hyperlocal Crossword.....B1	Faces & Places: A Breathtaking Quilt.....B4
Local Briefs.....A3	Valley View: Weir'd Out.....B1	Gallery Exhibits Listing.....B5
Op/Ed: Lived Experience.....A4	Travels With Max: Ferry Tale Island.....B1	Sex Matters: Interview Part II.....B5
MROTR: Sunshine State Edition.....A7	April Libraries Listing.....B2	Spanish Page: Hey, It's Francia!.....B6
10, 20, and 150 Years Ago.....A7	Montague Police Log Highlights.....B3	Arts & Entertainment Calendar.....B7
MCTV News.....A8	Montague Cryptojam.....B3	Four Comics.....B7



The Montague Reporter

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A Drift

"Mistakes are almost always of a sacred nature," the Spanish surrealist painter Salvador Dalí wrote in his 1963 memoir *Diary of a Genius*. "Never try to correct them. On the contrary: rationalize them, understand them thoroughly. After that, it will be possible for you to sublimate them."

The world's largest shipyard, just like the world's largest auto plant, is located in Ulsan, South Korea and owned by Hyundai. On January 5, 2015 an eight-story apartment building collapsed in Nairobi, Kenya, two American skiers were killed in an avalanche in the Swiss Alps, and Hyundai Heavy Industries shipbuilding division COO Yoon Moon-kyoon attended a naming ceremony in Ulsan for two new 984-foot-long container ships his company was selling to a Greek firm named Oceanbulk.

These massive ships were christened *MV Cézanne* and *MV Dalí*. The *Cézanne*, incidentally, stopped at the Port of Baltimore two weeks ago and is now chugging along on a month-long trip to Sri Lanka. These are Neopanamax-class vessels, i.e. so big they could only navigate the Panama Canal after its locks were enlarged in 2016. Sailing under Singaporean flags, they are chartered by the Danish company Maersk, which ships just over a seventh of the planet's freight.

Back in 1980, after a Japanese-built and Liberian-flagged freighter hit a pier and caused the partial collapse of a bridge across Tampa Bay, killing 35, an engineer with the state of Maryland's Toll Facilities Administration warned that the then-three-year-old Francis Scott Key Bridge across Baltimore's Outer Harbor would not have survived such a direct impact.

In fact, the *Baltimore Sun* wrote at the time, the engineer "said he knew of no economically feasible way to design a bridge that could withstand such a blow."

Early Tuesday morning the *Dalí*, having done its business at the Port of Baltimore, set out to follow the *Cézanne* to Sri Lanka, but before it had left the city's outer harbor it suffered a power outage. The crew dropped anchor and issued an emergency call, and first responders onshore began diverting traffic. After two minutes of drift the ship struck a main pillar of the bridge, effecting its catastrophic collapse.

Miraculously, only eight people are believed to have fallen with the

Key Bridge – apparently all construction workers of Mexican and Central American origin who were working on its span. As of press time, two survivors have been rescued, two bodies have been recovered, and the other four men are still missing in the river. The section of the bridge landed on the ship, whose manifest included 764 tons of hazardous materials, and an iridescent sheen could be seen on the water's surface Wednesday.

The cause of the power outage is still unknown – the FBI has ruled out terrorism – but the press is excited by the idea the ship may have been burning "dirty fuel," cheap and often contaminated light diesel apparently pervasive on the container-ship scene. It would be reassuring to learn that such a discrete sin – the greed of an operator – could be pinpointed as the root of this terrifying cascading wreck. Stamp out dirty fuel and all the incomprehensibly large objects of the global economy will once again float safely on past each other.

Baltimore's port is closed, best guesses indicate for six weeks, and the real wreck is just beginning to spread. Maryland governor Wes Moore called the accident a "global crisis," which is not wrong but should make one wonder: Is every local wildfire, earthquake, massacre, and collapse a global crisis, or just the ones that happen to block important nodes of circulation?

Since 2020 we have been reminded so often of these brittle planetary supply chains that actually talking about them has become eye-rollingly cringe. What we don't discuss enough, though, is the way some disasters don't cascade or spread or destabilize but become part of the normal flow of things.

February, for example, was the hottest February on record planetwide. It was also the ninth month in a row to earn this distinction. According to the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication, 29% of Americans are "very worried" about climate change and 36% more are "somewhat worried," but we aren't doing much about it.

The changing heat shifts migrations, allergies and illnesses, and crop viability, and all of that worry, too, has its flows and collisions. But mistakes are sacred, and this moment in history – in which we see what is happening, but do not have the power to correct our course – may yet prove to be sublime.



Lisa Stratford has been Leverett's town clerk for 27 years, but she says she measures her time by how many elections she has made it through, a process she estimates is three times as complicated as it used to be. In general, though, she has found her time working for the town to be "completely charming." Behind Stratford in the town hall meeting room is a vintage stage curtain painted by Thurston Munson and his brother in the 1930s. Also in the room are two portraits painted by Leverett native Erastus Salisbury Field (1805-1900).

Letter to the Editors

Planning for Solar in Our Community

Last week's *Reporter* included an article about some of the complexities related to our electric grid and its capacity for large solar installations in town. Our current electric grid's need for upgrades resulted in the proposal for a large solar array at the Turners Falls Airport grinding to a halt, for now.

The article stated that "the Montague Energy Committee... recently completed a major research project designed to encourage solar development in town."

I want to clarify the role of the Montague Energy Committee (MEC) in solar planning for our community, and announce that we have just set up a solar forum on Zoom for Wednesday, May 22, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. The forum will explore solar planning opportunities for our community. MEC will publicize more details and the agenda for this event in coming weeks, but, for now, let me explain a bit about the solar planning process that's been going on.

A draft *Community Solar Action Plan* and related documents on solar planning for our town were developed in the fall of 2022 through spring of 2023 by two UMass students, in close collaboration with UMass Clean Energy Extension (CEE) faculty.

The Montague Solar Planning Committee (SPC) was formed to assist in providing the CEE with a Montague perspective and resources for this planning process, and the Montague Energy Committee – which included several members also serving on the SPC – worked with the SPC and the CEE to facilitate development of those resources. Assistant town administrator Walter Ramsey was instrumental in helping provide current and accurate town solar and other related municipal information for these documents.

The research, planning process, and resulting documents were generated by the CEE to help our town continue to proactively plan for the expansion of solar, in a way consistent with preferences identified by a solar survey of town residents, also conducted by the CEE.

Solar will undoubtedly expand here for a number of reasons: 30% federal commercial and residential tax credits for solar installations through 2032; newly available 30% federal direct payments for solar to municipalities and nonprofits; the ever-falling costs of solar; Montague's abundance of farmland and forests,

which are preferred by developers of larger-scale solar because they cost less under current state incentives than solar on rooftops and parking canopies; and Massachusetts's encouraging and likely further incentivizing solar to meet mandated climate emission targets.

Regarding the limited grid capacity for solar in town, electric grid capacity is complex, and experiencing rapid changes. Even the 2022 *Solar Resource & Infrastructure Assessment for the Town of Montague*, developed by the CEE, includes grid information that has changed since that report was completed.

As of the time of that report a larger solar installation may have been possible, but currently, according to Eversource's up-to-date grid capacity map and CEE faculty, only solar arrays smaller than 1 megawatt may be possible at the moment due to the addition of larger solar installations on our electric grid since the *Assessment* was completed.

Home solar in Montague is typically around 7 kilowatts, and smaller arrays under 1 megawatt (1,000 kilowatts) would likely not be affected by current grid limitations. The Energy Committee, not having grid expertise, was unaware of this change in grid capacity for larger solar arrays, and it is typically an issue that is brought to light by the utility as solar developments are explored.

Staying current with the ever-changing solar grid capacity, shifting policies, and legislative complexities is challenging. Policy changes are in the process of being implemented, including Eversource's development of an *Electric Sector Modernization Plan*, a plan mandated by a bill which became law that our local legislators, Representative Natalie Blais and Senator Jo Comerford, introduced. Several other state bills are now being considered which, if passed by the end of this spring's legislative session, could also help expand grid capacity in our town.

Please mark your calendars for the May 22 solar forum Zoom to learn more about solar opportunities here, get an overview of the draft *Action Plan*, provide input on the draft plan, ask your questions, and engage in planning for solar in a way that our community prefers.

Sally Pick, co-chair
Montague Energy Committee

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Compiled by NINA ROSSI

The **Montague Shakespeare Festival** kicks off this weekend with performances of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on Friday and Saturday, March 29 and 30, at 7:30 p.m. The play is directed by Fiona Ross of the Royal Shakespeare Company in the UK.

“Join us for a night that mirrors our own world’s struggles and triumphs,” the announcement reads. “Where shadows illuminate truths, laughter liberates, and dreams dare to defy the darkness. This isn’t just Shakespeare – it’s an invitation to witness the enduring power of love and resistance.”

The Festival ends next weekend with additional performances on Friday and Saturday, April 5 and 6 at 7:30 p.m. and a matinee performance Sunday, April 7 at 2 p.m.

The Montague Congregational Church is having a **Pancake Breakfast** this Saturday, March 30 from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. in Montague Center. Enjoy homemade pancakes (plain or blueberry), real maple syrup, corned beef hash or ham, and coffee, tea, or juices for \$10. No need for reservations, just walk in.

The next National Spiritual Alliance **Psychic Fair** is this Saturday, March 30, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Thompson Temple, 2 Montague Avenue, Lake Pleasant. To register for a session with a medium or for more info visit spirituallianceusa.org/calendar.

Founded in 1874, Lake Pleasant is the oldest continuously-existing

same-site year-round Spiritualist center in the United States, and is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year.

The Finders Collective is holding a **seed swap and documentary screening** this Saturday, March 30 from 1 to 5:15 p.m. at 104 Fourth Street in Turners Falls. The free store and social center invites the community to browse free seeds as well as bring some to share with others until 3 p.m. *Seed: The Untold Story* will be screened at 3:15.

Donations will be collected for the Eastern Woodlands Rematriation Collective, and masks are required for all attendees. Email finders@riseup.net for further information.

Looky Here in Greenfield invites people to **join a Collage Club** led by Bella LaMontagne. All materials are provided for a \$10 ticket, which can be found at lookyheregreenfield.com. The class is from 1 to 3 p.m. this Saturday, March 30.

Don't forget that **Peter Cottontail's EGGstravaganza** will be held at 1 p.m. sharp, rain or shine, at Unity Park in Turners Falls this Saturday. Children ages 4 to 12 are invited to take part in “finding” approximately 5,000 candy-filled eggs strewn throughout the park. They must bring their own basket or bag.

This Sunday, March 31 is **Easter!** Our Lady of Peace Church in Turners Falls asked us to let our readers know that they will be holding masses at 8 and 10 a.m., and that the 10 a.m. service will include chil-

dren and a special children’s Easter message. An Easter egg hunt on the church grounds will follow.

The next silent film at the Greenfield Garden Cinemas will be *Safety Last! (1923)*, starring **Harold Lloyd**, next Monday, April 1 at 6:30 p.m. Jeff Rapsis will provide live music accompaniment. The shot of Lloyd hanging from a clock face high above a city street is one of the most famous silent film images.

Bestselling author **Jarrett Krosoczka** will be at the Greenfield Public Library next Tuesday, April 2, at 5:30 p.m. to give a presentation on his 2018 graphic memoir *Hey, Kiddo: How I Lost My Mother, Found My Father, and Dealt with Family Addiction*. The memoir is about growing up and piecing together the truth about his family while becoming an artist. There will be time for questions and answers and book signing.

Bring your own project or pull from the Looky Here stash to **craft and chat in Spanish** at *Arte y Conversación*, a monthly Spanish conversation group at Looky Here from 6 to 8 p.m. next Wednesday, April 3. Tickets are \$10 and can be found online at lookyheregreenfield.com.

Saturday, April 6 will mark the **45th year of the Artspace Market**, a craft fair fundraiser for Artspace Community Arts Center in Greenfield. The event takes place from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Greenfield High School. Attendees will find original arts and crafts from over 25 vendors plus raffles, pottery demonstrations, family art activities, live music, and food from the Orchard Chef.

The next film in the “Food, Farms, and Factories” documentary series at the Discovery Center in Turners Falls is *The Polish Americans*, screening Sunday, April 7 at 2 p.m. The 1998 New England Public Media documentary takes a look at the history of Polish immigrants in the Connecticut River Valley.

Drop by the lawn at the Carnegie library or Discovery Center in Turners Falls for an **eclipse viewing party** on Monday, April 8, from 2:15 to 4:30 p.m. Find out fun stuff about our solar system, do crafty solar activities, and get a pair of viewing glasses.

Massachusetts will not see a total solar eclipse, but peak viewing of the partial eclipse will be 3:30 p.m. locally.

In **Greenfield on eclipse day**, PV Squared and the Friends of the Greenfield Public Library are hosting a viewing party at the library on April 8 from 1 to 5 p.m. PV Squared will bring their solar-powered trailer and be on hand to answer solar energy questions, and scientist Jon Child will talk about climate change topics.

Eclipse-viewing glasses will be available to watch the eclipse from 2 to 4:30 p.m. If it rains, a movie featuring an eclipse will be shown inside.

The Brick House Community Resource Center, at 24 Third Street in Turners Falls, is offering a free two-part **workshop on Vision Boards for families**.

On Wednesday, April 10 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., parents and caregivers will create a vision board for themselves; refreshments and childcare will be available. On Wednesday, April 24 from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m., their families will create a vision board together; dinner will be served at this one.

Participants are required to attend both sessions. Families can register at bit.ly/3T5F6VS. For questions, or to register by phone or email, contact Stacey at slangknecht@brickhousecommunity.org or (413) 800-2496.

The Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) is **updating the Franklin County Bike Plan**, and would like public input to identify needs and next steps for improvements.

A survey and interactive map will be up until April 1 at frcog.org/project/franklin-county-bikeway/. You can add points to the map to show the location of potential improvements, highlight routes or places you especially like, or point out spots with issues. This information will help local towns make plans for encouraging increased biking throughout the county.

An online public meeting about the Bike Plan update will also be held Wednesday, April 10, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., with opportunity for public input. Register for the Zoom link at tinyurl.com/FC-bike.

Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

League of Women Voters To Host ‘Legislative Coffee’

GREENFIELD – The League of Women Voters of Franklin County (LWVFC) will host a “Legislative Coffee” with state legislators – Representative Natalie Blais, Senator Jo Comerford, and Representative Susannah Whipps – next Saturday, April 6, at 10 a.m. in the Community Room of the Greenfield Public Library.

“We always appreciate the opportunity to speak directly with our state lawmakers,” remarked Marie Gauthier, president of the Franklin County League. “Our Legislative Coffees are an opportunity for the public to make their voices heard on the issues that are important to them. We encourage everyone to attend and ask their questions.”

This event is free and open to all, and refreshments will also be provided.

The League of Women Voters of Franklin County is a nonpartisan grassroots political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The League works to provide objective information on critical public policy issues and conduct debates and forums to increase awareness of candidates seeking office.

Visit lvvma-franklincounty.org online for more information on the LWVFC.

TURNERS FALLS WATER DEPARTMENT METER READING BEGINS MONDAY APRIL 1

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The Trustees of the Montague Public Libraries are seeking two additional board members.
One for a two-year term and one for a full, three-year term.
The Library Trustees participate in regular meetings to support the operations, initiatives, and strategic plans of the three Montague Public Libraries. Those interested in joining the Montague Public Library Trustees must pick up nomination papers by Monday, April 1, 2024 and return them with signatures by Thursday, April 4.
Those with questions about the work of the Trustees can feel free to email library director Caitlin Kelley at librarydirector@montague-ma.gov or to call her at (413) 863-3214 ext. 6.
Thank you for your consideration!

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Another Letter to the Editors
Best B-Day Wishes
We want to wish our amazing Photo Beat guy, **Joey R. Parzych**, a Happy 33rd Birthday on April Fools Day. We hope you have many amazing adventures to come, full of enjoyment and fun.
We remember it like yesterday when Grandma and Grandpa were baking bread shaped like animals and having fun with you and your aunt Christine.
If any readers or his friends want to wish him happy birthday, feel free to send Joe a birthday card at 14C Elm Terrace, Greenfield, MA 01301.
Love Mom, Dad, Katie, Steve, Cousin Nick, Matt, Jesse, aunt Leslie, and Uncle Tom.

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by ERNIE BRILL
SUN. APRIL 7th • 3pm

BOOK LAUNCH
ON YOUR FEET
(a novel in translations)
by JACQUELINE FELDMAN
w/ CAREN BEILIN
(Revenge of the Scapegoat)
SAT. APRIL 13th • 6PM

POETRY READING
TAMAS PANITZ
JOEL NEWBERGER, JONNY
COLLAZO, BILLIE CHERNICOFF
& BRANDON DOWNING
FRI. MAY 17th • 6PM

66 AVENUE A • TURNERS FALLS

OP ED

My Experience With DCF

By XAVIER CHADWELL

Chapter 1: MANIPULATION

The third time I was put in the system was the permanent placement before I ended up getting adopted by my aunt in Chicago, but prior to that I was in the system from ages 11 to 14. During my last three years in the system, before I got adopted by my aunt, my family would promise I would be coming back home and that they were trying to get me and my siblings back. I believed in it for a couple years until I just lost hope and saw they had given up, too.

The system took me at 11. For years, I felt like this was a kidnapping because I never made it home.

I still remember the day it happened. It was a long day at school and I was called about an hour before the end of the school day. I was told not to get on the bus home and that my mom was going to pick me up. I had gotten a weird little feeling because my mother never mentioned it to me in the morning and she usually would never pick me up unless I had an appointment or a family emergency, so I figured something was going on.

After my last class I went straight to the office and I was there for about 15 minutes after the buses had left. My mother still wasn't there. Then, I was greeted by someone saying that I'm going to a new home for a little bit and at that moment I already knew what was going on. That was the beginning of the manipulation.

Holidays were the worst because my family would claim they had a surprise or present and I would never get what I was promised or what they had told me they had gotten me. As a kid it hurt. Being promised different things, like that I'll be home soon or being told I was going to get a lot of things and then never actually receiving anything I was promised or told I was going to get was manipulative.

The lying came from my own family (people that I thought would

never lie to me), people I didn't know, and even the government.

Chapter 2: STICKS AND STONE IS THE NEW HOME

I was taken by the system multiple times and every time I was moved to a different location I would have to start new at schools, meet new people, and try to fit in different communities with different kinds of people. No kid should have experienced that.

I remember when I was taken from my school in the city and driving on the highway to come to Greenfield (at the time I didn't even know where I was being brought to). I just remember looking to my left to my right and just seeing nothing but trees and the woods. It felt like the longest drive, like an hour. (Now I know it's actually like a 20- to 25-minute ride).

I went from being around Hispanics to being around all white people. I instantly knew I wasn't going to fit in, and to make matters worse, my mother always talked bad about white people so that made me feel a certain type of way to white people. Now I had to live with them and go to school with them. It felt like I was in a literal living hell.

Chapter 3: IT'S THEM VERSUS ME

Being in the system made me change and I say that because it messed up how I looked at and thought of people. Today, I still don't believe what is said to me and I need to witness or prove it first.

The system also changed my kind nature and made me more aggressive. I would say it made me feel like I was better off alone and made it feel like it was my fault for being in DCF. It felt like it was me vs. the world.

In a way, you can say it made me cold-hearted and hate the world and everything in it.

Chapter 4: RETHINKING THE SYSTEM

I feel like a lot of people foster kids for the money and I think DCF

takes advantage of their power. Sometimes kids are going through tough living situations and they don't have DCF there to help but other times families get their kids taken over by angry family members or friends trying to make them suffer. I believe there should be more investigations into homes kids are living in or going to be moved into, and I believe there should be harsher punishments or better solutions for child abuse and neglect.

I also believe that siblings should be kept together, especially because DCF is so quick to say that "It's not your fault, it's your parents' fault" or that "You're not in trouble," but the kids always suffer the most.

Chapter 5: NO CHILDHOOD

I never got to be a kid. I was always doing chores, I would watch over my siblings, I would have to feed and change them and make sure they were feeling OK. I was being punished and was always told I was a bad kid. I would get beaten every day whether it was from my mom or my uncles or my mom's friends.

It had seemed like she had hated me. She would give away our Christmas gifts to other kids and treated other kids more like they were her kids more than she did for us. She would do her drugs in front of us and would never play with any kinds of toys or game systems and she would have me and my siblings separated most of the time.

As a kid, you don't see anything wrong in that. For me it took me until the age of 20 to realize and see that none of it was OK.

Chapter 6: ADOPTION

When I got adopted by my aunt and uncle in Chicago it changed my life for the better. I got to Chicago on a plane and it was about an hour and a half flight.

Yeah, I was a little scared to be honest, and it was my first time on a plane too. (The worst part in my opinion is when the plane starts to drop down and starts getting ready

for landing. It felt like it was going to crash. The plane was shaking and rattling. Never again will I get on a plane.)

Honestly, overall, the plane's flight changed me in the sense it made me realize the world is a big place and I haven't even been anywhere else in the world yet. It made me want to travel more and see more of the world. Looking out the plane's window made me fascinated because it was beautiful and to me a life changing moment.

I remember landing and my aunt was there waiting for me with my little cousins. I remember first seeing my aunt and I swear she looked a lot like my mom, a lot of the same facial features, so instantly I looked at my aunt as my mom.

She was nice, loving, she made me feel comfortable and the only other person to make me feel like that was my grandma, but in this very moment my aunt was the second person I trusted to talk to about anything and felt safe and loved. We traveled a lot, they taught me education first. I was taught respect. I was told and taught that everything that had ever happened to me I didn't deserve, and that it wasn't OK what I went through. They showed me how I should have been raised and treated.

It was definitely the safest I ever felt, the most hope I have ever had. I actually had the family I always wanted, I was loved and accepted since day one.

This op-ed first appeared in The Light, a newsletter by Franklin County Jail and House of Correction (FCJSO) residents. Some of the writers join The Light already devoted to writing, while others discover love for writing through their participation. The students engage in process-oriented work to create stories and art, including personal essays, op-eds, recipes, poems, research articles, and other explorations of interest to them and their peers, coalescing into a new issue every 8 to 10 weeks.

LEVERETT from page A1

Tilman Wolf, Leverett's representative to the RSC, explained that the rejected budget would have required \$1.7 million in cuts from a level-services budget, but that the RSC had initially seen this as "just a number" it could work with. The reason the district was revising its request to the towns so late in the season, he said, was that "until March 6 it was not articulated to the school committee what exactly these cuts would look like on the ground for the academic programs in the school."

Once the RSC understood this impact, Wolf said, its members asked for a revised budget that did not cut "student-facing" staff and programs. Interim superintendent Doug Slaughter presented a revised budget on March 14 restoring nearly \$1 million in funding, which the RSC approved.

Fin com member Nancy Grossman commented that budget problems are a "crisis that's affecting schools throughout the Commonwealth," laying some blame on in-

flation and the way charter schools are funded, among other reasons, but she questioned the "absolute last-minute" timing of the revision. She and others also asked whether the increased budget would become a basis for future years.

Fin com member Isaiah Robison questioned increased school costs more generally, saying he didn't see the value of a lot of the spending in preparing young people for the world. Robison gave the example of expensive athletic fields, saying that in many places kids are happy to play sports in the dirt with makeshift balls, and that the real value of such activities was in team-building and getting kids together to do things they didn't think they could do.

Chair Tom Hankinson suggested that a "four-town meeting" – which would include members of the school committees, finance committees, and selectboards of all the towns in the district, often a venue "where these things are hammered out" – was appropriate, "if for no other reason than to explain all this

to each of the towns, so that we understand why they're asking for this much money at this late hour."

Wolf responded that as soon as he was done answering questions he was leaving to attend an RSC meeting also underway that night, and would convey the suggestion personally.

After brief discussions of other items – including a decision to increase the police department from three to four full-time officers – the fin com voted whether to recommend the higher town budget, and tied 2–2.

Chair Phil Carter said the full committee of five would meet and vote again.

The selectboard then voted 3–0 to recommend the lower version of the budget, with the provision that a special article be presented at town meeting to meet the additional regional school funding request.

Town administrator Marjorie McGinnis noted that Leverett's annual budget can be changed up to and including the day of town meeting.

Where Have Flowers Gone

After those votes, state representative Natalie Blais joined the meeting for her yearly visit to "touch base" with constituent towns during budget season.

Blais said the state's fiscal position was "not as rosy" as it was when she came into office five years ago, but presented a list of priorities she said she and state senator Jo Comerford were pursuing, including numerous education, transportation, and disaster relief initiatives.

Blais commented that Massachusetts and Connecticut were the only two states in the country with no disaster relief fund in place, and said she was working to change that. She also commended McGinnis for her recent presentation to state officials on the need to support maintenance work on rural roads, including Dudleyville Road in Leverett.

Responding to a comment from fin com member Bethany Seeger about a "systematic problem" in school budgets being caused by inflation and the state Chapter 70 aid formula, Blais said that it "feels like

this is the time" to revisit the formula, but that unpacking and changing the way schools are funded was a "tremendously difficult task."

Other Business

The selectboard voted to change a bylaw to allow the town's Community Preservation Commission to add a member from its Affordable Housing Trust, as designated by the trust. The board also appointed David Powicki to the conservation commission.

Leverett historical commission chair Susan Mareneck informed the board that Janet and David Pozar had volunteered to donate the paint and labor to paint the Field Library building.

Mareneck said they are not looking for help initially, and don't want scaffolding because it is "going to be too much trouble," but might want help getting ladders transported from their house.

"They are really into this," said Mareneck. "They just want to get going and do it."



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GILL from page A1

to “clear up a non-conforming house lot, end a long-standing boundary dispute, and – at the same time – receive a substantial financial gift.”

Jenkins’s children Ellen Bean and Greg Parody spoke against this plan. “My mother would not go for the town taking it just to turn around and sell it,” said Parody. “That wasn’t the point, that wasn’t the reason for leaving it.”

Bean said Jenkins gave the property to her children some years ago, but they returned it to her in case she needed additional assets for her end-of-life care. When no one in the family expressed interest in living in the house, Jenkins willed it to Gill. “If it couldn’t go to somebody she loved,” said Bean, “she wanted it to go to the organization she loved: her town.”

“She figured you could use it for something,” Bean continued, noting that the home was already on the National Register of Historic Places and close to the school, library, and town center. “I don’t think it ever crossed her mind that you would sell it.”

Lovejoy requested the issue go before town meeting. “This is kind of a political question,” he said. “When a political question lands in your lap, the nice way to deal with it is to go to town meeting and resolve the politics.”

He further warned that “it’s sort of unclear actually what the board of selectmen’s rights and responsibilities are with regard to rejecting the gift.”

Finance committee member Tupper Brown also said the town should accept the property. “If we say ‘No, we won’t take this land,’ we are reversing and undermining the one thing we do know about the testator’s intent, which was that the town should have the land,” he said. “It seems to me the town should have a pretty strong reason for undoing what one of its citizens tried to do in her will.”

Selectboard member Greg Snedeker expressed concern about bringing the matter to town meeting. “Where the historic commission has weighed in and said that the property really does not hold historical value,” he said, “then really what we’re doing is we’re cleaning up a personal deed issue.” He worried that “it could cause a lot of hard feelings” to make residents choose sides in a boundary dispute. Selling the house might bring Gill “a monetary gain, but what might we lose?” he asked. “We might lose some of the social cohesion in our town.”

Snedeker also said that if the town took possession of the home, it would likely be more fair to sell it to the highest bidder, “as opposed to automatically turning it over to the abutters, just to solve a private dispute.”

“You seem to have a Solomon decision before you,” summarized abutter James Asbel. He asked the town to make whatever decision would reduce the chance of the property being neglected or abandoned.

The board chose to delay its decision until at least its next meeting, and encouraged all parties to try to work out a solution among themselves in the meantime.

Breaking the Banks

“The Town has an interest in the Connecticut River being a healthy river ecosystem,” states a draft motion requesting “intervenor status” before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in the relicensing process for the Turners Falls Project and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project. The status of intervenor is required if the town wishes to later contest an aspect of the relicensing proceedings.

The main issue cited in the draft motion is the erosion caused by the Northfield Mountain project, as it pumps water from the river to the top of the mountain and releases it during high energy usage hours. The motion claims this process “degrades water quality in violation of state and federal clean water laws, harms fish and wildlife habitat, causes the loss of land along the river including prime agricultural land, threatens important transportation and municipal water and wastewater infrastructure, increases flood risks, and damages important historical and cultural resources.”

The document notes that complaints of erosion started as soon as the pumped storage facility started operating: “Landowners have described losing up to 30 feet of land to erosion over the last 50 years. Terraces and beaches have been replaced by steep eroding banks.”

The motion also cites safety concerns, as a failure of the Northfield Mountain project’s dike could result in hazardous flooding, which would hit the Riverside neighborhood with only 39 to 48 minutes’ warning.

Because the town signed earlier agreements, it is not allowed to dispute certain provisions about the company’s recreation investments and water flows and fish passage.

The final wording of the motion will be voted on at the next select-

board meeting. In the meantime, the current draft will be posted on the town website. Public comments to FERC about the projects are due April 22.

Other Business

William Tomb and Pamela Lester attended to request a pay raise for the Assistant to the Assessors, Diane Sumrall. “We find, by way of recent offerings for employment in a similar category by neighboring Franklin County towns, that Gill has a lower scale,” said Tomb. He said Sumrall’s ongoing certifications and accreditations have made her a more valuable asset to the town, and suggested raising her pay by about \$5,000 annually.

Lester said other towns in search of accredited assessors are “very interested in talking to [Sumrall]. And frankly, we’re very interested in keeping her.”

The board agreed to continue this discussion in its next meeting with the finance committee.

Board members expressed sadness about the closing of Four Winds School, which will no longer be leasing space from the town at the Riverside building after June. “The school has been a really good tenant over the last 22 years or so,” said town administrator Ray Purington.

Selectboard chair Randy Crochier suggested that some of the space could be used as a public meeting room.

The town is applying for a grant from the Mass Broadband Institute to help fund a workshop to understand the digital equity needs facing the town.

The board awarded the year’s road-sweeping contract to J.R. Sweeping, at the same price as recent years.

Ahmad Esfahani of Greenfield attended the meeting to introduce himself and announce his candidacy in the upcoming Republican primary for the 2nd District US Congressional seat currently held by Jim McGovern. The primary elections will be held September 3.

Amy Gordon resigned from the conservation commission, and Evan Fox was appointed to it. Tracy Dowd was appointed as an alternate member of the zoning board of appeals.

Gill’s annual town meeting will be held Monday, May 6 at 7 p.m. The deadline for petition articles for the meeting is April 16 at noon.

The next selectboard meeting will be held the day of the solar eclipse, April 8, at 5:30 p.m.



PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Women’s Fund Invites Grant Applications

SPRINGFIELD – The Women’s Fund of Western Massachusetts (WFWM) welcomes grant applications for its 2024 grant cycle and intends to award 10 to 15 grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$10,000 by summer.

WFWM strongly encourages smaller, community-based grassroots organizations to apply.

Organizations with 501(c)3 status and those with fiscal sponsors are welcome to apply, and those serving women and girls and transgender and gender-diverse people in Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden and Hampshire counties are encouraged to do so. Priority will be given to organizations aligning with race and gender justice and equity, and WFWM’s strategic pillars – economic security, equality in positions of power and leadership, and freedom from gender-based violence.

The two-year unrestricted grants can be used for general operations or program support, and the WFWM Grantmaking Committee looks for grant proposals with a meaningful impact.

“We are excited to continue to fund the important work that is being done to support women, girls and

gender-expansive people in our Western Massachusetts communities,” said Amihan Matias, senior director of community partnerships at the Women’s Fund. “We have diverse community members and residents from all four counties of Western Massachusetts on our Grantmaking Committee. We are grateful for their valuable perspectives regarding the needs of their communities. It is so important to hear directly from communities.”

To apply, complete an online application. For the English application, visit www.bit.ly/3v58AX0; for the Spanish version, visit www.bit.ly/49RrvUf. Submit a brief, one-page letter of intent. The WFWM strives to make the application process as inclusive and accessible as possible and also accepts video submissions or grant proposals written for other funders in place of the narrative portion of the written letter of intent. To have the application translated into a language other than English or Spanish, email Matias at amatias@mywomensfund.org.

Applications are due by midnight on Wednesday, May 15. The Grantmaking Committee will announce recipients on August 30.

Tip of the week ...

Regularly inspect your water heater for leaks and rust. A leaking heater can easily damage flooring, resulting in costly repairs. Rust or water around the unit may signal a need for professional inspection.

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MONTAGUE CITY VILLAGE CENTER STUDY

Planning Board Meeting

6:30 PM, Tuesday, April 2

via Zoom

WHAT’S HAPPENING

The Town of Montague, in partnership with Mass Housing Partnership (MHP) and VHB, are exploring possible land uses, activities, connections, and redevelopment strategies for the former Farren Care Center site.

Through this planning process, various stakeholders and the broader community have identified community needs to guide the Town in preparing a vision and physical site planning concepts. As a complementary component to the study, a residential/commercial market feasibility analysis and redevelopment strategy have been provided.

The final report for this study & market analysis is now available!

At this meeting, Planning Board members will review the report findings and recommendations and will provide feedback on what next steps the Town should take. After Board discussion, the chair will open it up for public comments. **All are welcome!**

For Zoom login, final report, and project page, click on the link or use the QR code shown above: <https://tinyurl.com/266rpybs>.

For questions/comments, please contact Maureen Pollock, Town Planner at maureenp@montague-ma.gov or (413) 863-3200 x112

INVITATION TO BID

Unity Skatepark Lighting Project

The Town of Montague is accepting sealed bids for the purchase and installation of outdoor recreational lighting at Unity Park in Turners Falls, MA. Bids shall be submitted in a sealed envelope clearly labeled “Unity Skate Park Lighting Project” and be delivered to the Selectboard Office, Montague Town Hall, One Avenue A, Turners Falls, Massachusetts 01376. This IFB is offered per MGL c. 30, § 39M and work is subject to MA Prevailing Wage Requirements. Sealed Bids must be received by April 22, 2024 at 1 p.m., at which time all bid packages will be opened and read at the Town Hall Annex Meeting Room at the same address listed above. No exceptions or allowances will be made for late submissions.

A bidders’ conference will be held on April 10, 2024 at 9 a.m. at Unity Park, 56 First Street, Turners Falls, MA. Attendance is not mandatory but is strongly encouraged. The IFB is available at www.montague-ma.gov/BIDS. Registration is required. Once registered, any addenda or notifications will automatically be sent to the email address of registrants on record. Written questions can be submitted to the Project Manager, Jon Dobosz, at recdir@montague-ma.gov until April 11 at 1 p.m.

Qualified proposers who are Minority/Women/Disabled Owned Business Enterprises (M/W/D/BE) businesses are encouraged to apply. Other qualified proposers are encouraged to partner with disadvantaged businesses. A listing of certified disadvantaged businesses can be found at www.mass.gov/sdo. The Town of Montague reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals in total or in part as they may deem in the public’s best interest. The funding source for this project is ARPA.

Montague Selectboard

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FARREN from page A1

and “provide feedback on what next steps the town should take,” Pollock told us. “After the planning board has provided recommendations, the selectboard will hold a meeting on April 22 to provide further review and comment.”

Public discussion of options for the Farren property began soon after Trinity’s November 2021 announcement that it planned to demolish the former hospital and long-term care center. After some debate, the demolition was effectively approved in December 2022 after the town historical commission deadlocked, 3 – 3, over whether to order a stay.

Last April the Massachusetts Housing Partnership, a non-profit that provided the town a planning grant for the site, chose national planning and engineering firm VHB Associates to produce a market analysis, solicit public input, and draft a development strategy.

The resulting document, to be reviewed on Tuesday, breaks down US Census data on Franklin County and the “study area” around the Farren, including Montague and Greenfield. VHB portrays the county as a low-income rural area with an aging population and a lack of affordable housing, but notes that in small population centers such as Turners Falls, property values have been increasing and rents have been rising.

One result, according to the study, is that a large percentage of renters in Montague (40%) and Greenfield (45%) are “cost-burdened,” a category that reflects how many people pay over 35% of their income in rent.

VHB concluded that there will be a “strong demand” for residential housing over the next decade, and recommended that Montague “take steps to encourage dense residential development at the Farren Care Center Site, to help address



The Farren lot could become the property of the inhabitants of the Town of Montague as early as this May or June.

the community’s unmet housing needs while at the same time creating a vibrant Village Center for Montague City.”

The firm drafted a “Village Center Plan,” which includes a range of potential options, based on public input it gathered at three “stakeholder group” meetings and two “community events” – a concert at Peskeompskut Park and a presentation at the Discovery Center in Turners Falls.

Describing in some detail the “diverse viewpoints” about the Farren’s future residents expressed at these events, VHB has proposed a “community’s vision statement” for the property: “Montague City’s new Village Center will be a dense, mixed-use hub that unites the surrounding community and unlocks

new housing and economic opportunities in Montague.”

The study reviews the eight-acre property’s location, proximity to public transportation, and zoning – “General Business” – and describes in some detail three potential site plans: a “low density” plan of approximately six units of housing per acre, a medium-density plan of nine units per acre, and a high-density option of 17 units per acre with more two and three-story buildings.

All three versions of the plan include commercial storefront spaces, a parking lot, and a community center, as well as buildings labeled “Block Structure inspired by Turners Falls.” Imposing a schematic of the Farren site over a map of the town between Third and Fifth streets, VHB explains how this el-

ement of the plan was “inspired by the blocks of Turners Falls.”

“This inter-block mix of single-family, duplex, and small apartment buildings is a condition that can be observed throughout Turners Falls – achieved organically as the city developed incrementally across its patchwork of smaller, historic lots,” the study states. “The Village Center will embrace this housing diversity, introducing density without dominating the neighborhood.”

Finally, the firm evaluates how such a project could be administered and financed. Drawing on comparable projects in Amherst, Northampton, Belchertown, and Eastham on Cape Cod, VHB suggests three development options. Two would involve the town selling the property through a bidding pro-

cess while keeping a degree of control over its development, and in the third the town would initially retain the property, subdivide it, and then develop sections of it over time with “private partners.”

The *Montague Reporter* asked Pollock if she had a preference for any of these approaches. She said she had been “seeking input from various local regional and state stakeholders,” including about “densities, development strategies, public infrastructure improvements, among other topics.” Pollock told us she planned to relate insights from these conversations at the upcoming planning and selectboard meetings.

As for the transfer of the property to Montague, town administrator Steve Ellis told the *Reporter* that lawyers for the town and Trinity have been reviewing relevant documents, as well as the status of Trinity’s commitment to fund reuse expenses. He also said that he and assistant town administrator Walter Ramsey had toured the site recently and found that all it required was additional grading, loaming, and seeding.

Once that has been completed it will be possible to close on the property, potentially at the end of May.

“It will take years of hard work and support from the town to realize redevelopment of the former hospital site, [but] this planning process has effectively laid the groundwork for a village center for Montague City,” said Ramsey, who has been centrally involved with the reuse planning and is slated to become town administrator on July 1.

“The bike path is being proposed to be relocated through the Farren site,” Ramsey added. “I realize that the plan did not describe that well, but that is something I feel strongly would be a great opportunity to improve the bike path.”

**MONTAGUE** from page A1

former on the east side and the latter on the west running up a steep hill that borders Millers. Bergeron reported that the camera recorded sand, roots, and pebbles, and then a “pile of larger rocks,” in the eastern pipe as it approached the front porch of a house.

The new owners, who plan to fix and resell the house, contacted his department. “We have permission from them to dig up whatever we need to dig up so that we can get it resolved,” Bergeron said. “We hope to start it this week.”

The pipe on the western side of the street travels under a retaining wall and then heads up the steep hill in the direction of Millers Falls Road. Nine feet in, the camera showed “lots of sand and grit, enough to bury the camera,” and at 56 feet there was a crack “taking on lots of water.” Bergeron said some part of the cracked pipe was beneath the retaining wall, and that the DPW may have to “dig a new line and put it back into the drainage system itself.”

Bergeron told the *Reporter* he believes these two lateral pipes are main sources of the high volume of wastewater being sent to the Erving plant, “but definitely not the only ones.” He also mentioned illegal sump pumps sending water from basements and drainage systems, and catch basins which need to be lined and perhaps disconnected from the sewer.

“I was concerned when you said there were not definitive findings,” selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz said at Monday’s meeting. “But then you gave us plans to move forward this evening, so that’s great news... It sounds like these are two of the biggest cul-

prits. Hopefully we’ll get these cleared up and then start chasing the next ones.”

Dump Gas and Paperwork

In other waste infrastructure news, the board approved a \$24,400 annual agreement with the engineering firm Tighe & Bond to continue monitoring groundwater, surface water, and gas at the former town landfill on Sandy Lane twice a year.

Assistant town administrator Walter Ramsey said he had solicited a quote from another firm which came in a little higher than Tighe & Bond, which has been monitoring the site for “a decade-plus,” and noted that another firm had installed the gas monitoring wells “at a cheaper price.”

Town administrator Steve Ellis reported that documents required by the federal National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) are nearly complete, and will be submitted by the end of the week to the Environmental Protection Agency. The reports, which focus on monitoring the town’s treatment plant and the sewer system that feeds it, have been developed by town officials with the assistance of the engineering firm Wright-Pierce and the non-profit RCAP Solutions.

One report he had been working on with RCAP, Ellis said, involves creating “a comprehensive map of what is required and where the requirement comes from,” because “the NPDES permit does not offer a simple table that summarizes what and why.”

Bridges and Rivers

Ellis gave the board a brief update on the temporary renovation of the “White Bridge,” which has not been white since the late 1930s

but continues to carry cars and pedestrians across the Connecticut River from Turners Falls to Greenfield. The bridge near the end of Fifth Street has frequently been reduced to one-way traffic or closed in recent months due to safety upgrades, and is due to be replaced by the state Department of Transportation in an estimated three years.

Ellis said workers were in the process of painting the underside of the bridge this week, and that the project may be “in the home stretch,” leading to the end of the recent disruptions. “We want to say ‘thank you’ to DOT’s project managers and also their contractor,” he said.

The board approved a lengthy “motion to intervene” in the next phase of the FirstLight Power relicensing process, and then approved another long document supporting Ellis’s “standing” to intervene. When asked what power these documents conferred to the town, Ellis said that Montague will “always have the ability to comment, [but] if in the event that things escalate, these documents tend to establish the town’s rights and opportunities relative to future processes.”

The documents were developed in collaboration with three other towns that border on the Connecticut River – Gill, Erving, and Northfield – with the assistance of legal counsel hired by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments. Ellis noted that he will retire from his current position on July 1 but that Ramsey, the next town administrator, can submit a new declaration of standing.

Other Business

The board reviewed articles for the May 4 annual town meeting, most of which had

been discussed and endorsed at previous meetings, and then voted to place them on the warrant. Its 25 articles include the town operating budget, assessments from the Gill-Montague School District and Franklin County Technical School, the budgets of the Clean Water Facility and Turners Falls Airport, and 15 “money articles” appropriating funds for specific purposes.

All articles have been endorsed by the selectboard and finance committee, most unanimously. One article proposed on the original warrant, to accept Sandy Lane as a “public way,” has been tabled.

The selectboard, wearing its “personnel board” hats, appointed Bergeron to the assistant town administrator hiring committee and approved a request by him to appoint Cameron Velez as a truck driver/laborer in training. Bergeron said his department still has openings for maintenance and janitorial work.

Jacob Goldman, Marcel LaFlamme, and Steven McGuirl were all appointed to positions as substitute library assistants.


The administrative assistant at the selectboard office, Angela Amidon, had her position on the town’s payscale upgraded by the board to take into consideration her level of experience in previous employment. “It is an equity concern,” said Ellis, referring to another employee recently hired at a higher wage level based on prior experience.

A request by Great Falls Farmers Market manager Annie Levine to reserve a portion of Peskeompskut Park for Saturdays from May 4 to October 26 was approved by the board. The market will be open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The next selectboard meeting will be held Monday, April 1.



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FUEL from page A1

processed less than 30% of the 7,600 fuel assistance applications it had received so far. At the time the "vast majority" of those receiving assistance had been expedited under emergency circumstances, meaning the customer was nearly out of heating oil or facing an imminent electricity shutoff.

According to Jo Bartley, Community Action's fuel assistance program manager, the agency has made progress in the last two months by hiring five more staff members. It has now processed about 60% of 8,200 applications, though new applications may be submitted until April 30.

About 9,900 applications were submitted through CAPV last year in total, and the work stretched into the summer. Bartley estimates that staff are processing applications 10% faster this year.

"As of today, CAPV Fuel Assistance has cut checks totaling nearly \$2 million," Bartley said in an emailed statement. "[T]his money goes directly to heat vendors and some direct-pay program participants in the community."

Richard Strycharz, owner of the Sunderland-based vendor Walter's Propane, said that he has gradually been receiving checks from CAPV for his fuel assistance customers, though some are still waiting for their applications to be reviewed.

Strycharz, who also spoke with the Reporter for our January article, said the last two years have been the slowest disbursement of LIHEAP aid he has experienced. In some sit-

uations, Strycharz said he has delivered propane before receiving reimbursement to households in urgent need because he knows they have qualified in past years.

"I shouldn't have to do that either, and I'm not going to do it again," Strycharz said. "Some payments have come through, but they're still behind.... They're getting caught up. I mean, they should - it's almost the end of the season."

Waiting To Hear

Last September CAPV employees missed a deadline to apply for a grant from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), leaving a hole in the budget of the Three County Continuum of Care (CoC), a network of housing and shelter providers and other service agencies serving Franklin, Hampshire, and Berkshire counties.

The Montague Reporter learned last month that CAPV, the current coordinator of the Three County CoC, was automatically shut out of an online HUD portal before uploading all required materials. The network had received a total of \$3,081,304 from HUD through the grant program last year, but this year the region will receive none of the \$124 million being distributed in Massachusetts.

Programs in the Three County CoC include permanent supportive housing in Hampshire and Franklin counties run by the nonprofit Making Opportunity Count, rehousing initiatives run by the Mental Health Association, Inc., and an HIV/AIDS clinic at Cooley Dickinson Hospital in Northampton.

Thus far, the member agencies are reportedly making do. One Three County CoC member, DIAL/SELF Youth and Community Services, received about \$170,000 from the state Office of Health and Human Services to fund two of its youth housing programs.

"We have been discussing the issue with the state and are waiting to hear back about any possible funding opportunities," Janna Tetreault, associate director of programs for CAPV and interim program manager of the Three County CoC, told the Reporter this week when asked for an update.

"To my knowledge," Tetreault wrote, "no services or programs have been cut."

State senator Jo Comerford and representative Natalie Blais both declined to comment on the Three County CoC's budget shortfall, or on the need for housing and homelessness services in the region. The state House and Senate have both passed versions of a bill this month to release funds into Massachusetts's cash-strapped emergency shelter system, but a timeline for a reconciled bill is unclear, and the sustainability of the state's housing policy is under debate.

US Congressman Jim McGovern's office did not respond to multiple requests for comment on the missed deadline, the state of housing and homelessness services in his district, and whether McGovern has reached out to HUD to seek replacement funding for western Massachusetts.



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

Here's the way it was on March 27, 2014: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

already in custody, was being held on \$25,000 cash bail.

Arsonist Destroys Historic Barns

An early morning fire on March 26 completely destroyed two historic barns at Our Father's Farm on Hatchery Road in Montague Center and melted the siding on the family's mobile home. There were no injuries.

According to Montague Police Chief Charles "Chip" Dodge, the fire was deliberately set. A suspect,

Broadband Comes to Leverett

The Leverett Fiber to the Home (FTTH) project is in high gear, and soon homeowners will be able to have the network installed in their houses.

The Leverett Broadband Committee believes the network is on schedule to be completed by end of this year, 2014, for broadband Internet access and landline telephone service. They expect network construction to begin in April or May.

20 YEARS AGO

Here's the way it was on March 25, 2004: News from the Montague Reporter's archive.

voice in the most important decision affecting your neighborhood in 40 years."

Montague Landfill: A 12-Year Debate

On Wednesday, Montague town officials met behind closed doors for over two hours with representatives of Global Environmental Solutions about possible development of a town-owned landfill. At the selectboard meeting on Monday, a large crowd of neighbors came to hear what the board might have in mind for that land, which includes 34 acres of potential new landfill space, a scarce commodity in the Commonwealth.

Monday's crowd came in response to a seven-page letter sent to abutters by Ted Skrypek, one of three interested developers. The flyer called for a strong turnout, saying, "It is time to demand a

Town administrator Frank Abbondanzio said it was unfortunate that Skrypek's flyer had been sent out, because it was filled with inaccuracies. He explained that the board is required to get town meeting approval before signing a contract for a landfill.

Some attendees expressed frustration about again considering a landfill, citing a 1992 override question on the subject that had been voted down a dozen years earlier. Abbondanzio pointed out the current proposal was different in that it wasn't the town interested in running the landfill, but a private contractor.

Potential landfill neighbor Gregory Garrison said, "Montague is too beautiful a town to be sold to the highest bidder, and to become a regional landfill site."

150 YEARS AGO

Here's the way it was on March 25, 1874: News from the Turners Falls Reporter's archive.

thrown from the blasting on Ave. A on Saturday and fell upon the roof of Gilbert L. Rist's building, breaking its way through to the hall below. No injury except to the building.

Local Matters

Just think what a sweet old time they will have at the M.E. Chapel to-night.

Geo. P. Dunbar is altering his store into a dwelling.

The Baptist Sociable at the residence of Mr. John Fellows on Wednesday evening last was a very enjoyable affair.

It wasn't much of a "fall" but considerable of a "scrape" that going through a hole in the floor of Colle building last Saturday!

Mr. Dibble has received a large quantity [sic] of coal the past week and is now prepared to fill orders as fast as entrusted to him.

We rejoice to chronicle the success of any of our business men - this time it is Gilbert L. Rist. He has made money enough and proposes to retire. His house, store, stock and goodwill are offered for sale in another column.

It is rumored that a gentleman of color, whose name we did not learn, has taken the store and a tenement in Sullivan's block, Fourth St. He will be assisted by two of his daughters. Business - torsorial.

A stone weighing 30 lbs. was

Commodore Smith says that if we tell our readers that he sent two of the handsomest corn brooms ever made in this county to our office he'll go for us. Well, we won't say they are the handsomest or the best, but we will not object to somebody else sending us two to beat them, if they can, flint's all.

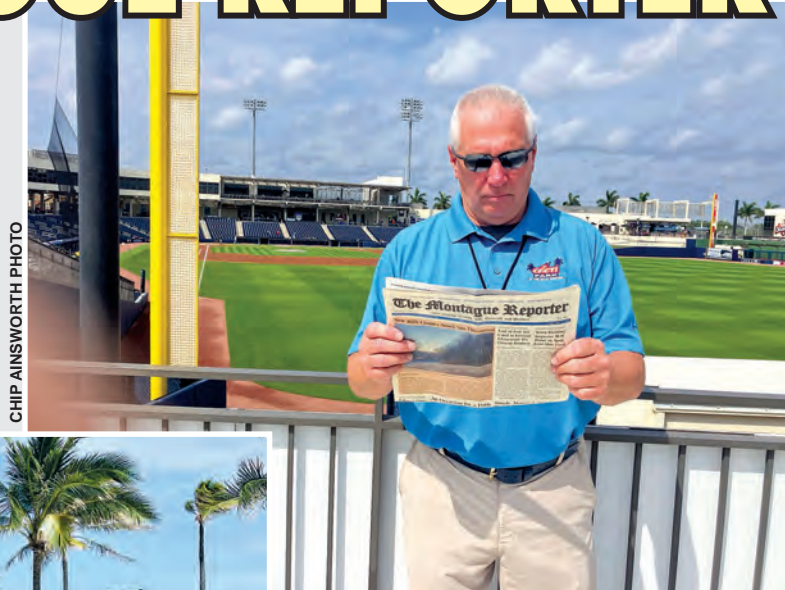
Mr. Wm. P. Cushman is the travelling agent for the Springfield Conservatory of Music, and will visit our town for the purpose of tuning pianos, organs, melodeons, etc. Mr. Cushman has a first class reputation wherever he is known, and our people will find it to their advantage to engage him. Orders may be left at the Farren House desk.

There is no truth in the rumor that Matthew Chapman, Esq., has withdrawn from the John Russell Cutlery Company, or that he intends to commence the manufacture of cutlery on his own account. It is also false that the Cutlery Company propose to "shut down." They have no such intention.



MONTAGUE REPORTER

At right: Turners Falls native Fran "Togger" Togneri takes a moment to read the news from back home before the March 9 spring training game between the Houston Astros and Washington Nationals, at CACTI Park of the Palm Beaches in West Palm Beach, Florida.



CHIP AINSWORTH PHOTO



At left: An hour south and ten days later, Mik Muller checked out the next week's edition at Hugh Taylor Birch State Park in Fort Lauderdale.

ON THE ROAD*

At right: Ray Stone and Christine Heard of Wendell, meanwhile, were staying with family members on the other side of the state in Ozeello, enjoying the Gulf's salt marshes on March 15. "Activities included kayaking, fishing, bird watching, and walking," Heard writes. "Thanks to my sister, Cindy Leppala, we saw eagles every day from the water and on land."



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

***TO FLORIDA**

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WENDELL from page A1

The office there is Wendell's emergency management center, and batteries could allow the garage's bay doors to open when grid supply is out, reducing the need for a backup generator.

Swift River School might work, but approving a battery there would require cooperation with New Salem. The town office building's south-facing roof needs reinforcement before solar panels can go there, but might have room for batteries.

As a member of the energy committee, selectboard chair DiDonato said she sent an email back to Nexamp with questions, and that she would bring the proposal to the energy committee's next meeting.

Selectboard member Gillian Budine said other companies are making similar offers, and Wendell should assess Nexamp's quality and compare its offer to other possibilities. Nexamp has a pilot facility in Newburyport.

New Leaf Battery Proposal

DiDonato began the discussion about the town's approach to the proposed 100-MW BESS, saying that the town counsel from Kopelman and Paige (KP Law) had not returned the new bylaw proposed by the citizens' group No Assault & Battery (NAB) with edits to take out references to land use and zoning.

"I didn't bug him yet," she said, "but I will bug him tomorrow."

NAB speaker Anna Gyorgy spoke of a timeline for Wendell's action, with the New Leaf Energy proposal already on the docket of the state Department of Public Utilities (DPU), and suggested penciling in a date for a special town meeting to address the bylaw, anticipating a response from KP Law by then or using NAB's draft if necessary.

Court Dorsey, also of NAB, said he would prefer a selectboard-endorsed bylaw, assuming it still is in the realm of the NAB's intentions.

Gloria Kegeles suggested the special town meeting could consider both the original text and KP Law's version, and said the town of Carver is using that approach.

Stubblefield said he would support Wendell passing the bylaw regardless of the state attorney general's possible rejection, because it would show the widely-held beliefs of townspeople.

DiDonato said she thought the consensus at the March 6 selectboard meeting had been to not

bring forward a bylaw expected to fail the attorney general's review. The selectboard tentatively chose Wednesday, May 1, at 6 p.m. for a special town meeting, followed by a regularly scheduled selectboard meeting at 7 p.m.

Selectboard member Paul Doud said he would contact KP Law to get the bylaw ready.

Budine said state senator Jo Comerford encouraged Wendell to send a petition, signed by many town citizens, showing the concerns and opposition to the project.

The letter sent by Comerford and state representative Aaron Saunders to Tori Kim, director of the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) office, requesting a failsafe review of the proposal failed to achieve its intent. DiDonato said the letter was good, but lacked the required minimum of 10 signatures.

Comerford and Saunders also recommended that Wendell ask for assistance on the DPU docket when facing the much wealthier New Leaf Energy. Town coordinator Glenn Johnson-Mussad said this request should be submitted along with the renewed failsafe review request, and that writing it was on his list.

Two Years In

After two years working as Wendell's town coordinator, Johnson-Mussad suggested some changes in his office hours. If he changed his Wednesday hours on selectboard nights, the first and third Wednesday of every month, from daytime to 4 to 6 p.m. he could stay in town and be at the meetings in person. On the second, fourth, and fifth Wednesdays he could be at the office from 4 to 5 p.m.

For the rest of his time working for Wendell, he would be available virtually, as he is often now when not in the office. He explained that he needs time for his consulting business.

Budine said she thought consistent office hours each week would be better for Wendell citizens who might want to speak with Johnson-Mussad, but that some changes could work.

Johnson-Mussad then brought up his pay. He said it is the lowest town coordinator pay in the county, \$6 less per hour than the average, though he acknowledged that the highest-paid coordinators work for larger towns with more complex issues. He asked for a raise from

\$36,320 to \$51,731, including a cost-of-living increase.

Johnson-Mussad said the jump would be big, but he reminded the board of the difficulty Wendell had in finding him, going through four coordinators in the six months after Nancy Aldrich retired.

DiDonato said that Johnson-Mussad's benefits package including vacation time is more generous than most and should be included in discussion of his pay, and pointed out that he has assistants.

Budine said Wendell's librarian pay was brought up to a level consistent with other towns' over several years, and suggested Wendell prepare for increasing the position's pay in several steps rather than all at once. She recommended looking at similar towns, and asking the finance committee how Wendell could make a raise work.

Inspectors

Johnson-Mussad said he had received informal positive recommendations for Justin Gale, who is interested in replacing retiring building inspector Phil Delorey, but no formal recommendations.

Budine said she wanted to make sure Gale would follow through and get the required licenses within a year, as he said he would. The board voted to hire him, pending formal recommendations and with the stipulation that he must be fully licensed by the end of FY'25.

Treasurer Carolyn Manley reported that she had had no contact with the town plumbing inspector for two years. The position might be a future agenda item. Board members suggested having him come to a meeting, and Doud said he would contact him.

Other Business

Anne Gobi, director of the state Office of Rural Affairs, has asked for Wendell's top three priorities for financial aid.

DiDonato mentioned the fire truck replacement that chief Joe Cuneo asked for almost as soon as he became chief. A second choice is redesigning a dangerous intersection, and a third is accounting and accounting software.

Budine brought up Swift River School's interior doors, the school's phone system, and its upcoming disposal of PFAS. DiDonato agreed to move redesigning the dangerous intersection down off the priority list of three.

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Montague Community Television News
Both Tempests Up

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

TURNERS FALLS – In January, the Young Shakespeare Players East presented *The Tempest* in two separate casts. If you caught one and missed the other, look no further than the MCTV Vimeo page! There you will also find the Montague Center Library Author's Talk with Kate Spencer, along with recent Montague selectboard and finance committee meetings.

All community members are welcome and encouraged to submit their videos to be aired on Channel 9, as well as featured on the MCTV Vimeo page. That means you! If you have any 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. If you would like to stop in for a meeting, even just to check the vibe, email infomontaguetv@gmail.com for a link to the Zoom.

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

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ADAM KOHL PHOTO

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OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER

MARCH 28, 2024

Above: Old Man Winter's last fit of snow and mean-spirited wind gave way to beauty and splendor Sunday morning, in the eastern and western hilltowns especially, when the sun came back out. Thanks to Wendell reader Adam Kohl for this one!

Milltown Floors

By ALEX DJAAFAR MCGUIGAN
edited by MIKE JACKSON

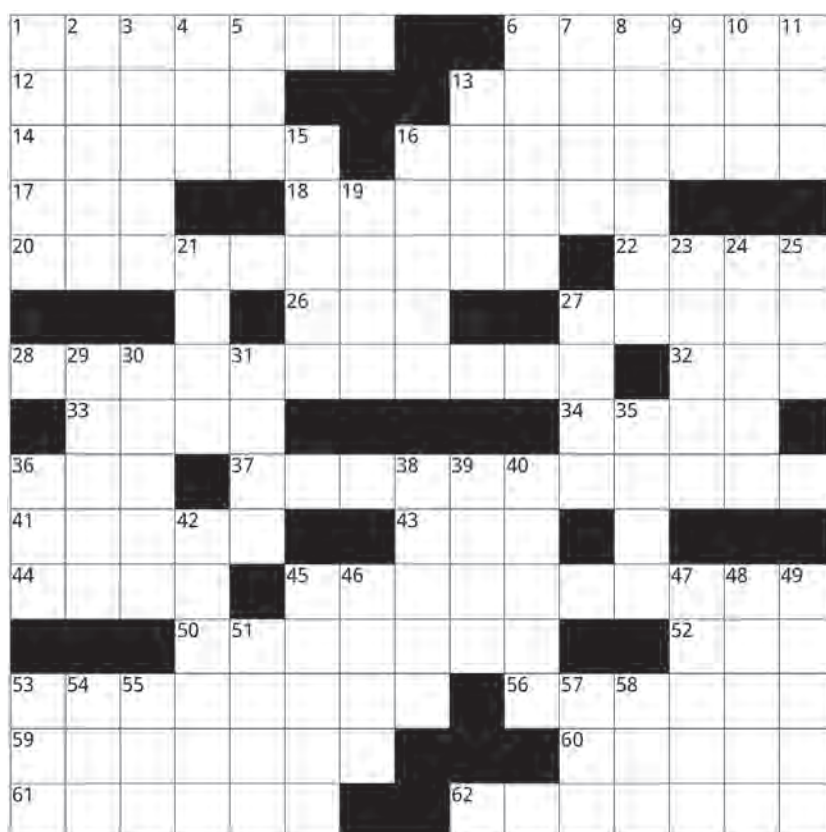
* Denotes clues related to the villages of Montague, MA.

ACROSS

- 1. *MC Rd built on bamboo
- 6. Oozy stuff
- 12. "Ugh, what ___ idea!"
- 13. * She's in Cugnot's pocket
- 14. "Sure thing!"
- 16. Traffic area designated by a bent arrow
- 17. It's "hard" for the French
- 18. Something easy as pie
- 20. * Downtown TF community center
- 22. Buyer be where?
- 26. Beast of burden
- 27. "Have ___ trip!"
- 28. 1994 Tarantino film
- 32. Red Sox legend
- 33. Particle prefix
- 34. Short response starter for a too-long post
- 36. 1997 Will Smith blockbuster, in brief
- 37. * Doc-worthy community with spirited intentions
- 41. Squirrel away
- 43. "Hogwash!"
- 44. Infamous failfest
- 45. Designers of Disney attractions
- 50. Sweet treat
- 52. Motorists' org.
- 53. * See 35 Down
- 56. Begins
- 59. A close copy
- 60. Amanda, star of 2007's *She's the Man*
- 61. Boss firefighters
- 62. Trap

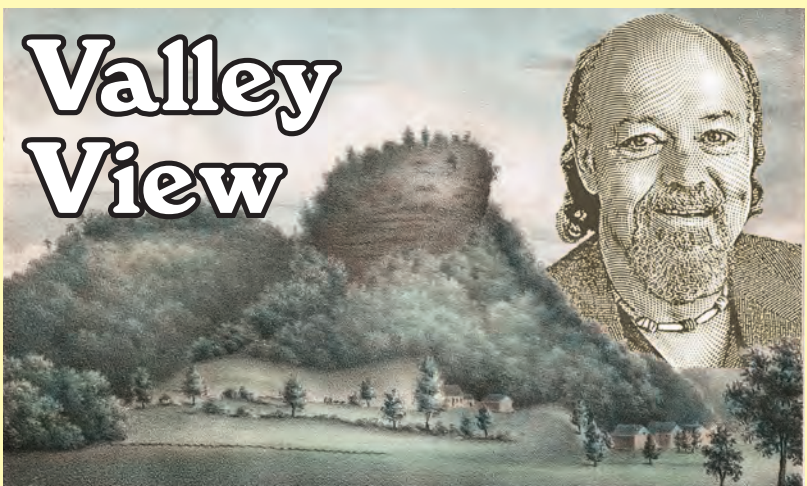
DOWN

- 1. Usher's genre
- 2. A scent, for a Brit
- 3. Jermaine, of hip-hop
- 4 A ___, soothing sounds on social med.
- 5. Home of *Euphoria* & *Barry*
- 6. Binge
- 7. City on the Danube
- 8. Except if
- 9. Double-helix molecule



- 10. ___-X (or Y, or Z)
- 11. Before, in verse
- 13. Takes legal action
- 15. Persian religion
- 16. Have faith in
- 19. Anjou alternative
- 21. ___ Crunch
- 23. Mozart contemporary
- 24. Joan ___
- 25. Candy in a dispenser
- 27. Picnic pests
- 29. * Riverside park with a whale
- 30. Work, or a party
- 31. Golfer's cry
- 35. * With 53 Across, a once dock-worthy community with spiritualist conventions
- 36. Borderless docs' org.
- 38. In pieces
- 39. Jafar's familiar
- 40. They may pass in the night
- 42. Lavishly entertain, as with stories
- 45. Iconic 1998 desktops
- 46. Madonna's skincare line, 2012 album
- 47. ___ living
- 48. Yelp contributor
- 49. Nebraska senator Ben
- 51. 1965 Dave Clark Five hit "Catch ___ You Can"
- 53. Chinese state, in brief
- 54. * TF Water Dept. Clerk/Collector Suzanne
- 55. Pen for emergency use
- 57. Recipe amts.
- 58. Author Rand

Valley View



ORRA WHITE HITCHCOCK PRINT

Which Way Were Weirs?

By GARY SANDERSON

GREENFIELD – A long, winding path sat me in this bow-back Windsor chair this morning – seasoned-oak oozing warmth from the woodstove to stimulate thoughts about Indian weirs.

My introduction to these man-made fish-catching structures occurred more than 30 years ago. Deerfield artist/illustrator Al Dray had been following my columns on salmon, shad, and ancient spring fishing camps situated around the Great Falls between Turners Falls and Riverside, Gill, and wanted to take me on a little field trip.

He'd been poking around the Connecticut River's eastern shore down by Rock Dam in Montague City and was convinced he'd found vestiges of a weir above the "fishing falls" there. We went to the site, he pointed out the open mouth of a V-shaped stone column facing us, and suggested it was the handiwork of Native fishermen wanting to funnel migrating fish into a shoreline trap. Though I was a beginner, he gave a convincing argument.

The concept of fish weirs and traps fit snugly into my interests at the time. I was then passionately fishing for shad, studying the waters I frequented, publishing weekly migration numbers during the upstream spring spawning run, and taking the unpopular opinion that Connecticut River salmon-restoration was doomed.

With little helpful information about Indian fishing camps and practices available in the standard Connecticut Valley town histories, I hunted additional sources and found thin picking. Then came Hilary Stewart's richly-illustrated *Indian Fishing* (1982 paperback), focusing on Washington State and British Columbia. Though the camps she sketched were faraway, I believed the tools and practices would differ little from those used by our own indigenous people. Subsequent research supported that opinion.

The rule of thumb linking all stream-fishing camps I reviewed was that upstream-pointing weirs were the rule for catching upstream-migrating fish.

Then, in recent weeks, I happened to read something in Rev. J.H. Temple's *History of Palmer* (1889) that sang a different tune about Native fishing on the upper Chicopee River and its headwaters. Repeating an assertion made two years earlier in his *History of North Brookfield* (1887), Temple reported that Indians fishing the spring Atlantic salmon run there – the Chicopee River watershed – employed nets, spears, and arrows to catch ascending fish, and weirs to catch survivors returning to sea.

I knew nothing about the Chicopee River before exploring this topic, but have since learned that it starts at the confluence of the Ware, Quaboag, and Swift rivers in Palmer's Three Rivers village and flows some 18 miles to the Connecticut River.

This was the first mention I ever found of fishing for spawning-run survivors returning to the sea. The new paradigm raised my interest after nearly 50 years of carefully tracking and extensively reporting our valley's spring, anadromous-fish spawning runs of shad, salmon, striped bass, herring, alewife, and eels. Anadromous fish are born in freshwater, live as adults in saltwater, and return in their reproductive prime to spawn in natal streams.

Why, I pondered in print and then in email correspondence with a reader, would anyone exert time and energy catching an exhausted, depleted resource? Less than 10% of the annual Atlantic salmon run survives for out-migration, and those fish descend in weakened condition. Certainly not optimal specimens for human consumption.

Having witnessed as an angler the behavior of migrating fish on their upstream journey, I felt like I had insight and understanding about spawning-run dynamics. I learned to catch shad swimming in their preferred interior river channels, discovered how water flow and temperature governed runs' ebbs and flows, and could easily identify their last dance in the sluggish shallows – a circling spawning ritual signaling the end of fishing season. About 50% of

see **VALLEY VIEW** page B3



Travel with Max

By Max Hartshorne

Grand Manan Island, Queen of the Bay of Fundy.



HARTSHORNE PHOTO

One of the ferries that makes the 90-minute one-way crossing to Grand Manan.

SOUTH DEERFIELD – Any trip to Grand Manan Island, about 20 miles off the coast of New Brunswick Canada, begins at Black's Harbour. This small coastal village is the launching pad for the two large ferries that travel the route daily, bringing everything the islands need, and there is no scheduled air service.

It's either your own boat or the ferry, for just about anyone who wants to come.

During our visit our ferry departed in a fog and the 90-minute trip the 20 miles to Grand Manan was relaxed and pleasant. With our car

see **TRAVELS** page B8

VALLEY VIEW from page B1

the shad run dies, leaving in its wake pungent, bloated reminders fit only for salvaging.

Although I have never observed Atlantic salmon runs, they must have been similar to shad runs, despite fewer numbers and a higher mortality rate. Of course, if Temple can be believed – he offers no sources, and likely was not an outdoorsman – that was a moot point in the Chicopee River watershed above the insurmountable Chicopee Falls. Only strong, agile salmon could clear that barrier, eliminating all other Connecticut River fish migrations above there.

I soon pushed to the backburner my impulsive inquiry into weirs designed to catch out-migrating salmon. It was slightly out of my comfort zone. I could always revisit it if the spirit moved me.

That plan soon changed, however, when quite by chance a retired archaeologist friend reached out to me by email, then telephone, to discuss the ancient Indian fishing grounds bordering Montague's Turners Falls village. Little did he know he was hitting on a hot topic.

His impetus was recent examination of a private, previously unknown, Riverside/Gill Indian artifact collection brought to his attention. When this find stirred his inquisitive juices, he dug out an archaeological "WMECo Site" report he wrote nearly 50 years ago about that Riverside excavation he led. He wanted to compare notes, so to speak.

We have often discussed Connecticut River anadromous fisheries over the years because he knows it's in my wheelhouse and not his bailiwick. He just wanted to chat about run dynamics. Plus, he was eager to share maps and aerial photos he had found showing two extant Native weirs in the valley: one on the Westfield River, and the other on the – yep, you guessed it! – Ware River in Palmer.

The photos showed two man-made, stonewall-like structures spanning the entire width of the streambeds. Both knee-high structures point downstream. The Westfield River example is a wide V. The one in Palmer is a shallow arc. Both of them point downstream and would have held back water under normal flows, forming a pool and presenting a clearable obstacle.

I told my friend I was not familiar with that type of weir. The ones I was familiar with from sketches and photos pointed upstream with mouths inviting fish into tight enclosures and traps for easy harvest

with nets, spears, and arrows. His downstream-pointing examples made no sense to me as weirs targeting upstream swimmers. Maybe Temple was right.

My friend suggested that such weirs extending across a river and pointed downstream could have forced upstream travelers toward narrow, manmade shoreline channels at both ends, where they could be easily harvested from shore. Other local historians have surmised that Indian fishers stood atop the weirs to take fish with dipnets, spears, and arrows. Perhaps, but smaller, tighter weirs would have been more efficient with higher yields.

Hmmmm?
Time to search for answers.

The first source I pulled from my bookcase was Stewart's aforementioned *Indian Fishing*, which displayed a variety of stonewall-like, V-shaped, stream-fishing obstacles, some equipped with wooden cages, pens, fence posts and lattices positioned beyond the apex to delay fish. I could decipher none pointing downstream.

Next stop was Frank Speck's classic *Penobscot Man*, about the lifeways of Maine Indians. There I found information about an important fall American eel fishery that relied on downstream-pointing weirs and traps to intercept out-migration to Bermuda Triangle spawning grounds and death.

Other than that, Harral Ayres' *The Great New England Trail* mentioned springtime lamprey-eel fishing by eastern Massachusetts Natives. Then Gordon Day's classic *In Search of New England's Native Past* confirmed the importance of fall eel fishing but didn't go into minute detail.

I believe it's safe to assume that migrating spring lampreys and fall American eels were sought after by indigenous Connecticut Valley inhabitants – even after Three-Sisters, corn-squash-bean farming was adopted around 1,000 AD.

So, what to make of all this confusing information? Was the downstream-pointed weir on the Westfield River constructed to harvest fall, out-migrating American eels? How about the Palmer weir? It couldn't have been built for fall eels, because Chicopee Falls blocked their way.

Questions remain. Food for thought. More grist for the thought mill.

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



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Missing Vehicle; Persistent Pizza Orderer; Chemical Smell; Pub Disturbance; Bingo in Chicopee; Death By Sound

Monday, 3/18

7:49 a.m. 911 caller from Avenue A states that a fire alarm has been sounding in the building since 4 a.m.; can smell smoke in the building. Evacuating now. Transferred to Shelburne Control. No flames or smoke showing, but strong odor on second floor. Officer advises there is an odor outside of the building as well. Maintenance coming with key. Confirmed apartment where odor is coming from.

Tuesday, 3/19

4:25 p.m. Following a vehicle stop, a 35-year-old Levrett man was arrested on a default warrant.

8:28 p.m. Caller from Eleventh Street states that she had her car parked at a friend's father's house and they just told her that the vehicle is gone. Caller states she has both sets of keys. Caller at station filling out paperwork. Area agencies advised to be on lookout. Vehicle entered into NCIC as stolen.

Wednesday, 3/20

7:59 a.m. Caller states that she and her daughter have been constantly harassed by another tenant in their building; she called about the male last month, but he has not stopped making rude comments. They feel uncomfortable at this time and would like to speak to someone about their options. Advised of options.

8:47 a.m. Caller from Oakman Street would like to speak with an officer about an ongoing overnight noise complaint.

9:42 a.m. Caller from Kentucky states he was advised by his lawyer to call and report a threatening message he received from a female in our town. Officer called caller back and advised him of options.

9:48 a.m. 911 call mapping to Fifth Street; party stated she would like to order a pizza then hung up. Second 911 call from same number. Unable to call back; 911-only phone. First floor apartment at location didn't know any-

thing about a 911 call. Officers checked area; nobody located. Received another call from same number; sounds like a child again asking to order a pizza. When asked if they need police, party said "You are stupid" and hung up. Officers checking area again.

12:24 p.m. Officer out at Keith Apartments with a female outside screaming. Officer requesting ambulance for transport. AMR en route. Summons issued.

1:17 p.m. Caller from Second Street states the upstairs neighbor has been screaming and throwing things around the building. Could hear female in background yelling at male. Female was leaving while male was on phone. Caller states he had called the landlord, who told him to call the police and report the issue.

1:47 p.m. 911 caller stated they would like to order a pizza; when asked if they need police, party said "You are stupid" multiple times and hung up. Would not answer any other questions. Received five more calls from 911-only phone; sounds like a child who just keeps asking to order a pizza and asking "Who are you?" All calls mapping within 20 meters of a Fourth Street address. Officer checked area; unable to locate.

3:49 p.m. Caller from Greenfield Road reports that there was a man on her back deck and when her dog started barking, he took off into the woods. Described as having longish gray hair and wearing a leather jacket and a flannel. Caller would like an officer to drive through the area. If she sees him again, she will call the PD back. Officer checked area; nothing showing.

4:39 p.m. Caller from Federal Street states that there has been suspicious activity at the apartment next door. States cars drive in and out at all hours of the night. States today the smoke alarm was sounding so she

went to check on them and there was a strong chemical smell coming from the apartment. Caller requesting officers drive by the area periodically and check for suspicious vehicles/people.

Thursday, 3/21

10:14 a.m. Officers attempting to serve warrant to female on Avenue A. No answer at door.

3:01 p.m. Caller from Wentworth Congregate Housing states a neighbor has had music playing too loudly all day long, and it's disruptive. States the male party left the building and the music is still going. Referred to an officer.

5:46 p.m. Caller from Coolidge Avenue states there is a man walking with his dog off leash; it's becoming more frequent as the weeks go by, and when she is out in the yard, the dog runs at her. Call printed for animal control officer. Male party advised of leash laws.

7:13 p.m. Caller from Central Street states that there are thick black wires down and exposed. Unsure what kind of wires they are. Officer advises it is a cable or phone wire.

Friday, 3/22

12:33 a.m. 911 caller advises that individuals are currently causing a disturbance at Millers Pub; yelling and screaming heard over the phone while attempting to gather info. Officer advises verbal altercation only; both parties separated at this time; one has left the area. No further issues.

9:02 a.m. Officer conducting a motor vehicle stop at Avenue A and Fourth Street. Stop was initiated after a phone call reporting that the vehicle was operating very erratically on Route 2 and then after both vehicles pulled into Food City, the driver got out, took the caller's photo, and said something rude to her, then left the parking lot. Investigated.

4:17 p.m. Caller from Central Street states there is a brown-and-white dog running down the road. Referred to an officer.

11:04 p.m. 911 caller advises he is behind a vehicle that is all over the roadway and middle yellow line. Caller advises vehicle went through the lights at the PD and continued towards the high school. Officer located and stopped vehicle at Norman and Millers Falls Roads.

Saturday, 3/23

10:53 a.m. First of several reports of trees and wires down around town with

subsequent road closures. Power lines on fire on Meadow Road; tree down blocking Wendell Road; branch blocking Mormon Hollow Road; tree on wires on East Chestnut Hill Road.

2:04 p.m. 911 caller from Bridge Street states there has been banging on the floor in the apartment upstairs for the past 10 hours.

It is causing him to have a headache, and he would like them talked to. States he is going to leave the residence as he can't take it anymore. Caller called back in stating neighbors are trying to cause him death by sound and he cannot stand it anymore. He knows it's real as it's been confirmed by his doctor. He yelled through the ceiling to the neighbor to stop, but they didn't. Caller then hung up. Officer spoke with painters on the third floor who are redoing the apartment. They have been hearing a tenant in Apartment 2 who has been screaming all day causing a disturbance. Attempted to make contact with caller; unable to locate.

11:36 p.m. Heard over radio; box alarm on Avenue A. Officer on scene advises the building is being evacuated.

11:47 p.m. Caller from Davis Street states there is a red car in the parking lot across the street with the lights on, windows down, and music blasting. Caller states it just woke him up. Car gone upon officer's arrival.

11:53 p.m. 911 caller from Central Street states that he went to the store and he and his girlfriend were jumped. Caller states his girlfriend's nose is bleeding but she doesn't want any EMS at this time. Caller states the assailants took everything out of his pockets. Caller was able to name four involved parties. Officer requesting ambulance; Control contacted. Investigated.

Sunday, 3/24

8:56 a.m. Caller from Davis Street states that a white Monte Carlo has gone by his house at over 70 mph twice this morning. Officer checked area; unable to locate. Units will continue to be on lookout in the area.

5:20 p.m. Report of four teenagers (three males, one female) throwing things from the train trestle into the road on North Leverett Road. Objects appear to be sections of pipe and rocks/gravel. Subjects have been hanging out there for a good part of the day but only started throwing things within the past 20 minutes. Officer advises parties gone on arrival. Debris was observed and removed.

MONTAGUE CRYPTOJAM !!!

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SUBMITTED PHOTO

Number Seventy: Wheatie Mattiasich

Interview by J. BURKETT
And TROY CURRY

TURNERS FALLS – Wheatie Mattiasich might be a newer name in the underground music scene, but she has an old sound that connects to old traditions. And, even though she only has one release – *Old Glow*, on the Open Mouth label – it is a deep and resonating album that stretches to areas that most artists take many releases to reach.

Mattiasich has a gorgeous voice, almost like Shirley Collins' Irish folk songs or Nico's so-called "Teutonic" neo-classical albums, and we can even feel some of Linda Smith's home recording stylings in it, but there is something that gives her own music its own unique sound. NPR recently said the LP "drenches dulcimer, guitar, keyboard and harmonium in cotton clouds of cozy reverb" and has "eerie music that could fill a forest cathedral."

We really recommend checking out this overlooked gem, and seeing her live. She is playing at Mystra's Ooze fest in New York City on April 4 with Gary Higgins, Frank Hurricane, and Peter Stamp-

fel and the Atomic Meta-Pagans.

MMM: Do you want to share anything about early music experiences or growing up? Did you grow up in Pennsylvania?

WM: I live in Baltimore, but I grew up on a farm outside Poughkeepsie, New York. My mother's side of the family all lived in different houses on the land there – about 20 of us. I always felt a little more connected with the other side of the Hudson River, though, in the Catskill Mountains. My Uncle Lumo lived on a sort of commune over there, and I loved the feel of it.

As for early music memories... There was a big outdoor church camp about a mile down the road – like hundreds of families camping in tents. They would sing gospel songs around a lake at night, and I loved going outside after a storm, listening to the songs make their way through the woods. Something about the sound faintly coming through the actual mist from the storm – that was so magical.

MMM: How would you describe your music? Do you feel like you

are connected to any categories, or "movements"?

WM: I'm not sure. I like the word "balladeer." I feel connected with the idea of a ballad – the intensity of that kind of delivery. Though, I think I approach it in an amorphous way. Stephen [Santillan]'s keyboard and guitar writing brings in some more contemporary timbres, which abstracts it all even more.

MMM: Do you want to talk about your next album? Or your last one – is it still available?

WM: The last album, *Old Glow*, was a collection of songs written over the course of a decade and recorded in our attic during the early pandemic. Most of the music was written collaboratively though, with Stephen.

We're grateful to Bill Nace, who put it out on his label, Open Mouth Records. The vinyl's currently sold out online, but I do have some copies I'll be taking on tour.

As for the next album, it's in the works, slowly coming along! I think we'll try to record on tape this time around.

MMM: Your music has a feeling of the outdoors. Can you comment on that?

WM: I'm glad it feels that

way. I grew up pretty immersed in nature – a lot of time alone in swamps, woods, and ponds. I try to think of songwriting as collaborative, not just between humans.

MMM: Any music you could recommend to the readers, or any favorite books or poetry?

WM: Stephen and I actually have a mutual favorite song, called "Bats' i Son Martomail" from Chiapas. I've come across a few different recordings of it – all so beautiful!

Also, lately, the music of Branko Mataja. My grandmother was Croatian, and I love the way he alchemized all these folk songs from there into one instrument.

As for books, I'm currently reading some journals of the painter Charles Burchfield called *The Poetry of Place*. There's a smaller collection that recently came out too, called *The Sphinx and the Milky Way*. He'll write about nature in this euphoric way, and then in the next entry, write about seeing *Bambi* in the movie theater when it first came out, and about being deeply disturbed by the big anthropomorphic eyes and foreheads. I love this book.

I'm also reading two books of poetry, *The Wishing Bone Cycle: Narrative Poems of the Swampy Cree* and *When the Light of the*

World Was Subdued, Our Songs Came Through: A Norton Anthology of Native Nations Poetry.

MMM: Any new bands, live music, or other current stuff that's been inspiring or that you'd like to recommend?

WM: I saw Cindy Lee perform in Baltimore, and they were so stunning.

Some other favorites: The Dwarfs of East Agouza, Sam Wenc, Stella Kola, and a trio of Bill Nace, Susan Alcorn, and Chris Corsano.

MMM: Do you enjoy other mediums of art making or can you recommend some to the readers?

WM: Stephen and I both dabble in drawing, painting, sculpture, and video. I think we feel most at home in the music realm though.

We do watch a lot of films, too, that sometimes make their way into our writing process. *Night of the Hunter* helped us finish a song once.

MMM: Are you excited about the Mystra Oozefest? And are you familiar with Gary Higgins and Peter Stampfel?

WM: So looking forward to it! I was somewhat familiar with them both, but as I delve deeper into their music – dang. Brilliant people.

FACES & PLACES



SANDRA VECCHIO PHOTOS

Greenfield sewist Alicia Rhodes (inset at left) has a pop-up gallery of her crafts – including this centerpiece quilt – for display and sale at the Turners Falls branch of Greenfield Savings Bank into early April.

Rhodes, 34, has lived since childhood with spina bifida and faces serious mobility challenges, and has found in sewing a "sanctuary," in her mother's words, as well as an outlet for considerable talent.

"Alicia does amazing work," says Sandra Vecchio, community generalist at the United Arc in Turners, which has helped support Rhodes's sewing lessons. Check out the display at the bank to learn more about Rhodes and her craft business, *Alicia Sews*.



MOVIE REVIEW

The Last Legion (2007)

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – *The Last Legion* is something I decided to watch recently on DVD. It's one of the many takes on the King Arthur story that I have seen in film and TV. Some I have liked very well – others I have not. I decided to check this out.

This film begins with the true story of the fall of Rome, and the last emperor of Rome, Romulus Augustus. He was a young boy who ruled only for a short time and was later imprisoned on an island called Capri. The film makes the real-life history suddenly take a different turn. The last emperor and some of his last legion surviving leads to this becoming a King Arthur story.

Colin Firth and Ben Kingsley are part of the cast. The way Kingsley's character acts is kind of a giveaway of who he is really is in this story. Both are important parts of what makes this become a King Arthur story. Let's just say it comes in handy that Kingsley's character is loyal to the boy emperor.

Though the film is presented as

historical content and not a fantasy, the sword Excalibur is featured, which is a magical element of the Arthur story but is connected here as something made for Julius Caesar. That makes this story still feel like a historical one of some kind. The sword helps nicely with that.

Things end up going sideways again for this kid emperor, and he, along with his legion has to make a last stand. I won't spoil too much about how it goes from there, but the "sword in the stone" part does happen, and the kid does go on with his life, just like his real-life history – which is kind of important to how things are at the end of this movie.

This kid also continues to have the loyal man played by Ben Kingsley at his side, and he shows him his continued appreciation, along with the others who stayed by his side. I found the way they connected this story to the King Arthur legend to be very cool. I would be surprised if anyone else who sees this movie doesn't feel the same way. It fits it all together nicely, which is why it's very cool in the first place.

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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.

Greenfield Savings Bank, Turners Falls: *Alicia Sews*, textile creations by Alicia Rhodes on display in the lobby.

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: *Pauline Star*, photography exhibit. Through April, with a reception Thursday, April 11 at 5 p.m.

Artspace, Greenfield: *Divinites*, mixed-media by Jules Jones referencing medieval themes and the divine feminine. April 5 through 26, with a reception Friday, April 5 from 5 to 8 p.m.

Looky Here, Greenfield: *Be-*

tween You and Me, portraits by Maria Sparrow, closing with a reception Friday, March 29.

Leverett Crafts & Arts, Leverett: *Bill & Dianne Dolan*, painting and pottery. Through April, with a reception Sunday, April 7 from 3 to 5 p.m.

Fiddleheads Gallery, Northfield: *Fourth Annual Photography Show*, juried exhibit. Through April 14.

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 Falls: *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.

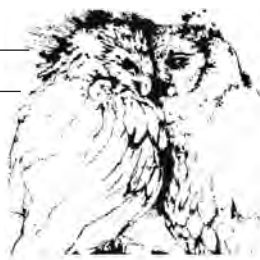
A.P.E. Gallery, Northampton: *The Elephant Vanishes: Full Circle*, translations of jazz compositions into visual art by Allen Fowler, with an interactive component for audience response. April 3 through April 14, with a reception Friday, April 12 from 5 to 8 p.m.

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



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Sex Matters

a sex-positive health column

by STEPHANIE BAIRD

SOUTH HADLEY – Dear readers, for March we have Part Two of the interview with Emily Nagoski, PhD about her latest book, *Come Together: The Science (and Art) of Creating Lasting Sexual Connection* (2024).

Here is a bit more information from the jacket description:

“Nagoski breaks down the obstacles that impede us from enjoying sex – from stress and body image to relationship difficulties and gendered beliefs about how sex ‘should’ be – and presents the best ways to overcome them. You’ll learn:

- that “spontaneous desire” is not the kind of desire to strive for if you want to have great sex for decades;
- vocabulary for talking with partners about ways to get in ‘the mood’ and how to not take it personally when ‘the mood’ is nowhere to be found;
- how to understand your own and your partner’s ‘emotional floorplan,’ so that you have a blueprint for how to get to a sexy state of mind.

“Written with scientific rigor, humor, and compassion, Nagoski shows us what great sex can look like, how to create it in our own lives, and what to do when struggles arise.”

I happily gulped down this new book in a handful of days, and am including it in my canon of regular-

ly recommended texts for my clients – especially those in long-term relationships – as this book also has a lot of excellent communication strategies and tips.

As are her other two books, it is written in a highly readable, relatable, and engaging style. Throughout the book, as in *Come As You Are*, Nagoski takes every opportunity to remind readers they are “normal” and “not broken,” no matter what they think of their own struggles. She also continuously reminds us of how difficult it is to cultivate a pleasure-oriented, pleasure-positive sexuality, in the consistently toxic and erotophobic culture that surrounds our “gardens.”

SB: *Can you share a couple examples of practical skills couples can learn from this book?*

EN: The most transformational skills in the book are not what you might call “practical.” They involve cultivating sexual confidence (that is, knowing what’s true about your sexuality, your body, your mind, your world, your relationship, your life history, even if it’s not what you think “should” be true, and even if it’s not what you wish were true) and joy (that is, loving what’s true about your sexuality etc., even if it’s not what you think “should” be true, even if it’s not what you wish were

true.) (Joy is the hard part.)

Above all, turning toward whatever is happening in the moment with confidence, joy, compassion, and a sense of play, rather than a sense of worry that something is “wrong,” will completely revolutionize a person’s experience of a sexual connection. Changing our relationship with sexuality itself is the foundational transformation that will change our sex lives.

But the practical stuff is helpful, too. As one example to illustrate, my spouse and I put towels in our nightstands, so that we could clean up without having to get out of bed on a cold New England night. Transformational!

SB: *If you could recommend only one or two other modern self-help sex-related books (other than your own), what would they be?*

EN: Oh gosh, it really depends who the reader is. I think *Magnificent Sex* by Peggy Kleinplatz and Dana Ménard is essential reading for all professionals, or any research-minded person interested in sex. For people who are delving into their own sexual minds to discover what’s true for themselves, under all the cultural lies they were told, I recommend the forthcoming *Feel It All* by Casey Tanner of queersextherapy.com.

SB: *What local bookstores can folks buy your book from?*

EN: Many local bookstores carry *Come Together*, and any of them can order it if you ask! My local bookstore, Book Moon Books in Easthampton, carries signed copies.

SB: *Now that you might have a bit of free time again for yourself, what types of activities and self-care do you enjoy?*

EN: Hahahahahahaha FREE TIME THAT’S HILARIOUS I LOVE IT!!!!

I have long COVID, so the bulk of my free time is devoted to restoring my nervous system and my mitochondria to full working order. Do long, hot baths count as an activity?

SB: *Heck, yeah, hot baths count, especially if your partner draws them for you.*

Having now had a chance to fully read and digest this powerhouse of optimism, I’ll mention a few highlights that stuck out for me: Nagoski speaks often of “centering pleasure” in our lives, both throughout the day and sensually/sexually. “Spark” in a relationship and “pleasure” are not the same, as “spark” can be hard to maintain long-term, and is actually not associated with long-term relationship contentment.

Getting to know our pleasure-favorable spaces in our emotion brain (*lust, play, seeking, care*) and pleasure-adverse spaces (*panic/grief, fear, rage*), alongside our *thinking minds, bodies, and observation*

minds, can help us sort out our “floorplans,” developing blueprints for accessing pleasure more often.

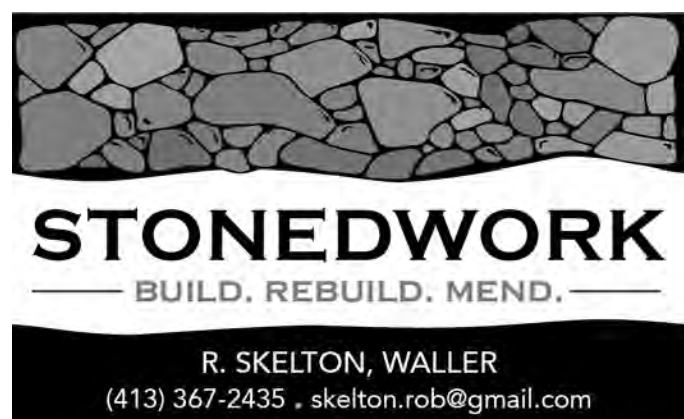
Figuring out what is adjacent to *lust* spaces in our floor plans will help us access said *lust* and resulting pleasure. For instance, if *play* is close to *lust* – like a screened-in porch that you walk through – then laughing and wrestling with your partner may help you get to *lust* a bit easier.

Nagoski also spends plenty of time discussing the negative impact of various imperatives such as the “coital imperative,” “the variety imperative,” the “performance imperative,” the “confidence imperative,” the “monogamy imperative,” and even the “sex imperative.” To learn more, you’ll have to get the book and turn to page 197. There is also a full chapter – perhaps my favorite chapter – devoted to the mirage of the “gender binary.”

In the end, Nagoski is doing her damndest to instill in her readers that we deserve the right and the opportunity to fully be and express ourselves authentically, confidently, and joyfully. For that, I am eternally grateful.

Stephanie Baird is a certified OWL facilitator and an EMDR psychotherapist and consultant who encourages her clients towards thriving sexual health. She is the author of the book EMDR Therapy and Sexual Health: A Clinician’s Guide (2023). She welcomes feedback and suggestions at sexmatters@montaguereporter.org.

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Esta es la página mensual en español del *Montague Reporter*. Aquí podrá encontrar cuestiones acerca de la comunidad hispana en el área, eventos de interés, curiosidades, y noticias mundiales en español. Si quiere participar o compartir alguna sugerencia, envíenos un correo electrónico a spanish@montaguereporter.org.



Gente de Franklin County: Francia (Vieda) Wisnewski

Por VICTORIA MAÍLLO DE AGUILERA

TURNERS FALLS – Este mes traemos a la página en español a una mujer que llevo mucho tiempo queriendo entrevistar. Vive en Franklin County desde hace años y es una activista, líder comunitaria y principalmente educadora.

Francia Wisnewski es colombiana, nació en Santiago de Cali que se encuentra en el suroeste de Colombia. Es mucho más conocida como Cali. Está bañada por el Océano Pacífico, lo que la convierte en un centro turístico y económico en el sur de Colombia.

Francia creció allí, en Cali y allí también creció, más concretamente en el barrio de Chiminangos, en el seno de una familia tradicional. Tiene una hermana menor que vive en Colombia. Su padre trabajaba fuera de casa y su madre hacía talleres didácticos.

Tiene muy buenos recuerdos de su barrio ya que era un lugar especial, donde los residentes compartían comida, se ayudaban unos a otros en las tareas, iban al mercado, o leían juntos el periódico si alguien lo compraba. Los niños jugaban en casas de otros y se notaba una sensación de pertenecer a una comunidad.

La importancia de la educación fue algo que sus padres siempre inculcaron a Francia. Me dice que recuerda muy bien una frase que sus padres les decían a menudo a ella y a su hermana: “La única herencia que les vamos a dejar es la educación.” En Colombia existe la educación pública, pero los recursos son muy limitados y por ello sus padres siempre hicieron el esfuerzo para poder pagar una buena educación.

En sexto grado, su padre la llevaba cada mañana en una moto a una escuela mejor, aunque estaba lejos de su casa. Aunque repitió su sexto grado, esto le vino bien porque aumentó su autoestima.

Era una escuela vocacional donde existían diversas opciones como artes culinarias, secretariado, trabajo social, electrónica, auto-mecánica, etc. A ella siempre le gustaron las ciencias, así que estudió el bachillerato de ciencias. Uno de sus recuerdos de niña es como en cuarto grado le encantaba pintar el aparato digestivo con sus diferentes órganos en colores.

En la escuela vocacional aprendió mucho de matemáticas lo que le hizo conseguir una buena puntuación para entrar en la universidad. Se matriculó en la Universidad del Valle en biología y química.

En el quinto año de la universidad es necesario hacer una práctica que te permite enseñar. En este su



Francia Wisnewski.

primer trabajo como educadora, Francia fue maestra de una comunidad de bajos recursos donde enseñó matemáticas, biología y salud sexual reproductiva. Los estudiantes eran niños de sexto a undécimo grado en una escuela rural de familias de ingresos medios.

Los recursos en la escuela eran limitados. Allí en Colombia, en la universidad te enseñan a ser creativo y diseñar tus propios materiales con los recursos existentes como fríjoles, hierbas, etc.

Me dice que recuerda mucho una colaboración que hicieron entre todos los maestros y decidieron crear un museo cultural y cada maestro hacía algo con sus estudiantes como velas, imitación de baño de oro, máscaras. Los maestros con los recursos que tenían, todos provenientes de la comunidad, crearon los diferentes artefactos.

Después de terminar su carrera quería experimentar nuevos campos, y uno de ellos era aprender una lengua. Tenía algunos amigos colombianos en Maine y los visitó. Cuando estaba en Maine hizo un viaje en bicicleta y llegó hasta Massachusetts. Una de sus paradas fue Amherst y le gustó mucho el ambiente de la universidad y de la pequeña ciudad.

Su primera experiencia en una escuela en Massachusetts fue en Rowe. Había unos estudiantes que habían llegado de Chile, que no hablaban inglés y necesitaban una tutoría voluntaria para ayudarlos con las clases.

Ejerció como voluntaria en esa escuela y al mismo tiempo empezó a preparar sus pruebas de acceso a la Universidad de Massachusetts que era su siguiente objetivo, aunque no el único, también había pensado en viajar a Chile u otros países de Sudamérica para conocer otras culturas.

Pero la vida le tenía preparada otra sorpresa. Venía bastante con amigos a Greenfield, y ahí, en

People's Pint trabajaba el que más tarde se convertiría en su esposo y padre de sus dos hijos, Mark. A partir de ahí su vida se estableció en Franklin County.

Su Trabajo

En la Universidad de Massachusetts obtuvo una maestría en Educación con concentración en Educación Temprana. Todo un logro ya que la hizo mientras cuidaba de sus dos niños pequeños.

Francia quería seguir trabajando, y al mismo tiempo necesitaba practicar y perfeccionar su inglés. Empezó a trabajar en la Despensa de Alimentos de Community Action en Greenfield. Allí se dio cuenta de la fuerza de la comunidad. Aprendió a conocer a la comunidad a través de la escasez de alimentos y a ser parte de esa comunidad para poder ayudarlos y apoyarlos en solidaridad y con dignidad.

Francia me dice que recibió un apoyo muy grande por parte de sus jefes en Community Action que le permitían ir con el bebé al trabajo y le permitieron desarrollar proyectos educativos más acordes con su formación y sus propios intereses. En Community Action en Greenfield se sentía parte de una comunidad.

Francia es una mujer muy activa, que le gusta hacer muchas cosas y es inquieta por naturaleza.

Estando embarazada de su primer hijo, enseñaba y al mismo tiempo empezó a trabajar también con Catholic Ministries en Turners Falls. Fue asistente de la escuela temprana en el centro comunitario que se encuentra en el centro de Turners. Empezó a trabajar con grupos de padres para realizar actividades de juegos con los niños, o enseñar cómo funcionan los sistemas estadounidenses para los inmigrantes.

Este trabajo le permitió conocer a la comunidad latina en Turners y me cuenta como al principio las mujeres latinas de la comuni-

dad eran muy tímidas, pero luego empezaron a conocerse y a abrirse mostrando sus preocupaciones acerca de lo difícil que era mantener un balance entre trabajar, cuidar de los hijos pequeños y la casa sin tener ayuda familiar.

Ahora Francia es la directora de membresía de la organización nacional sin ánimo de lucro, The National Association for Family Child Care (Asociación Nacional para el Cuidado Infantil Familiar).

Esta asociación tiene como fin promover el cuidado infantil familiar en programas de aprendizaje temprano remunerados, fortaleciendo y acreditando la profesión de cuidador infantil. NAFCC aboga por la inclusión de la educación infantil en los planes de grandes y pequeñas empresas, en la educación K-12, por la igualdad salarial para los trabajadores independientemente del ámbito laboral, el acceso a recursos integrales, incluyendo la salud mental, y estándares y marcadores de calidad diseñados por ellos mismos.

Francia me dice que una vez en una graduación, el orador dijo me gustaría decirles que persigan sus sueños, que dejen todo por ello, pero no puedo porque no sería real, así que piensen en un plan B. Añade que muchas de las mujeres trabajadoras estamos llevando a cabo ese plan B.

Quiso ser profesora, pero también empezó a darse cuenta de que la educación temprana tiene mucha importancia. Trabaja para el programa nacional, la oficina está en Washington y recibe fondos diversificados, algunos estatales, pero en su mayoría privados.

Algunos estados son conscientes de la importancia de una educación temprana de calidad y la relación que tiene con la fuerza de los trabajadores, así que apoyan esta organización. Los sindicatos también tienen una parte activa en la creación de recursos para apoyar la educación temprana.

La idea de Francia es apoyar a la mujer en el sector educativo, y aunque le siguen gustando las ciencias necesita estar en contacto con la gente y con la comunidad. En su trabajo es importante saber que la mayoría de las mujeres que tienen negocio de cuidado de niños son mujeres de color, especialmente latinas. Las familias buscan una escuela con un ambiente familiar. Es un ambiente de educación, donde se les enseña lo mismo que en una escuela.

Francia añade que no es fácil encontrar una guardería en un lugar rural y es complicado conseguir recursos para ello. A veces el costo de la guardería es tan alto para los padres,

que no merece la pena ir a trabajar para pagar los costos tan caros.

Francia me cuenta que Massachusetts está intentando que negocios, empresas, y cámaras de comercio ayuden a los padres para que puedan dejar a sus hijos pequeños durante las horas de trabajo. Para Francia ese es un modelo ideal, en el que el cuidado de los niños esté integrado en un plan general, ya que al final esto tiene que tener relación con la economía.

Hablamos también de las personas que deciden abrir una de estas escuelas. Francia tiene mucha admiración por las personas que tienen una guardería, cosa que no es fácil ya que se deben pasar muchos trámites, inspecciones, higiene. Las personas tienen que saber de negocios, pero no se les trata como abogados o enfermeros. Para ella es muy injusto que estas personas no tengan el mismo tipo de contrato de trabajo y compensaciones que los maestros de K-12.

Su organización está haciendo talleres, para hacer mentores, el estado subvenciona el cuidado pero las subvenciones son ridículas.

Franklin County

Francia me dice que la población de latinos en Turners ha cambiado mucho desde que llegó. Me cuenta que hace años había una tienda de productos latinos, cuya dueña era una puertorriqueña que vendía arepas, platanitos, y otros productos en el centro de Turners.

En los grupos de familia con los que ella colaboraba, había muchas familias latinas, aunque el censo decía que eran solamente menos del 2%. Más tarde, el censo reveló que el porcentaje era mucho más alto.

Francia organizó con una amiga un grupo de juegos para los padres latinos al que llamaron Coqui. Francia y otros líderes comunitarios se dieron cuenta de que la población latina estaba creciendo. Empezó a ver como apoyar a los niños que estaban creciendo en el distrito escolar de Gill-Montague. En esos años se creó un departamento de español, y un departamento de inglés de segunda lengua, así como una posición específica para ayudar a la comunidad latina en la escuela.

Le encanta Franklin County, y Massachusetts en general. A Francia le gusta mucho correr y participa en muchas de las actividades deportivas que se organizan en el área. Aun así me dice que echa de menos la comida colombiana, las empanaditas, las arepas colombianas, los sancochos, y por supuesto, la familia, y los amigos que se han ido yendo a otros países.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



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THURSDAY, MARCH 28

Bombyx Center, Florence: *Takuya Kuroda*. \$ 7 p.m.

Holyoke Media, Holyoke: *Connect Four, idm theftable, Transcendent Winds*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

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

FRIDAY, MARCH 29

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Two Step Night*. No cover. 7 p.m.

Tori Town, Holyoke: *Sgraffito Kill, Minus Points, Rangus, Radical Joy*. \$ 7 p.m.

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

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Tony Vacca and Fusion Nomads*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

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

LaPop, Northampton: *Owen Manure, Sapien Joyride, Film & Gender, Gut Health*. \$ 8 p.m.

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

Garcia's Mexican Restaurant, Amherst: *DJ Lucas, Papo2004, Subjxt 5, 22BB*. \$ 9 p.m.

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

SATURDAY, MARCH 30

Buoyant Heart, Brattleboro: *Ah-kuba, Sneff, Boring Man, Slow Pony*, open mic. \$ 6 p.m.

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

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

10 Forward, Greenfield: *DJ Mollgoth, Clockserum Dutch Experts, Spriggan*. \$ 8 p.m.

The Drake, Amherst: *Bella's Bartok*. \$ 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Der-ek Bridges*. No cover. 9:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, MARCH 31

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

THURSDAY, APRIL 4

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

FRIDAY, APRIL 5

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

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Get*

Out Of My House, Petricore, Victoria Delhi. \$ 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 6

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

Pioneer Brewery, Turners Falls: *Rock 201*. No cover. 7 p.m.

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

CitySpace, Easthampton: *Qwanqwa, Habbina Habbina*. \$ 7 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Richard Lloyd, Wojcicki*. \$ 7 p.m.

Buoyant Heart, Brattleboro: *Blue Dish, beetsblog, Old Maybe, Membra*. \$ 7 p.m.

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

Parlor Room, Northampton: *Cloudbelly*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *Josephine Foster, Stella Kola, Ceremonial Abyss*. \$ 8 p.m.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Blvir, Cinnabun & Eris Electra, DJ Whatzitoya, Ensatina*. \$ 9:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, APRIL 7

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. \$

Afternoon showing, 2 p.m.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *The Obsessed, Howling Giant, Gozu*. \$ 6 p.m.

Parlor Room, Northampton: *Cloudbelly*. \$ 7:30 p.m.

MONDAY, APRIL 8

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: Eclipse celebration with *Thistle*. \$ 2 p.m.

TUESDAY, APRIL 9

Bombyx Center, Florence: *Sona Jobarteh*. \$ 7 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Falltown String Band*. No cover. 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, APRIL 12

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *The Whiskey Treaty Roadshow* with special guest *Peter Prince*. \$ 8 p.m.

10 Forward, Greenfield: *Rocking Puppies, Boring Man, Sam Mulligan, Spookaround, Wire Pile*. \$ 8 p.m.

Academy of Music, Northampton: *Pat Metheny*. \$ 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 13

Palladium, Worcester: *Bone Thugs-N-Harmony, DJ Craze, Lil Eazy E, Danny Pease & The Regulators, Leon Trout*, more. \$ 4 p.m.

looking forward...

FRIDAY, APRIL 19

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Back In Black, AC/DC* tribute. \$ 8 p.m.

FRIDAY, MAY 10

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

FRIDAY, MAY 24

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Home Body, Woolly Mar*. \$ 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, JUNE 1

Three County Fairgrounds, Northampton: *Sheer Mag, Indigo de Souza, Dehd, Thus Love, Sun Parade, Lucy*, more. \$ 12 p.m. Second day of Field Day festival. See field-day.rocks for more info.

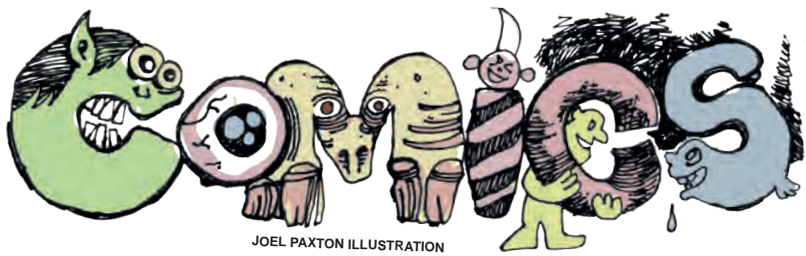
Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *Negativland, SUE-C, Valley Solar*. \$ 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, JUNE 8

Hawks & Reed, Greenfield: *Greenfield Records 15th Anniversary* feat. *Stella Kola, Rufus Cesspool, Big Destiny, Noise Nomads, Creative Writing, DJs Dutch, Storok*, more TBA. \$ 1 p.m.

FRIDAY, JUNE 14

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Bettye LaVette*. \$ 7 p.m.



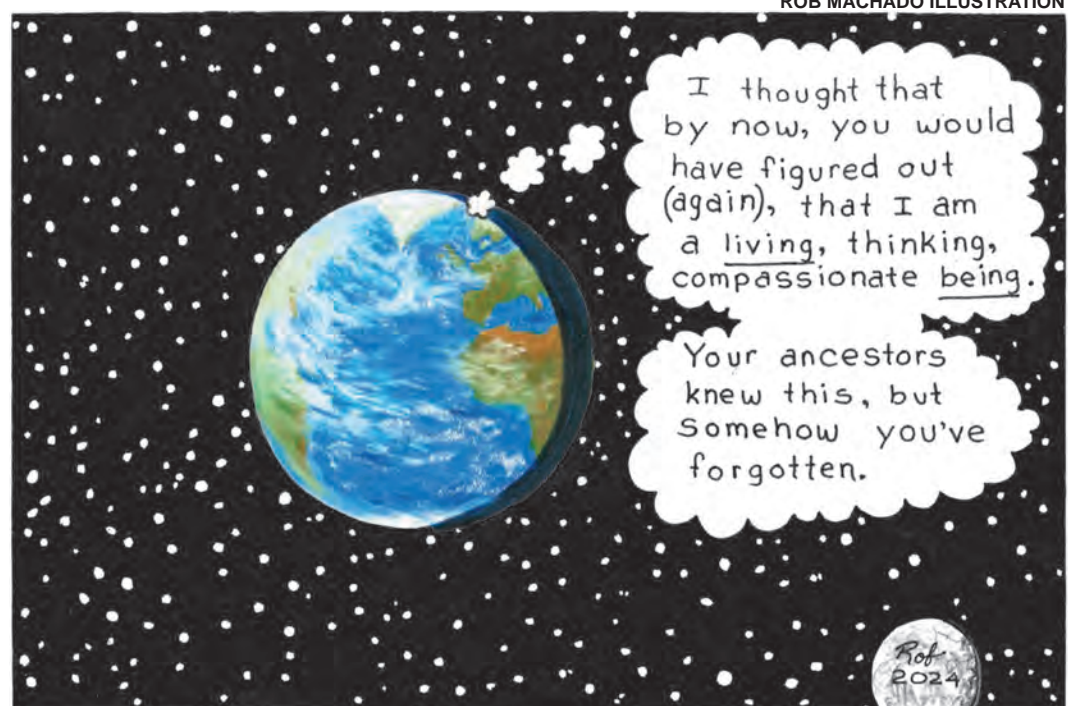
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TRAVELS from page B1

secured in the hold – each ferry holds 65 cars and 300 people – it was a perfect opportunity to catch up on email using the ship’s WiFi, and enjoy chowder and grilled cheese from the ferry galley.

We disembarked in the small village at North Head and headed north. We had learned that there was a great hike waiting for us at the Swallowtail lighthouse. Indeed, that was an understatement!

While we scrambled on the rocks toward the lighthouse in a stiff wind, all around us was the undulating Bay of Fundy. Another ferry approached in the distance, and we looked down from the high cliffs on a herring weir, circular traps set up to catch the small fish.

The white lighthouse with red trim had been painted recently by island volunteers, who are proud of this light and their untouched pristine island. So they all chip in and help keep the light looking sharp.

Island Lodging

Our accommodations on Grand Manan had a literary theme. The Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Willa Cather spent many summers here at the same lodge, the Inn at Whale Cove, beginning in 1922, with her special friend.

Cather’s home here had neither indoor plumbing nor electricity, but today the Inn has both, plus high-speed internet and a cozy restaurant too. You can even stay in Willa Cather’s former cabin at the Inn at Whale’s Cove today; it has two bedrooms, two fireplaces, and its own kitchen. The ocean views are remarkable from the Adirondack chairs on the lawn.

Cather loved the remoteness of Grand Manan, where she could live her life with Edith Lewis as she wanted to; no prejudice or discrimination was found here. It was clear that this far out from the mainland, prejudice was left on the shore, and people here are free to



The famous Swallowtail Lighthouse on Grand Manan Island, New Brunswick.



HARTSHORNE PHOTOS

Willa Cather stayed in this cabin on Grand Manan.

be who they are.

Many others, from John James Audubon to Winslow Homer, have also fallen in love with this island during their lifetimes.

With entrees like halibut Nicoise and crab cakes with chile-lime aioli, the small dining room at the Inn at Whale Cove feels like having dinner with friends.

Just outside, the colorful Adirondack chairs face the sea, and are a great place for a before-dinner drink or morning coffee.

What is it about Grand Manan? When you bring this name up in New Brunswick you get a quiet smile. This place is well-known, and well-beloved to the folks who live up here.

Part of its charm is its remoteness. That long ferry ride shuts the door on day-trippers, so most of the people here are locals. The people you see are fishermen and workers, there are no hordes of tourists.

It seems that nothing in Grand Manan is crowded with tourists, despite the proximity to the ocean. Imagine this on Cape Cod... it would be mobbed!

Grand Manan feels authentic. It’s a true fisherman’s island, and today 90% of the people there work in fishing. You see that when you drive the only main road, Route 776, that winds its way up and down the eastern coast.

After Seal Cove the road just ends at the cliffs. There is no way to get to a large part of the island. It remains wild and people-free.

Lobster Profits Soar

Kevin Sampson, the owner of the Compass Rose Inn, runs a kayaking tour business on the island, and he said that today Grand Manan is one

of the richest islands in Canada. The lobster business has proven to be a sustainable and well-run one, and the profits are a big part of what keeps the island going.

Sampson said that this year, though, there were far fewer lobsters. Still, they send planes full of them to China from the island.

Today 52% of the houses here are owned by off-islander Canadians and many Americans.

Later we visited a fish market up island where the owner said fishermen still get lobsters, but they have to go much further out, to the “gray zone,” where they can fish year round.

Man Overboard!

One activity not to be missed is an afternoon-long kayak trip from the beach near the ferry terminal around the North Head and past the famous “Hole in the Wall,” just past the Swallowtail Lighthouse.

As we paddled out of the harbor, we learned about the many herring weirs that are set up along the coast. The herring harvest is important, as well as two different types of seaweed. Grand Manan is the dulce capital of the world, and ships a lot of nori seaweed to Japan.

You can also hike a trail just past the Swallowtail light that has a camping area. A steep and narrow trail through the woods takes you to the point just above the Hole in the Wall, pictured at right. Highly recommended at sunset!

The circular traps called weirs attract herring to enter and are still used to catch sardines, which are young herring, and larger fish. The area also has many salmon farms on some outlying islands.

As we paddled our kayaks near

the Hole in the Wall, one member of our group turned around quickly to look at some seals and capsized. With the chilly water in the Bay of Fundy averaging about 56 degrees Fahrenheit, it was a chilly dip.

Thankfully, he quickly got himself back in the boat with help from our guides and didn’t suffer any hypothermia, which would have resulted from a long time in the frigid water.

Driving Down the Coast

On the morning of our departure, we decided we needed to see more of the island, so we changed to a later ferry and set off down Route 776, the main road, toward Seal Cove.

This part of the island is a national historic site of Canada and still looks just like it did during the island’s herring heyday when millions of boxes of the smoked fish were sent all over the world by local fishermen.

Along the way we found a pretty arc of a beach, where a couple of moms and a gaggle of kids enjoyed the cold water and ran along the beach.

The old fish-smoking barns you can explore here at Seal Cove bring you back hundreds of years.

Grand Manan is a remarkable place, mostly because it’s so hard to find somewhere that remains untouched by commercialism and tourist hordes. With its remote location and ferry-only access, it’s likely to stay that way for many years to come.

But go see it yourself, just in case.

Max Hartshorne, local travel editor, writes about traveling around our region and a little beyond. Max is the editor of GoNOMAD Travel and hosts the short-form GoNOMAD Travel Podcast, which you can hear at anchor.fm/max-hartshorne.



The Hole in the Wall.

WEBSITES

Tourism New Brunswick
tourismnewbrunswick.ca

Grand Manan Island
www.grandmanannb.com

The Compass Rose Inn,
which offers kayaking tours:
www.adventurehigh.com

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