

The Montague Reporter

Year 23 – No. 14

MARCH 6, 2025

\$2

editor@montaguereporter.org

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

montaguereporter.org

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Ed Costs Top Concern

By JEFF SINGLETON

State senator Jo Comerford and representative Natalie Blais told Montague officials this week that they hope to “crack open,” in Comerford’s words, the formula the state uses to calculate local Chapter 70 education aid. Their effort comes at a time when well over half the school districts in the state have been assigned a so-called “hold harmless” status under the formula, due to receive only minimum increases in aid next fiscal year.

This was part of a longer discussion of policy issues at the March 3 Montague selectboard meeting, which also saw finishing touches put on hiring committees for two vacant town positions and ended in several non-public executive sessions.



Montague's representatives on Beacon Hill stop by each year during budget season to discuss the town's concerns.

The annual check-in with Comerford and Blais, which occurs during the state and local budget season, ranged widely this year, based on an agenda created by town administrator Walter Ramsey. Ostensibly devoted to the town’s “legislative priorities,” topics varied from regionalization of ambulance services

see MONTAGUE page A7

High School Sports Week: State Belt for Tech Wrestler



Franklin County Tech wrestler Mia Marigliano (left), seen here in a meet in January, is the wrestling state champion in the 132-lb. weight class following the MIAA Girls' All-State Wrestling Championship last weekend at Methuen High School.

By MATT ROBINSON

TURNERS FALLS – The Franklin County Tech wrestling team won the 2025 Suburban North League championship for the first time in the school’s history. But for one grappler, the highly successful season continues.

Last weekend, Mia Marigliano entered the Massachusetts All-State Wrestling Championship seeded seventh in the 132-weight class. I suspect that she was ranked so low because there were no school size divisions. All the ladies were placed in brackets no mat-

ter how large or how small their school was. So it was only logical that city schools would defeat smaller schools.

Marigliano’s first match, held on February 28, was against second-seeded Melanie Miles of Putnam. Marigliano was behind in the match, but pulled off a pin fall at 3:02 to advance to the second round.

On Saturday, March 1, she faced sixth-ranked Rileigh Fagan of Bristol-Plymouth, and attained another “upset.” Leading 2 to 0, she achieved another pin fall in 4:47. Later that day she completed the hat

see SPORTS page A8

Soap Star Revisits Church With New One-Man Show



Our Lady of Peace Church.

By BELLA LEVAVI

TURNERS FALLS – Our Lady of Peace, located at 90 Seventh Street, will host actor Frank Runyeon for his one-man show, “Hollywood vs. Faith,” this Saturday, March 8 at 7 p.m.

“I hope everyone will come,” Rev. Stan Aksamit, pastor of the Catholic church, said in an interview about the event. “It is a huge undertaking to have someone internationally known and respected with a powerful message. He will make

see CHURCH page A5

Former Sheriff Suspended From New Job On Cape Cod

By MIKE JACKSON

EAST FALMOUTH – The top administrators of a new police academy on Cape Cod have been suspended, according to coverage by the Cape Cod Times, The Boston Globe, MassLive, and other outlets, amid an investigation this week into “alleged incidents of misconduct by academy staff and instructors.” The suspended administrators are academy coordinator Edward Dunne and academy director Christopher Donelan, who retired in January after 14 years as Franklin County sheriff.

see SHERIFF page A6

ERVING SELECTBOARD

Church Street Bridge Project Can Hopefully Move Forward

By KEITH WATERS

The Erving selectboard met on Monday, March 3 for a short meeting that included some good news.

The board had thought they needed to schedule a special town meeting (STM) for this month, mainly to reauthorize the takings of temporary easements related to the replacement of the Church Street bridge. Six of the nine articles in a draft STM warrant related to these easements.

All six easements had already been authorized at a previous special town meeting last August, but the project’s design phase took longer than expected, and town counsel had advised the project should not go out for procurement more than 120 days after the easements were approved.

However, on Monday Bryan Smith reported that he had spoken with the state Department of Transportation (MassDOT), and had been promised that the procurement would still be certified, “as long as everything else is taken care of.”

“The immediacy to need a special town meeting no longer exists,” he told the board.

“Do you have that in writing from MassDOT, that you’re good to go?” selectboard member Jim Loynd asked him.

“I have a witness,” Bryan Smith replied.

Selectboard chair Jacob Smith added that the town had received “a couple confirmations” that the 120-day limit did not apply to the situation. The board agreed to skip the STM.

The town will still hold its annual town meeting, as required, in the spring, and this year it is scheduled for May 14. On Monday the board gave the meeting warrant an official first read. It stood at 18 articles,

see ERVING page A8

SCENE REPORT

New Scrabble Club a Fun Distraction for Local Players



Mike Fleck plays a word at Drop-In Scrabble Night at Greenfield Public Library.

By BEN GAGNON

GREENFIELD – “All levels are welcome,” said Mike Fleck, who founded the first Scrabble club in Franklin County about a year ago. “It’s just as much about socializing as it is about learning.”

The group meets at Greenfield Public Library from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. the first and third Tuesday of each month.

Three of the five players this week were experts who play in tournaments, but the great equalizer in Scrabble is the randomness of drawing letters from the bag. Retired schoolteacher Susan Peckitt doesn’t go to tournaments and doesn’t consider herself an expert player.

“I don’t play competitively, because I always prefer to play a fun word rather than a strategic one,” she said. “When I play with my kids, I let them make up words if they can come up with a definition that sounds reasonable.” Like most Scrabble enthusiasts, Peckitt started playing as a child.

“Scrabble is how my mom taught me to read,” recalls Fleck, who has traveled as far as Niagara Falls to play in multi-day tournaments. More often he plays in one-day tournaments in nearby Florence, at a Scrabble club that has been active for 17 years.

Mark Phillips is another expert who learned how to spell playing Scrabble with his parents, and has

see SCRABBLE page A5

TRAVEL

Regional Bus Options Grow; Free Fares Continue Locally

By MAX HARTSHORNE

SOUTH DEERFIELD – Today we are giving attention to a form of transport that some people never even think of. However, for many residents, bus travel and commuting on public transportation are import-

ant parts of their daily lives. In 2025, much news indicates a resurgence in bus travel, with more routes, better buses, and increased ridership.

One of the dominating topics in the transit world in New England is the benefit of getting rid of fares.

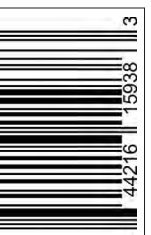
see TRAVEL page A6



The Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA) has expanded on-demand services.

Let Us Talk Our Talk

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August 2002

Incoming

The Associated Press reported Wednesday that it had obtained a memo outlining a plan to fire over 80,000 staff at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Asked to comment on the plan, a White House spokesperson said the president "refuses to accept the VA bureaucracy and bloat that has hindered veterans' ability to receive timely and quality care."

According to the AP, the VA provided veterans 127.5 million appointments in 2024, the highest volume of services ever. Trump fired the department's inspector general, the independent manager already tasked with making it operate more efficiently, in January.

A month and a half in, the federal government dismantling looks dramatic and arbitrary, and it's hard to imagine it ever being reversed.

Locally, we know that one of the largest federal workplaces, a US Fish & Wildlife office in Hadley that employs about 200 workers, is slated for closure this summer – and we only know because it was on a list of Department of Interior

lease terminations leaked by a whistleblower.

"They're just cutting positions, space and programming without even understanding what the purpose is," US representative Jim McGovern told the *Hampshire Daily Gazette*.

There are a number of logics at play in the current institutional blitzkrieg – and one of them is deliberate illogic. It's intentional.

Living in Massachusetts, we may feel more relatively insulated from the immediate austerity measures, but our state depends in constant ways on the federal government, and it is only a matter of time before some of these deferred impacts connect.

After all, we have already been experiencing a severe housing crisis – a function of growing demand unmet by stagnant supply – and to the extent that Massachusetts looks like a good place to move, we should expect that factor to worsen. *Anecdotally*, these pilgrims are already starting to arrive, just as they did during the first two years

of the COVID-19 pandemic.

If the purges continue as looks likely, it is not difficult to imagine that some of these many deposed federal workers – an opposition civil service in exile, to be romantic about it – will get the urge to head for the hills, ride out the chaos in an backwater zone that has touted its pastoral insulation as a real estate brand for nearly 90 years.

How will it play out? Will WestMass have the will – and the pocketbook – to welcome this other sort of refugee? It might get weird. We might want to get ready.



Gretchen Wetherby prepares to work on a client in her Millers Falls massage studio. Wetherby has practiced massage for 23 years, and offers myofascial release, lymphatic draining, post-cancer treatment, and the Rossiter technique. She enjoys problem-solving complex issues such as chronic pain.

Letters to the Editors

Apparent SF Author Refutes Attribution

What a thrill to see my debut novel, *TimeLiners*, reviewed way up there in Montague, MA! Although my cats and I are hunkered down here in Brooklyn, friends up there sent me Richard Andersen's glowing review from your February 27 issue. Wow! "Action packed!" "Thought provoking!" Who needs faux reviews when you have real ones?

But above all, *TimeLiners* was written to be fun, fun, fun, and Andersen really "got it." My only concern is Andersen's suggestion that some "local author," some (ahem!) "Bruce Watson" character, an "accomplished intellectual"

no less, might have something to do with *my* novel. Bruce Watson? Who he? Sounds like an assumed name to me.

To put such speculation to rest, I hereby swear on the body of H.G. Wells and other deceased celebrities who loved my novel, that I wrote every word of it, even the faux reviews on the back cover.

Emily Blaisdell
Brooklyn, NY

P.S. The novel's "time flaneur," who drifts through time and culture, is named Guy McGee, not Guy McVee. Don't sweat it.

Center Resident De-sullies Reputation

Your February 27 review of some novel called *TimeLiners* suggested me as the possible author. Though I was sent a copy and have managed to make it through the first few chapters – and they do have their moments – I write to squash such speculation.

Why would I sully my reputation as what reviewer Richard Andersen called "an accomplished intellectual," by writing a (holding my nose)

time travel novel? If I ever stooped so low, I hope I would admit it.

Still, in these days of faux reviews and fake news, you can't trust anyone with the Truth, not even yourself. At any rate, although novelist Emily Blaisdell does know her recent history, and some physics, she ain't me, babe.

Bruce Watson
Montague Center

RERUN

Protect Sunshine

"At last week's meeting of the Masonic club," reads the March 10, 1920 *Turners Falls Reporter*, "there was a lively debate and discussion on daylight saving. Walter H. Ray, Jr. was the main speaker in favor of the measure and Dr. A.J. Nims argued against it. After the smoke had cleared away it was found that the club members were evenly divided in their sentiments in the matter."

The US Senate's passage Tuesday, by unanimous consent, of a bill that would abolish Daylight Saving time – or rather, make it permanent, sticking us in summer-mode after one more winter – took everyone by surprise. After all, the institution seems uncannily designed to elicit discomfort, gripping and debate while remaining just out of reach of democratic control.

But it's not that old or entrenched. Many of us learned in school that the policy was designed to help farmers, but this was another Lie Our Teachers Told Us. It was introduced during the first World War, for just two years, as a fuel-conserving measure; it was voted out in August 1919 and Massachusetts was one of the only states to keep it on (hence the Masons'

debate the next spring).

DST went federal again during the next World War in the Forties, and this time it stuck in more states – but again, not federally. America's official Daylight Saving policy was passed in 1966 and was observed for the first time beginning the last Sunday of April, 1967, which means it is younger than *The Velvet Underground & Nico*.

An experiment in 1974 and '75 tried turning it on for longer; it was thrown out along with Nixon, but then DST was gradually extended from six to seven to nearly eight months.

In modern times the struggle over daylight saving has become, at its heart, a struggle between afternoon people (who dislike the early sunsets when DST is switched off) and morning people (who have the gall to complain of late sunrises when it's on).

The *Reporter* will be watching H.R. 69, the House's version of the Sunshine Protection Act, with keen eyes. We call on Illinois Rep. Jan Schakowsky to see that this important legislation moves forward from the Energy Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce,

which she chairs, and we warn any member of Congress who votes against it on behalf of the morning people that they will be facing a primary challenge.

This editorial first appeared in the Montague Reporter on March 17, 2022.

Later that day, BuzzFeed News reported that senators who "vehemently" opposed the bill, including Tom Cotton of Arkansas, had accidentally allowed the bill to pass their chamber by consent. The bill died in the House that year, and Schakowsky did not face a primary challenge in 2022 or 2024.

The bill was re-introduced in 2023, died, and was re-introduced again in January. There are certainly more consequential happenings in the federal government at this moment, but we hope the House Committee on Energy and Commerce and Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation will recognize that this chaotic session may be the best chance we have to put the morning people in their place once and for all.

And to our readers – don't forget to "spring ahead" Saturday night!

Published weekly on Thursdays.

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

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LOCAL BRIEFS

Compiled by NINA ROSSI

Although the risk to the general population from **avian flu** remains low, it's a significant threat to food systems and economies. The flu has infected cows, and dairy cattle have now passed it on to humans – 40 cases have been reported among people who work with dairy herds. Learn more about the flu, and how and where to report dead wild birds or domestic fowl, on the Franklin Regional Council of Governments website: frcog.org/bird-flu.

A new **Girl Scout troop** is forming in Turners Falls. Girl Scout Troop 65541 is welcoming new members in grades K and 1. Organizers write that they aim to provide young girls with opportunities to explore leadership, financial literacy, life skills, STEM, the outdoors, and community service.

Troop 65541 will meet twice a month on Thursdays from 4 to 5 p.m. Membership is \$35 annually, with financial assistance available to ensure all girls have the chance to participate. Girls who would like to join should register their interest at go.gscwm.org/troop65541.

For additional membership information, contact info@gscwm.org or call (413) 584-2602.

Big Foot Food Forest, a permaculture farm on Hatchery Road in Montague, is looking for Montague households to participate in their **free food scrap pickup**. They've got a flock of chickens who love all kinds of scraps, and it helps the farm make high-quality compost after they've scratched their way through it.

The farm will give each household a lidded plastic bucket, and pick it up and leave a fresh bucket every Monday. You can put anything in that is food, even if it is cooked or spoiled. Unlike the municipal composting, you may not include paper.

Readers interested in joining the food scrap relay may text (781) 428-1670 or email bigfootfoodforest@gmail.com. Learn more about their many permaculture projects at bigfootfoodforest.com.

This weekend you can **sink your teeth into local history** at the Discovery Center in Turners Falls. Documentaries are being shown back-to-back this Saturday, March 8 from 2 to 3:30 p.m.

The first, on the Millers Falls Tools Company, includes footage from the factory in 1943 and with recent narration, followed by *The Mill at Montague*, an oral history from 1991 about the Martin Machine Company which once occupied what is now the Bookmill. Ed Gregory and Chris Clawson of the Montague Historical Society and Dawn Ward will field questions afterwards.

On Sunday, March 9, head back to the Center for *Quabbin Obscura: The Swift River in Black & White* at 2 p.m. DCR staff will explore artist Burt V. Brooks' (1849-1934) photographs and paintings of life in the "drowned towns" before the building of the Quabbin Reservoir.

Both programs are recommended for ages 12 and up and are held in the Great Hall.

On Monday, March 10 at 6:30 p.m., Dr. Susan Smith Pagano of

the Rochester Institute of Technology will make a presentation at the Second Congregational Church in Greenfield titled "**Berries for Birds: A Nutritional Perspective.**" Are all berries equal? Dr. Pagano will discuss her research on native versus non-native shrubs, research that indicates native berries are a higher-quality, calorific food, especially for migrating birds. For more information, visit GreeningGreenfieldMA.org.

Green Burial Massachusetts will present next Thursday, March 13 at 4 p.m. at the Leverett Library on what green burial is, how it works, and where it can be done.

If you can't be there in person (*ed. note: at the library*), you may attend

on Zoom; email leverettlibrary@gmail.com to receive the link.

Hike at Northfield Mountain on Thursday, March 13 between 1 and 3 p.m. Depending on trail conditions, you may need snowshoes or microspikes, but any equipment rentals you may need are free for this event. Pre-registration is required at bookey.com/northfield.

If you've been considering **replacing a gas stove with an induction stove**, Cole Payne from Rise Engineering will give a talk on the subject at noon next Sunday, March 16 at the Episcopal Church of Saints James and Andrew in Greenfield. MassSave is offering a \$500 rebate to anyone making the switch.

The event, which is organized by the church's Green Team, is free and open to the public. Enter the Chapel through the archway door at 8 Church Street and follow the signs. You may bring a lunch or snack.

The Neighborhood Forest organization will give a **free tree to children**, through the Montague Center Library, to plant in their neighborhoods. The tree will be a variety native to the area.

Go to neighborhoodforest.org and search for the Montague Center Library in their list of organizations to register your child, aged 17 and under, for a tree.

Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

FACES & PLACES



JOSH HEINEMANN PHOTO

A departure soirée was held at the Wendell town offices Friday afternoon for Glenn Johnson-Mussad (above), following his last day as town coordinator. Johnson-Mussad has accepted a job as town planner in Erving. Chris Wings is now serving as temporary coordinator in Wendell, and can be reached at coordinator@wendellmass.us or (978) 544-3395.

OP ED

Montague Town Volunteer Opportunities: Part I

By LEIGH RAE and JUDITH LOREI

MONTAGUE – Every strong municipality relies on the dedication of citizen volunteers, and Montague is no exception. There are dozens of boards, committees, commissions and volunteer opportunities that contribute to the functioning of our town and the quality of our community. Positions are either elected or appointed. Whatever you feel strongly about, there is sure to be an opportunity to pursue your interests while at the same time serving our town.

This year, elections take place on Tuesday, May 20 for vacant board, committee, and commission seats, or where a seat's term is expiring. These elected positions include: selectboard, board of assessors, board of health, parks and recreation commission, library trustees, Montague Housing Authority, soldiers' memorial committee, and the Gill-Montague regional school committee.

For more information on each of these entities, go to the town website at www.montague-ma.gov and pick "Boards & Committees" from the Your Government menu.

Anyone interested in a town-wide position needs to secure signatures from 48 registered Montague voters in order to be included on the May 20 ballot. Nomination papers are available now from the town clerk and need

to be returned by 5 p.m. on Tuesday, April 1. For more information, go to the town website and pick "Town Elections" from the Your Government menu.

There are also opportunities to become a town meeting member, especially in Precincts 3, 4, 5, and 6. Town meeting is the legislative body of our town, and serves an essential function to ensure that the voices of town residents are represented.

To be included on the May 20 ballot for town meeting, a person seeking nomination needs to secure signatures from 10 registered Montague voters within their own precinct. Nomination papers are available now from the town clerk and need to be returned by 5 p.m. on April 1. For more information, go to the town website, pick "Town Elections" from the Your Government menu, and find a link to the town-wide precinct map.

To learn more about these positions, you can contact the following people:

The **selectboard** is the policy-making arm of the town's government and is responsible for developing programs, projects, and procedures to implement these policies, including those in the areas of public works, public safety, economic development, financial management, and personnel management. Selectboard members serve three-year terms. Contact Wendy Bogusz, executive assistant,

at selectscity@montague-ma.gov.

The **board of assessors** is responsible for the administration of property values and the distribution of property tax levies. Board members serve three-year terms. Contact Anne Cenzano, chair, at assessor@montague-ma.gov.

The **board of health** is responsible for protecting the health and promoting health improvements for Montague residents. Board members serve three-year terms. Contact public health director Ryan Paxton at health-dir@montague-ma.gov.

The **parks and recreation commission** is the governing and policy-making arm of the parks and recreation department, which is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life and the sense of community for residents through delivering safe, healthy, diverse, accessible leisure-time experiences, in addition to preserving and improving its parks and resources. Commissioners serve three-year terms. Contact parks and rec director Jon Dobosz at recdir@montague-ma.gov.

The **public library trustees** oversee and support library operations for our three libraries. Trustees serve three-year terms. Contact libraries director Caitlin Kelley at library-director@montague-ma.gov.

The **Montague Housing Authority** is responsible for administering public housing

programs to meet the needs of low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled. Commissioners serve five-year terms. Contact executive director Bellamine Dickerman at montagueha@verizon.net.

The **soldiers' memorial committee** is responsible for maintaining memorials commemorating the services of Montague's soldiers. Members serve three-year terms, and a seat is opening up this year for a veteran. Contact member Chris Boutwell at chrisb@montague-ma.gov.

The **Gill-Montague regional school committee** advocates for Montague's public-school students and public education in Montague. Six of its nine seats are reserved for Montague residents. Two three-year seats and a one-year seat are available. Contact superintendent of schools Brian Beck at brian.beck@gmr.sd.org.

For information regarding nominations for **town meeting** membership, you can reach out to interim town clerk Tina Sulda at tinaas-stownclerk@montague-ma.gov.

Look for the next issue of the *Montague Reporter* to learn about the town's appointed seats for boards, committees, and commissions!

Leigh Rae serves on the Montague finance committee, and Judith Lorei on the cemetery commission. Both are town meeting members, and live in Montague Center.

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OP/ED

The Price Is... More and More and More

By GEORGE SHAPIRO

LAKE PLEASANT – One fact about the world we live in is that the greatest advance in renewable energy, wind and solar-generated electricity, is being made in China right now. This is unsurprising if you know that China is the world center for the manufacture of both the components for building solar panels and the panels themselves.

The rise of Chinese manufacturing of solar panels, and crucial components such as polysilicon, is largely responsible for the decrease in price for those panels that many herald as a sign that a "transition" from fossil fuels to renewable energy is underway. If this transition were to occur, it would be based on renewable energy being more competitive in the marketplace than other means of power, just as there was a transition from wood to coal, coal to oil.

Yet, while becoming the world leader in renewable energy, China has also become the world's largest consumer of coal. Does this contradict the idea that we are on the cusp of an energy transition?

French historian of science Jean-Baptiste Fressoz has written a new book, *More and More and More*, which first asks and then answers whether there has ever been an energy transition in history at all. Answer: No! In fact, the world burns vastly more wood for energy now than it did before the exploitation of coal. More than that, the mining of coal required heroic quantities of wood, well into the 20th century, to build the supports that kept mines from collapsing.

The building of railways used – and uses – vast quantities of wood sleepers, and the "transition" to oil led to diesel trucks, chainsaws, and logging roads, which intensified the exploitation of wood.

The "barrel of oil" was originally a literal wooden barrel of oil, and in 1920 the largest producer of wooden barrels was... Standard Oil.

Leaving wood aside, global coal consumption tripled between 1980 and 2010. "Peak coal" in the US didn't arrive until 2008. What you

see illustrated in Fressoz's book is not successive energy transitions but the accumulation of more and more and more energy, as new forms intensify production in general. It is true that the relative amount of energy extracted from wood is less than from oil, but the *total* amount of energy from all sources used has increased since the 19th century, and so has the absolute amount of wood consumed. *More and more and more.*

If you are concerned about the coming changes in our planet's climate, it is the absolute amount of fossil fuel used that is important.

Fressoz distinguishes between the "easy" problem of greening the electrical grid and the more complicated one of disentangling this "symbiosis" between essential raw materials and fossil fuels. To pick an example, polysilicon, the basic ingredient for the semiconductors that solar panels and computer chips are made from, starts out as raw silica mixed with "coke," a derivative of coal that is also essential to steel production, and burned in titanic promethan furnaces.

If greening the electrical grid depends upon building enough renewable generation, a long list of the basic commodities that our world is built on – semiconductors, concrete, steel, etc. – are produced via processes that depend upon petrochemicals. Alternatives require not simply political will, but technological advances.

In the last year Brett Christophers, a Swedish professor of "economic geography," has written a book about the relationship between the price of solar panels and the greening of the electrical grid. *The Price Is Wrong* argues that even as the price of solar panels has brought down the cost of generating a watt of electrical power, this has not in fact made solar power competitive in the energy marketplace.

The "price" is the "levelized cost of energy," or LCOE. This is a metric, from the world of business metrics, that attempts to sum up the total cost of a particular method of generating electricity, from the cost

Jean-Baptiste Fressoz, *More and More and More* (Allen Lane, 2024)
Brett Christophers, *The Price Is Wrong* (Verso Books, 2024)

of machinery to fuel to financing, etc. As a number it's subject to interpretation, but the LCOE of solar and wind power – and in particular solar – is generally acknowledged to now be cheaper than coal and comparable to natural gas.

The problem for Christophers, and the thesis of his book, is that even though people desire sustainable energy and the price is right, investors are not going to build enough wind and solar power to make an energy transition happen.

Christophers, a former management consultant, spends most of his book talking with investors in the renewable energy sector, and his conclusion is that renewable energy is a risky investment with only marginal returns. On average, a renewable energy plant might generate a 5% return to investors, versus 15% for a fossil fuel plant.

The number that turns out to be most important for renewables investors is the interest rate on the loan. As interest rates have reverted to historic means in previous years, we have seen a crisis develop in the wind power industry as projects have been renegotiated or canceled.

Since the publishing of Christophers's book *British Petroleum*, which rebranded itself as "BP" or "Beyond Petroleum" as it invested in solar power, has announced it is shifting money back into oil production.

Renewable energy is a complex business, and you would be hard-pressed to find a more accessible introduction to that business than Christophers's book. However, on a basic level, renewables' disadvantage in the marketplace arises because Fressoz's "easy" problem is not so easy. The electrical grid is not simply a transportation network for a commodity, electricity, but a giant and complicated machine that requires different modes of electrical energy to function.

It's not simply a matter of producing more and more and more

electricity. The grid depends upon, and thus rewards, being able to deliver a fixed amount of electrical power, at a single location and at a time of our choosing. This is a combination of needs that only fossil fuels currently satisfy in full.

This is the problem the New Leaf Energy battery plant proposal was aimed at, albeit in a manner limited by scale, existing transmission lines, solar panels, local support, changes in state law, and, in the end, business reality.

Much as fossil fuels are in symbiosis with the basic materials of the modern world, they are also built into the way the grid functions, and therefore into the economy at large. (This is the thesis of Andreas Malm's book *Fossil Capital*, which both Fressoz and Christophers cite but then dismiss.)

Taken together, *More and More and More* and *The Price Is Wrong* present an accessible and fairly comprehensive argument that a transition away from fossil fuels is simply not happening, and that this is not a result of politics. A transition would require changing the fundamental logic of how our world works, from our politics all the way down to our fundamental technologies.

This stark conclusion deserves every consideration. The political logic of "transition" has been: *everything must change, while nothing must change*. The world envisioned after a green revolution feels much the same as before, only cleaner.

While Fressoz spends some time tracing the concept of "transition" as a false consciousness, threaded through the 20th century to a climactic 1977 presidential speech by Jimmy Carter, the reader is forced towards a more dramatic conclusion: if a transition from fossil fuels is historically unprecedented, it cannot happen behind the scenes by the invisible hand – but must follow from unprecedented action.

George Shapiro lives in Lake Pleasant.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Hold the Foam! Free Recycling Events for Styrofoam Blocks

FRANKLIN COUNTY – This spring, Franklin County Solid Waste Management District (FCSWMD) is collaborating with the towns of Leverett, Montague, Northfield, and Warwick to hold special recycling collections for blocky "Styrofoam™" packing material.

The collections will occur each Saturday in April – April 5, 12, 19, and 26 – from 9 a.m. to noon. These events are open only to Leverett, Montague, Northfield, and Warwick residents.

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

These collections will not accept any food-related "styrofoam" items such as cups, plates, bowls, trays, egg cartons, or take-out

containers. Other items that will not be accepted include wet or dirty materials, #4 (LDPE) foam packaging material, foam insulation board (XPS), or packing peanuts.

Each of the four towns' transfer stations will host these special collections; a transfer station permit is not required, but again, these events are only open to town residents.

The collection locations are: the Leverett Transfer Station, at 5 Cemetery Road in Leverett; the Montague Transfer Station, at 11 Sandy Lane in Turners Falls; the Northfield Transfer Station, at 31 Caldwell Road in Northfield; and the Warwick Transfer Station at Garage Road in Warwick.

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



Montague volunteer Kate O'Kane stuffs a shipping container with the correct kind of foam last April.

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CHURCH from page A1

people think and be better prepared to deal with the issues of today.”

Runyeon is a world-famous actor, starring in popular daytime television shows such as *As the World Turns* and *General Hospital* in the 1980s and '90s. He was nominated for a Daytime Emmy award in 2016 for a guest role on *The Young and the Restless*.

“Everyone is hotly debating the influence of the media today,” the church’s announcement of Runyeon’s presentation reads, “[b]ut

few people are speaking a language that captures the attention of youth and adults...”

After many years in acting, according to Aksamit, Runyeon began getting an interest in Scripture. He put together a one-man comedy show pairing current events, Christian teaching, and comedy. His show has evolved since 2005, when he first visited the Catholic church to perform.

He has acted in over 3,000 different churches around the country, said Aksamit, and this week-

end will be his third appearance at the church. At the time of his first shows in Turners Falls, Aksamit explained, he was more of a household name and filled every seat in the church and choir loft, and had people standing on the staircase to hear his message.

“He has this amazing talent and wonderful sense of humor,” Aksamit described. Runyeon attended Yale Divinity School and graduated from seminary while maintaining a successful acting career, which Aksamit reported “balanced out his ability to have feet in both worlds and be authentic.”

Frustrated with the news of the day, Aksamit said now is the perfect time for Runyeon to come back to the area to teach people how to deal with the current moment.

“We thought it was timely for him to come back in an entertaining way, helping us to laugh a bit at our foibles and maybe assure us we are not all that lost,” Aksamit said.

Though the church will ask for a goodwill offering at the door, Aksamit stressed that it is more important for community members to show up than worry about paying to attend.

When asked how it feels to see a comedian at the pulpit, Aksamit replied, “I love it. Especially with the world in turmoil as it is now, it would be good for us to take a step back and analyze what’s going on, and the best way to respond.”



LEVAVI PHOTO

Fr. Stanley Aksamit (above) helped bring Frank Runyeon to the church then known as Saint Mary’s in February 2005 to perform “Afraid,” his take on the Gospel of Mark. Runyeon returned that December with a Christmas-themed show.

SCRABBLE from page A1

traveled as far as Lake George, New York, for multi-day tournaments. But due to the random draw of letters, even the top experts win only about half the games they play.

“Tonight was a losing night for me,” said Phillips. “But last week I won three in a row.”

Scrabble night at Greenfield Library is an opportunity to socialize through long winters while expanding the vocabulary, but it’s also an escape from current events. “You can get away from the world because you’re locked in – your mind is active and focused the whole time,” said Phillips.

Fleck agreed. “I know some people who suffer from chronic pain who really enjoy Scrabble tournaments because the day just flies by,” he added.

Scrabble requires addition and multiplication, and improves the vocabulary while encouraging mental habits like concentration, pattern recognition, planning, spatial perception, and balancing risk. It’s no simple task to mentally juggle seven random letters while identifying opportunities on the board to make the best play possible without creating openings for your opponent to hit a triple-letter score.

Some neurologists believe that with regular practice, habits learned in Scrabble can improve cognitive abilities and even help players make better life decisions.

A neurological study published in the journal *Cortex* in February 2016 used MRIs to scan the brains of Scrabble experts and found they displayed a “connectivity pattern that was much more widespread [than in the control group].” The MRIs showed several areas of the brains, encompassing the frontal, temporal, parietal, limbic, and paralimbic regions, lit up at once while the experts played Scrabble.

Numerous other articles on how Scrabble can improve cognitive function can be found online, including “Benefits Of Playing Scrabble For Self-Improvement,” at wordrated.com; “Reflections: Scrabble has

surprising benefits,” at medicinehatnews.com; and “Boosting Brain Health with a Scrabble Word Checker,” at southmag.com.

After Monopoly, Scrabble is reported to be the second-highest-selling board game of all time, at 150 million copies. While the game is popular across Europe, Africa, and Asia, it is a cultural phenomenon in Thailand and Nigeria, where the top Scrabble player each year gets a congratulatory phone call from the president, says Fleck.

“Some of the world’s best Scrabble players are from Nigeria,” he said, adding that tournaments across Europe, Africa, and Asia use the Collins Dictionary and allow the use of about 35% more words than contests in North America. One of the most often used Scrabble words overseas is *E-U-O-I*, says Fleck: “It means a cry of Bacchic frenzy.”

While Scrabble continues to thrive around the world, it has grown somewhat less popular in the US in recent years, partly because the board game maker Hasbro stopped providing prize money and sponsorships about 15 years ago. The reason? Offensive words.

“Hasbro and ESPN didn’t want to be associated with a game that could be decided by an offensive word,” said Fleck, adding that Scrabble tournaments in North America have fragmented under three different organizations that disagree about whether certain words – including slang terms for ethnic groups – should be removed from the Scrabble dictionary.

“At one point the word ‘redskin’ was removed,” said Fleck. “But later it was put back, because it’s also a type of peanut.”

Meanwhile, Fleck continues to study lists of words in preparation for Scrabble tourneys, especially words featuring letters carrying high numbers like J and Z. One of his favorites?

“*Jezail*,” said Fleck. “It’s an Afghan musket.”



**TOWN OF MONTAGUE
REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ):
OWNER’S PROJECT MANAGER
Construction/Renovation of the
Montague Public Libraries Main Branch**

The Town of Montague is seeking responses from qualified individuals, partnerships, or firms for Owner’s Project Manager (OPM) Services for the planning and completion of the Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program (MPLCP) Level of Design of a renovated or new public library. OPM services will commence immediately after contract award. Planning and design is required to be completed by December 31, 2025.

RFQ documents are available at the Selectboard office, Montague Town Hall, 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA 01376, or by sending an email to chrism@montague-ma.gov.

A Briefing Session and Site Tour will be held on March 12, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. in the Carnegie Library, located at 201 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA 01376, followed by a brief visit to the primary alternative site under consideration, at 38 Avenue A, just south of the Great Falls Discovery Center. Attendance is strongly encouraged, but not mandatory.

Bid responses are to be submitted to the Montague Selectboard’s Office no later than March 26, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.

The Town reserves the right to cancel this bid, to reject any and all responses, to waive informalities, and to make an award as it believes is in the best interest of the Town.

**Town of Leverett
BUILDINGS CUSTODIAN**

The Town of Leverett is hiring a part-time Municipal Buildings Custodian.

Duties to include, but are not limited to, cleaning buildings, emptying trash, completing simple repairs, and helping coordinate maintenance projects at the Town Hall, Library and Public Safety Complex.

Flexible schedule to include some evenings and weekends for an average of 19 hours per week. Pay \$19.58/hour in FY25. A job description and application are available in the Town Hall, at www.leverett.ma.us, or by calling (413) 548-9699. Applications accepted until March 24, 2025.

Leverett is an AA/EOE.

**PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE
MONTAGUE CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

In accordance with the Mass. Wetlands Protection Act, M.G.L. Ch. 131, Sec. 40, the Montague Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 13, 2025 to review the Notice of Intent NOI# 2025-01/DEP 229-0266 filed by the Town of Montague DPW for repairs to Bridge M-28-036 on Swamp Road over Goddard Brook including repairs and/or replacement to the bridge, beam seats, beam ends, bridge rails, and deck within the 200-foot Riverfront Area.

A hybrid meeting will be held at the Montague Town Hall Annex, 1 Avenue A in Turners Falls, MA. Remote meeting login information and the filing are available for review at www.montague-ma.gov/calendar.

**Tip of the
week ...**

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ANNOUNCEMENT

FCCPR to Host Town Hall With Congressman McGovern

GREENFIELD – US Congressman Jim McGovern will hold a Town Hall, open to the general public, on Tuesday, March 18 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Greenfield Middle School, 195 Federal Street. Doors will open at 6 p.m.

The Town Hall has been organized by Franklin County Continuing the Political Revolution (FCCPR). The Congressman will make some opening remarks, addressing the crisis in our democracy and its impact on his constituents, including veterans, farmers, and people relying on the social safety net.

There will be lots of time for questions from the audience.

“At a time when many Republicans in Congress are refusing to meet with their constituents, we are pleased that our Congressman so quickly accepted our invitation to speak with us here in Franklin County,” said Susan Triolo, a member of FCCPR’s Coordinating Committee. “We look forward to hearing his perspectives on the current crisis and what sorts of creative and powerful actions he and we can take to preserve Social Security, Medicare, and all the governmental

programs we depend on.”

Congressman McGovern represents Massachusetts Congressional District 2, which includes 68 towns of which 22 are in Franklin County: Ashfield, Bernardston, Buckland, Colrain, Conway, Deerfield, Erving, Gill, Greenfield, Heath, Leverett, Leyden, Montague, New Salem, Northfield, Orange, Shelburne, Shutesbury, Sunderland, Warwick, Wendell, and Whatley.

McGovern has been in Congress since 1997, and is the ranking member of the House Rules Committee and the senior member of the House Committee on Agriculture, Subcommittee on Nutrition, Oversight, and Department Operations.

FCCPR is a multi-issue community organization that emerged from Bernie Sanders’s presidential campaigns. FCCPR has task forces on immigration, reproductive justice, education, single-payer healthcare, climate crisis, and peace. It works on electoral campaigns, holds demonstrations, and has developed a blueprint for a progressive Greenfield. Email info@fccpr.us for more information.

SHERIFF from page A1

“Any form of hazing, harassment or misconduct is unequivocally unacceptable,” Municipal Police Training Committee (MPTC) executive director Rick Rathbun and deputy executive director Amy Fanikos wrote in a letter to police chiefs Monday outlining the situation at the brand-new East Falmouth Police Academy.

According to the letter, “agencies” contacted the MPTC last Wednesday raising “concerns regarding inappropriate conduct” by staff at the academy. Rathbun met the next day with the current class of recruits, and the MPTC decided to temporarily replace all instructors with staff from another academy and suspend Donelan and Dunne, “[w]ith the support of the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security.”

“We are conducting a thorough review of procedures and practices to ensure that all activities have a direct nexus to a specific learning objective,” the letter added.

Rathbun and Fanikos did not specify the alleged misconduct, or why the decision had been made to suspend Dunne and Donelan. The MPTC directors “encourage[d] anyone with information regarding these allegations to come forward and report their concerns.”

The academy, located in the Falmouth Industrial Park, was originally scheduled to open in mid-Jan-

uary but the inaugural class began its studies at other facilities amid “contractor delays,” according to the *Falmouth Enterprise*.

On February 3 the Falmouth Police Department posted on its Facebook page that the academy was open, and asked the public to “use caution” driving in the industrial park as “cadets may be running for PT in the roadways.”

Donelan, a former state representative first elected sheriff in 2010, was widely recognized during his tenure at the Franklin County sheriff’s office for his efforts to support education and addiction recovery programs; he served as co-chair of the Franklin County Opioid Task Force, a network of public and private agencies supporting recovery programs in local communities.

In early January, two years into his third six-year term, he abruptly announced his retirement.

Though Donelan did not publicly disclose any plans for a new position, *New England Public Radio* reported that he was “planning on working with the future justice professionals.”

“I maxed out on the amount I can earn on my pension, and opportunities to do some [other] things in my retirement popped up on the radar screen,” he told the network in a January 8 interview. “Maybe teaching or training...”

Speaking two weeks later with

the *Montague Reporter*, Donelan said he planned to spend time at a home he owns on Cape Cod, and to “dabble in education and training,” but did not want to discuss any potential job opportunities.

Governor Maura Healey appointed Lori Streeter, a longtime superintendent at the Franklin County House of Correction, as interim sheriff until the seat comes up for election in November 2026.

On its website, the East Falmouth Police Academy describes itself as a “full service police academy offering entry-level training for police officers, Veteran Officer In-Service and Specialized training programs.”

As of press time Thursday, Christopher Donelan is listed as “Academy Director.”

Attempts to reach Donelan via his work phone on Thursday were unsuccessful. A call to the MPTC press office was not returned as of press time.

In September a 25-year-old trainee at the Massachusetts State Police Academy in New Braintree died from injuries apparently incurred during a training session. The family of Enrique Delgado-Garcia told the press that he was injured during a boxing exercise. Last month the *Boston Globe* reported that an independent investigation into the death was still ongoing. The State Police Academy is not administered by the MPTC.



TRAVEL from page A1

Yes, that’s right. Today’s transit in six systems across rural Massachusetts is fare-free, all the time! From Worcester to Merrimack Valley, and our own Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA), it has been decided that collecting and storing money for fares makes for too many delays. It is worth it to simply fund transit from the state budget and pandemic grants.

A good chunk of the money for these free bus fares – \$90 million last year – comes from the Fair Share Act, which additionally taxes Massachusetts residents’ incomes over \$1 million. The citizens voted it into law by a ballot referendum in 2022.

The Merrimack Transit Authority solved the perennial problem of a lack of bus drivers by handing out raises that bring their wages much higher than even Boston’s MBTA, which to this day still struggles to find enough drivers and has had to cut routes as a result. Merrimack is treating its drivers better with a comfortable lounge, incentive pay, and even a cappuccino maker.

It all adds up to plenty of happy drivers – and fewer canceled routes.

Flex With Flix

The consolidation of interstate bus lines has made FlixBus the big kahuna in 2025

after the demise of Megabus and Greyhound lines, which were absorbed into FlixBus in 2016 and 2021.

FlixBus flexes its might all over Europe – when you use Google Maps to find a location in Europe, “FlixBus” will pop up as an option. They are more dominant than Greyhound and Trailways used to be. Today, you can take a FlixBus from Springfield to 25 different US destinations.

In 2025, Logan Airport has significantly expanded its bus service. It is now the airport with the most bus connections in the US. The route between Boston and New York is the most competitive in the country. On a busy day, FlixBus and Greyhound offer 27 and 14 trips in each direction.

From its Springfield headquarters, regional bus operator Peter Pan has increased to 15 daily trips to New York City. Now, three other bus companies – GoBuses, OurBus, and Coach Run – also offer Logan service.

With all of these new providers there are now 64 different daily trips between the two cities, a 20% increase from 2024.

If you wanted to take the Greyhound bus from Greenfield to Las Vegas, it would be a four-day, four-city trip, using both FlixBus and Greyhound coaches, for 92 hours. The one-way cost is \$211.

Up in Maine, the state has decided to bridge

the gap for travelers headed to Boston. They have funded a new 13-times-a-day bus route between Lewiston/Auburn and Portland. From there you can transfer to the popular Amtrak Downeaster train servicing Boston.

A seamless train connection can now be made to these mid-Maine cities for the 34-mile ride up to Lewiston. The service began in 2024, and the state will trial the route for two years before deciding if enough riders make it worth the expense.

So far the reaction from locals is not entirely positive, as seen in one reader comment on a *Lewiston Sun Journal* article: “A low-class operation. The company bought the lowest-priced airport shuttle buses they could find, not designed for highway use, made a schedule that was so tight that any hiccup in the route made the buses late, and made fare collection a rip-off without making change. Also, there is no WiFi system even though the website says there is. What a waste of taxpayer money. A far cry from the nice highway coaches that Concord (Coach) used to run.”

Phone For a Ride

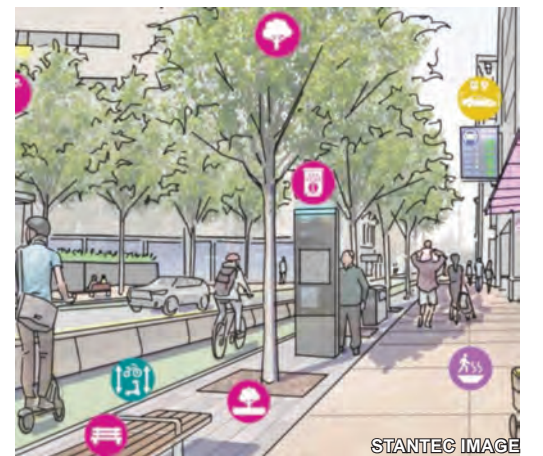
Leyden, Greenfield, Montague, and Gill residents can pick up the phone and reserve a local bus ride – as long as they do it a day in advance, and it’s along an existing bus route.

You can call, but there is a catch... you have to fit into one of these descriptors: “The FRTA’s Demand Response transportation service is for persons over the age of 60, eligible LifePath clients, consumers currently living in a nursing home facility, or Veterans with a disability rating of 70% or greater.”

Free, *but*. That keeps the list short, but the service is invaluable for someone who is trapped in a far-from-anything house in one of these towns.

As many of us have watched electric vehicles make inroads on internal combustion cars, the same is true with buses. As of 2025 about 15% of the buses used in mass transit in Massachusetts are electric, and the state has set a goal of a 50% electric fleet by 2030.

Behind the scenes, chargers are being installed and funding is being procured for the big expense of using electric school buses, which cost about twice as much to purchase as diesel-powered buses. Massachusetts re-



A consultant’s rendering of Bus Rapid Transit in Buffalo, New York.

ceived a \$90 million grant from the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to provide funds to buy the electric buses.

In Springfield, a giant step forward is about to start, which will be called BRT, for Bus Rapid Transit. BRT is coming up with new ways of giving buses priority over cars, with special bus-only lanes and new covered stations along the route that runs the length of Main Street and up State Street.

The full rollout in 2026 will include real-time indicators of where each bus is and how long the wait will be, similar to what riders might see on train platforms. In Boston, where the BRT has been in the news for many years, there will be platform-level boarding, just like on the T. Tickets will be available on a mobile app allowing prepaid fare cards, called “off-board fare collection.”

The people who have been pushing BRT took stakeholders to visit Mexico City to experience the “gold standard” of BRT systems. There, buses have green-painted dedicated lanes. The system has been lauded as one of the cheapest ways to develop successful mass transit on a very large scale using buses instead of underground subways or trams.

Max Hartshorne is the editor of the *GoNOMAD.com* travel website and the host of the *GoNOMAD Travel Podcast*, with new short-form episodes every week at feeds.captivate.fm/gonomad-travel-podcast.

He writes a monthly column in this newspaper, *Travel With Max*. He lives in South Deerfield.



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THE SPIRIT SHOPPE

MONTAGUE from page A1 and school districts to state aid for school transportation.

Blais said she believed transportation aid was increasing, but selectboard chair Rich Kuklewicz, who also serves as chair of the Franklin County Technical School committee, said he thought it had taken a “nosedive” in governor Maura Healey’s recent FY’26 state budget proposal.

“This budget, you should see it go back up,” Comerford told him. “The proposal from the governor has it at 95% [reimbursement].”

“Our district’s expecting it to be down,” he replied.

Ramsey mentioned the high cost to Montague of transporting a student to the Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School in Northampton.

Comerford complimented the Franklin Regional Transit Authority for its Access program, which provides Uber-style transportation to individuals at a relatively low cost, and selectboard member Chris Boutwell asked about electricity rate increases.

“Even the governor and attorney general are getting involved in this,” said Blais about the utility rate hikes.

Comerford said Healey was drafting a “cost-control bill.”

On the issue of education aid, Comerford said that the “Chapter 70 formula, and the ‘minimum contribution’ formula, don’t work for us in western Mass.” She said it had been 10 years since the state last evaluated Chapter 70 and 17 years since it evaluated the municipal contributions, “and those formulas need to be cracked open.”

Comerford, Blais, and representative Mindy Domb of Amherst sent Healey a letter last October advocating that a broad range of educational funding increases be included in “House 1,” the governor’s initial FY’26 budget proposal this winter. The letter recommended creating a commission to “examine the Chapter 70 formula to make recommendations on state spending and local contribution calculations,” and included a list of 11 bullet points flagging virtually every element of the formula for review by the commission.

The commission was not included in the governor’s budget bill, which will be reviewed by the joint Ways and Means Committee and will likely be modified by the state House and Senate before passage this summer. Blais pointed out that Comerford is the vice chair of the powerful Ways and Means Committee, “which is incredible.”

At the beginning of the current session in January, Comerford and Blais both re-introduced bills they have previously petitioned titled “An Act to provide a sustainable future for rural schools.” These bills would modify the Chapter 70 formula in several ways, and would establish a “Declining Enrollment Fund,” intended to aid any district that has experienced a 35% loss of enrollment over a 20-year period.

A large number of districts, including urban districts such as Boston, are due to receive minimal Chapter 70 increases next year. Somerville, in particular, is much deeper into “hold harmless” status than many rural districts.

The issue of revisiting the Chapter 70 formula was also raised at a February 5 meeting between Gill-Montague regional school district (GMRSD) officials and the



Comerford (left) and Blais took notes throughout the 38-minute session.

two towns’ finance committees and selectboards.

GMRSD business manager Joanne Blier told the *Reporter* this week that she will meet with the state legislators, including Gill’s representative Susannah Whipps, next Monday, and plans to raise the idea with the regional school committee after that.

“The whole formula needs to be re-evaluated,” she argued.

Tax Exemptions

During the meeting’s public comment period Precinct 6 resident Jane Sumrall, partner of local veteran Ken Sumrall, urged the board to endorse two provisions of the state HERO Act which would create a new property tax exemption for the town’s disabled veterans and apply a cost-of-living increase to exemptions already in place.

“The town should definitely take the welfare of the veterans into consideration, since they became disabled in the service of our country,” she said.

“It’s definitely on our radar screen,” said Kuklewicz, noting that the issue would be on “future agendas.”

Ramsey said the selectboard had requested more analysis of the law’s “fiscal impact.” At the board’s January 27 meeting, he had estimated that various options in the multi-tiered proposal could cost the town between \$18,000 and \$50,000. At that time, board members seemed amenable to sending the proposal to the annual town meeting in May, but wanted a better accounting of its costs and benefits.

Hazard Mitigation

Assistant town administrator Chris Nolan-Zeller told the board that the Montague City Road flood mitigation project has been completed. The board voted to approve its official “certificate of close-out.”

Ramsey announced that state Chapter 90 highway aid will increase by 6% next year to \$822,495, under an updated formula that benefits rural towns with a large number of road miles per capita.

A request by town planner Maureen Pollock to apply for a federal grant to update Montague’s recently-expired hazard mitigation plan was approved. The board also endorsed her suggestion to fund most of the “town match” for a portion of the \$32,300 project with an in-kind donation of dedicated staff time.

Pollock was asked about the

funding source for the required 20% cash portion of the match. “That’s a good question,” said Pollock, whereupon Kuklewicz pointed her toward the ever-ready community development discretionary fund.

Hirers Named

The selectboard, acting as the personnel board, appointed Ella Ingraham as the “town resident representative” on the hiring committee for the director of assessing position, and Ariel Elan for an equivalent slot on the town clerk hiring committee.

Town treasurer Eileen Seymour and accountant Angelica Desroches were also appointed to the assessor hiring committee, and Ramsey announced that former town clerk Deb Bourbeau had agreed to join the clerk hiring committee. She was duly appointed. Selectboard members Matt Lord and Boutwell switched places, with the former now helping to recommend an assessor and the latter a clerk.

Ramsey reported that the board of assessors, the final appointing authority for the director of assessing position, had chosen current assessing technician Oliver Beane to serve as interim director until the hiring process is complete.

Other Business

A request by Zak Nichita to add five more cars for sale to the space in front of his repair shop on Millers Falls Road, for a total of 10 cars, was approved by the board. Ramsey said that the current location of the cars was temporary, pending the construction of a new repair building, which is subject to site plan review by the planning board.

The board approved a request from the Brick House Community Resource Center for its annual 5K “Fun Run and Walk” fundraiser, along the bike path and through the Patch neighborhood in Turners Falls, on Saturday, May 17 from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m.

At the end of the public portion of the meeting, the board retired into a series of three executive sessions: one to discuss negotiations with the FirstLight Power Company; a second to discuss with the assessors the value of a small, privately owned hydroelectric plant that is complicating the demolition of the Strathmore mill complex; and a third to discuss charges or complaints made against an unnamed town employee.

The next selectboard meeting will be held Monday, March 10.



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

Here’s the way it was on March 5, 2015: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

Buyer Wanted for Building 11

The town of Montague will again attempt to sell Building 11, a stand-alone building in the Strathmore mill complex, under its Commercial Homesteading program. According to town planner Walter Ramsey, this is a new strategy for dealing with the former paper mill. Attempts to sell the entire complex

have not been successful.

A former owner used the mill to store recycled paper, much of it still in the buildings when the town took them over for back taxes. Copper wiring was stripped, roof leaks were not fixed, water and sewer lines were allowed to degrade. Last year the fire department ordered the town to clear out the paper and restore utility services.

Ramsey suggested that the recent work, and the improved real estate market, have created a new opportunity to find potential buyers.

20 YEARS AGO

Here’s the way it was on March 3, 2005: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

Noise on the Avenue

Years ago, when there were 28 places to get a drink in downtown Turners Falls, brawling in front of the bars was not uncommon.

At the noise policy hearing on February 28, police chief Ray Zukowski recalled the days the Renaissance Community brought in a private security detail from Boston to maintain a semblance of order downtown, and when the selectboard ordered the most troublesome bars to hire detail officers to keep unruly patrons in line.

Times have changed, but still the mixed-use neighborhood of bars and residences in the blocks around Avenue A and Third Street is the scene of loud bands, motorcycles, and some carousing on the sidewalks and parking lots as the bars let out. The recent statewide ban on smoking in bars has created an added dimension to the street scene as patrons gather on the walks and patios to smoke, occasionally bringing the party out with them.

Chris Janke, who lives two doors

down from Yesterdays on Third Street, told the board he walked by the crowd in the smokers’ patio this weekend with a friend from Boston who manages and tours the country with rock bands. Witnessing inebriated people wandering the sidewalk and harassing passersby, Janke’s friend made the comment, “They wear their drunkenness as a badge of honor out here.”

The board of health’s Gina McNeely, there to present a draft of a proposed noise ordinance, observed, “If we had more common sense, we’d need less regulation.”

Ross Cappetta, a Fourth Street resident whose apartment faces Yesterdays’ rear entrance, said bands leaving the bar at 2:30 a.m. were frequently rowdy and abusive. “They aren’t happy people. They’re loading their truck and yelling at each other.”

“Maybe they can’t hear anymore,” put in board chair Pat Allen.

Zukowski said he would speak with the officers working the night shift and have them pay stricter attention to noise around the Third Street bar.

The board will take two weeks to consider the matter before acting on the proposed noise ordinance.

150 YEARS AGO

Here’s the way it was on March 3, 1875: News from the Turners Falls Reporter’s archive.

Turners Falls and Vicinity

The snow storm of Monday was the boss of the season. May it be the last.

The Rev. J.F. Moors will deliver his lecture on “Rome,” at the Methodist Chapel, this evening at 7 o’clock.

Landlord Morrison, of l’Hotel du Tramp, has been busy this week. He thinks of engaging a head waiter.

There is still talk of a new bank here. Thursday’s Republican says one of the paper companies is prepared to furnish part of the capital.

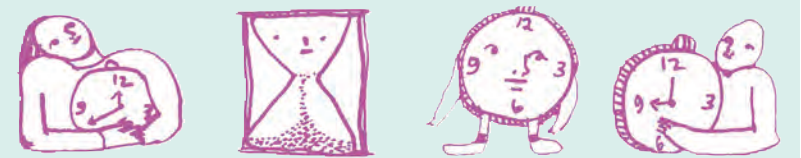
There is a possibility of the Montague Paper Company and Pulp Company being united, when another machine for making

paper will be added.

Louis Marsters, hoster for N.D. Allen, while driving a pair of recently purchased horses Saturday, they ran away and threw him out of the sleigh, shattering a bone in his right hand.

We have been informed that a representative of Boston capitalists has been in this part of the state the past few days looking to the feasibility of establishing a water power company. He made an inspection of several small streams, and spent several hours at Montague City.

It would be a great convenience if all persons indebted to the REPORTER for subscriptions or job would please hand in the amounts of their indebtedness. It is rather discouraging to have to earn money over again by taking as much time to collect a bill as it is worth. You might as well try to run a bank without money as a printing office.



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ERVING from page A1

though most of the monetary sums were still left blank. The board also anticipates at least one STM will need to be held later in the year.

Patrons of All Ages

The first item on Monday's agenda was ironing out the job description for the senior and community center director, in order to hire a replacement for departing director Paula Better. The selectboard had been hoping to have the position ready to advertise in the beginning of March, but at the meeting Monday they and town administrator Bryan Smith continued to edit the draft, and agreed Smith would incorporate the edits and send another draft for review next week.

"The job is more than just this center," said Loynd. "There's outreach involved, and guidance and support for some of the elder population."

Member Scott Bastarache wanted to make sure the description specified the director would work "in conjunction," or "in collaboration," with other town departments to facilitate programming for "patrons of all ages."

"She's not creating or implementing this programming," he clarified. "She is supporting [residents] so that they have access to this community center, to use it for that purpose."

After agreeing on a number of other edits, the board made a plan to finalize the text next Monday meeting and advertise for the position soon after. Members also discussed their desire to involve the new hire in long-range planning for the center – "to grow with the community needs over the next decade," in Bastarache's words.

"Do you want this position to continue to have an involvement in the development of the senior housing complex?" Bryan Smith asked them.

"I think some involvement," Jacob Smith replied.

"It's not a leadership role.... That [development] happening while you're running the center is going to be a challenge."

Dumping Fears

The town is preparing for its annual Almost Anything Goes bulky waste collection, planned for May 5. Highway superintendent Glenn McCrory was in attendance Monday and concurred with Bryan Smith in the view that the program had gone smoothly last year, and that the guidelines did not need changes.

Bryan Smith did bring up concerns raised by some residents that the program encourages illegal dumping. After some conversation, in which the board acknowledged that the program was popular and people were generally happy with it, Loynd suggested that if residents have issues with illegal dumping, they could bring in videos from their video doorbells.

"Under \$50 you can get a trail camera – motion-activated, night vision, all that," Bastarache said.


McCrory also suggested that if people have issues with the program they could come and talk about them at something like this selectboard meeting. After all that everyone agreed the guidelines as they were last year will be used again, besides date changes.

The event will be advertised in the *Around Town* newsletter.

Other Business

The board accepted a letter of resignation from the conservation commission from Michele Turner. Bryan Smith said the commission now has two vacancies.

The selectboard's next meeting will be held Monday, March 10.

Mike Jackson provided additional writing. 

SPORTS from page A1

trick, out-pointing Lindsey Lincoln of Rockland by a 12-3 "major deci-

sion" (winning by 8 points or more). This earned Marigliano the state championship belt. This weekend

she will compete in the New England Championship, seeded fifth in the six-state match. Her first opponent is a girl from Bedford, New Hampshire.

Basketball


Pioneer Valley 75 – Old Colony 43

With the basketball playoffs winding down, the top-seeded Pioneer boys are still alive and kicking. On Tuesday, the Black Panthers decimated Old Colony Regional Vocational Technical High School in the MIAA Division 5 tournament's Round of 16.

I couldn't go to the game, but I listened to it on Bear Country. It was a rout from tip-off as Pioneer kept hitting three-pointers – the Black Cats took an early 30-point lead, and never looked back. The Colonialists only made up ground in the fourth quarter, outpacing the Panthers by 11 points.

Brayden Thayer led the Panthers with 23 points, followed by Kurt Redeker (19), Alex McClelland (18), Jackson Glazier (7), William Glazier (4), and Ben Werner and Judah Glenn (2 each).

Pioneer, top-seeded in their quest for a state championship, will host ninth-ranked Ware in Northfield in the Division 5 Elite Eight round at 6 p.m. this Friday, March 7.

And although Franklin County Tech and Turners Falls High School are both out of the playoffs, some of their athletes will compete in the All-Star game held at Frontier High School next Friday, March 14. 



DAVID HOIT PHOTO

Pioneer Valley's Kurt Redeker (center) goes up for a shot during the MIAA Division 5 Round of 16 tournament game against Old Colony Regional Vocational Technical High School last Tuesday. The top-seeded Panthers advanced to the Elite Eight following their 75-43 win at Messer Gymnasium.

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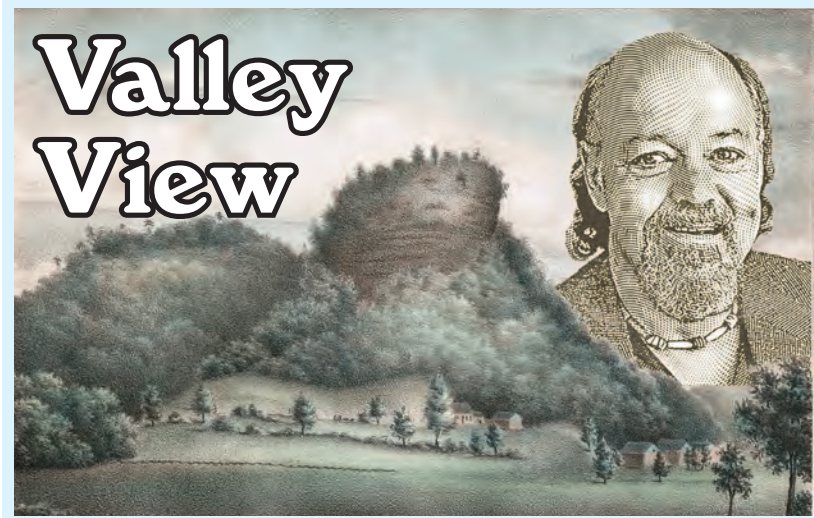


GARTH SHANEYHELT PHOTO

features@montaguereporter.org

OF THE MONTAGUE REPORTER

MARCH 6, 2025



Valley View

ORRA WHITE HITCHCOCK PRINT

And the Beat Goes On...

By GARY SANDERSON

GREENFIELD – When you’ve worked a beat for nearly a half-century as I have, and enjoy deep roots therein, upturned stones of investigation can trigger vivid memories.

This is such a circumstance. It started with word of a supposed archaeological site in South Deerfield, about to be disturbed by the construction of a new dog shelter. When I caught wind of it, I immediately dug deeper because I didn’t recognize the address in my original hometown founded by ancestors. When I finally located East Plain Road, I initially decided to back off from it as a column topic – the site was a little out of range, in my opinion, for a small weekly newspaper serving greater Montague.

That changed, however, when I discovered a solid Montague link. The proposed facility is intended to replace the Franklin County Sheriff’s Office regional dog shelter located on Sandy Lane in Turners Falls, just a hop, skip, and a jump across Turnpike Road from the old Park Villa outdoor movie theater.

Though I was learning of the shelter for the first time, I was familiar with the sandy plain on which it lies. I got to know it from my brief days of employment (1978-79) as a laborer and truck driver for the Montague DPW.

I would not have known the sheriff’s shelter site had I not often visited the adjacent old town landfill during my dump-truck-driving days for road boss Charlie Richotte, back when Joe Janikus and Denny Choleva ran the office. A matter of convenience, my address was then just down the road. I was living in a two-bedroom apartment in the sprawling residence of widowed Irene Martineau on the end of South High Street in Montague City.

I took the temporary job while approaching marriage after a swashbuckling, here-today, gone-tomorrow life on the road. I had closed my last fundraising deal and moved in with my work-

ing wife-to-be. During this brief period of unemployed freedom, I was wearing out a path to Power-town barroom poolhalls.

When this malingering lifestyle lingered, my fiancée tired of the destructive routine and, as only a social worker could do, suggested I “find an effing job.” Soon I was a member of the Montague road crew.

My first job was extracting heavy, broken cement guardrail posts on Turners Falls Road and replacing them with heavier new posts. I enjoyed the strenuous labor, and it quickly whipped me into shape after four years of unhealthy living and sedentary office work. Let’s just say that those smoky offices, motel lounges, and restaurants are no formula for staying fit and trim.

But we won’t go there... back to the proposed South Deerfield shelter site and, especially, to the old Montague landfill.

First, the reason for my interest in the supposed archaeological site: overgrown tillage and pheasant cover I often hunted before the construction of the South Deerfield Emergency Veterinary Clinic. I wondered if maybe, just maybe, the supposed Native artifacts surface-collected there during a fairly recent walkover may have been gathered from the place called “Indian Plain” on a few 19th-century deeds I had read from the general neighborhood. Ever since stumbling across that forgotten place-name in a town I know well, I have tried unsuccessfully to pinpoint it, and this clue seemed like good evidence to chase.

I searched out the man holding the artifact assemblage. His home lot abuts the proposed shelter site on the opposite side of the dead-end East Plain Road. I remembered his home being built by town pharmacist Billy Rotkiewicz in the 1980s.

My source happened to be a vocal opponent – not unusual among neighbors of such development projects. We spoke on the phone and, with deadline looming and time running thin, I was unable to see **VALLEY VIEW** page B3

Above: As the ice floes leave, it’s fishing season once again on the Connecticut – the view downriver from the General Pierce Bridge.

MONTV / MUSIK / MOUNTAIN

Interview by J. BURKETT & TROY CURRY

TURNERS FALLS – Oh wow... how cool it is to talk with Jonathan Richman this week! Just in case you don’t know, Jonathan is a cool and legendary “music dude” with deep origins in the eastern Mass area before hitting the Boston music scene with the Modern Lovers in the early ’70s.

The Modern Lovers played for years, their first incarnation being the most famous, having made one of *thee* classic LPs to come out of the Boston scene, *The Modern Lovers*. It still sounds amazing. Richman continued with other versions of the band before starting a string of solo LPs, which are still coming out.

So ever since growing up in the early ’60s, he has basically been making music non-stop for forever. He started out as more of an *uber-fan*, following around bands like the Velvet Underground, which he saw hundreds of times, and the Stooges. (You *have* to see his appearances in both of the recent music docs on those two bands!) But

he has been playing his own very different, very cool music ever since, not only doing a ton of tours around the world, but also making a lot of records.

That first LP is still our favorite, and different from the rest, and if you are into it it’s worth searching out the long version of “Roadrunner,” which talks about UMass and other western Mass sites.

Did we mention that the Modern Lovers were Jerry Harrison’s first

band, before the Talking Heads? Supposedly Byrne and his gang went to Boston just to check him out, and he’s been in that band ever since. They were also David Robinson’s first band before the Cars.

Make sure to check out Jonathan’s many other LPs since then, as there are great songs on them too. We particularly recommend the *Just A Spark, On Journey Through The Dark CD* on the Blue see **MUSIK** page B4

77: Jonathan Richman



ANGELINA CASTILLO PHOTO

BOOK REVIEW

A Moral Obligation to Be Educated

By RICHARD ANDERSEN

MONTAGUE – In every culture – in every family, school, church, military, business, and industry – there is a center of power. Those at these centers of power control much of what is considered important and valued in our lives, and in the wider culture: what’s true and false, right and wrong, good and bad, beautiful and ugly, and just about everything else about the ways we think, feel, look, and act.

The center of power in our American culture is and has for centuries been dominated by people who are mostly white, rich, male, heterosexual, and Christian. Many of these people continue to feel it is their duty to maintain their positions of power and wealth for the good of the country. They do this, in large part, by marginalizing anyone who doesn’t share not only their values but also their appearances and experiences.

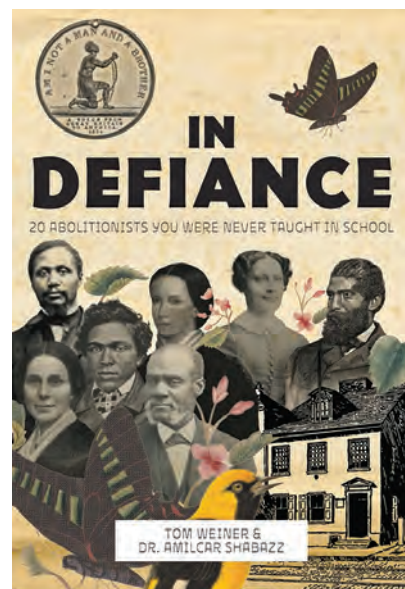
Think of it as a checklist. The more of the above-mentioned iden-

ties you can put a check mark next to, the greater the chances of your voice being heard, your identity being respected, and your success being improved. The less you resemble those at the center,

the more alienated you find yourself. Imagine, for example, a Black lesbian single parent, who doesn’t believe in a god, and works at a place like Walmart.

Tom Weiner and Amilcar Shabazz’s new book, *In Defiance: 20 Abolitionists You Were Never Taught in School*, pushes back against some of the thoughts, values, and stories that have come to make up our inherited American history, the one written by those who, because of their positions in the centers of power, have been able to control the narratives we’ve been conditioned to believe are true.

This is why we’ve never been taught anything about any of the 20 abolitionists who, Weiner and Shabazz write in their “Introduction,” acted in defiance “against the social norms that promoted the acceptance of the enslavement of one group of human beings by another.” The voices of these now mostly-forgotten abolitionists who risked their careers and even their lives, not see **BOOK** page B8



Tom Weiner and Amilcar Shabazz, *In Defiance: 20 Abolitionists You Were Never Taught in School* (Interlink Books, 2025)

Pet of the Week



CARMODY COLLAGE

'EVERGREEN AND MISTLETOE'

Are you looking for the cutest pair of pigs? Well, Mistletoe and Evergreen are looking for a new place to crash. They are playful, used to being handled, and enjoy interacting with humans under 13.

These two furry friends are in foster care. Guinea pigs are incredibly social animals who need to be kept in pairs or groups. They need lots of space to run, toys to keep them active and enriched, and floor time outside of their cage.

Many cages sold at pet stores are too small. We can suggest best options during your adoption call.

Diet requirements include grass hay, timothy pellets, and daily vitamin C, which they can get from veggies like red pepper, kale, and other leafy greens.

The adoption fee for the pair is \$35. If you're ready to adopt now and want to learn more about, meet, or adopt these pets, you can start the process by coming to the Dakin Humane Society in Springfield during our open adoption hours, Tuesdays through Saturdays from 12:30 to 3 p.m., calling us at (413) 781-4000, or visiting www.dakinhumane.org.

MOVIE REVIEW

I Will Survive: The Gloria Gaynor Story (2023)

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – Gloria Gaynor is someone I know best for singing a famous song called “I Will Survive.” She is an African-American disco singer who is well-known because of this song, so I guess it made sense for a movie to come out on Lifetime about her.

One interesting tidbit – if it is indeed a true fact – is that Gaynor was not initially interested in that song, but became intrigued after she met with the songwriter. With some of the stuff she ended up having to deal with, the song would become her personal anthem, in a way.

We get a little bit of a portrait of Gaynor's character. She is a woman of faith, and her relationship with her sister is shown to be

loving and supportive. Early in her life and as she gained success, she married a cop. She found herself in a financial hole after a back injury, however, which happened after a fall off a stage, and she eventually had a hit with the song as she was trying to recover from the injury.

Adding to the sense that this song was her personal anthem was that her marriage was also falling apart. Because of that she was able to relate to it – she got the whole “I should have changed that stupid lock” line quite well.

Gaynor resolves to rebuild her career, with the help of a loyal assistant she had at an earlier point who comes back into her life and I believe ends up staying around for good. Needless to say, this movie shows a fair amount of tumult that

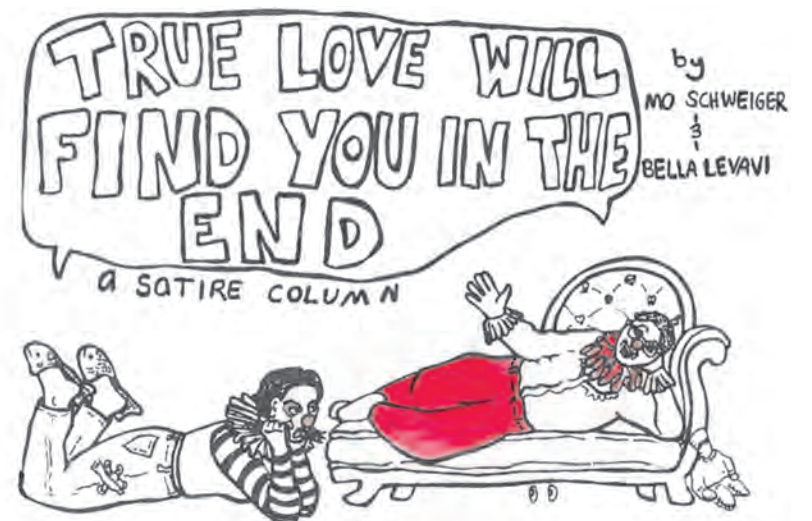


happened in her life.

Another part of the famous song that she can probably relate to is the chorus – “I will survive.” She probably felt she had to do that, and in my opinion she has survived what life has thrown at her nicely.

People who see this movie will probably agree. It's like someone is still standing after being through so much in her life. That covers her music career as well – we also learn that she still is performing on stage, just like she did in the disco era.

Notes From the Bellybutton of the Internet



By MANDI MUDBALLS

FRANKLIN COUNTY – “If you could have any Signal group in the world, what would it be?” asked Daul Davidson. I was sitting on the top bunk of the bunkbed at the center of his living room reserved for passing couch surfers, kicking our legs against the painted wooden slats.

The room is one of nearly 100 in Daul Davidson's Turners Falls Victorian, which boasts six roommates, three of whom live in a tiny house in the backyard and none of whom own a bedframe. The house is home to the infamous steam room collective, two refrigerators, and a hand-painted mural from the 18th century depicting the Revolutionary War.

I invited myself to Davidson's home to discuss his latest creation: a Pioneer Valley Signal groupchat of Signal groupchats called The Valley Signal Groups Signal Group (TVSGSG). Signal, in Davidson's words, is a communication platform that is unique because it is encrypted, open-sourced, driven by a desire for privacy, and owned by a nonprofit.

It's also “like how squirrels use the bark of hickory to communicate, writing little messages to each other like signposts in the forest,” according to Davidson.

Aptly, my initial foray into the app was to buy mushrooms from a guy in Leverett named Jungle.

TVSGSG was started the day that Donald Trump was inaugurated, though Davidson stresses that this was unrelated, and that he's been using the app for between five and 10 years.

“My friend was like ‘I want to start a Signal group but I'm nervous, can you help me?’ I thought this group might be a fun way for people to plug into what they're interested in,” he says of the group's genesis. “I didn't know how to do that before the group existed.”

Since then the chat has come to encompass 277 members, and has introduced people to groups like the Antiracist Birding Collective, the Pioneer Valley Rave Scene chat – whose only activity has been the suggestion of a silent disco while guerrilla gardening – and Long Distance Winter Backpacking, which includes one hopeful and recruiting member.

The real meat of this group, however, is the discussion of how it should operate. “This was totally my fault,” says Davidson. “Actually, you can blame it on my friend.” The situation began when someone sent a message asking if there was anyone in the chat who could offer them piano lessons.

“Totally not allowed,” says Davidson, who recently let slide a request for a group that provides answers to the pressing question of whether there was a local Signal chat that could help them obtain a “queer friendly

affordable car inspection,” even though inspections are set at a standard \$35 across the state.

“This led me to try to crack the whip, partially for fun,” Davidson says. “I feel like people will leave if there's a lot of conversation about the conversation happening in the same space that the conversation is happening, because that's a different conversation to talk about how we're having this conversation rather than actually having this conversation, and people are maybe only interested in one conversation or the other, not both.” This incident led to the creation of Davidson's self-proclaimed “silliest group”: The Meta Valley Signal Group on Signal Groups (TMVSGSG). TMVSGSG is a space in which community members can discuss what is and isn't allowed in TVSGSG. “I hope it won't turn into a policing thing, unless everyone was having fun with that,” he says.

Davidson expressed that his interest in Signal groups is about a larger desire for community connection. “It's really important that we find ways to support one another and build webs of trust and community and care and laughter and fun,” he says, hoping that Signal can be a place in which that happens.

Many conversations on Signal reflect this hope, such as a recent thread in the Pioneer Valley Moldiest Basements chat (a punk show channel) that discussed the merits and drawbacks of the phrase “notaflof” – No One Turned Away for Lack of Funds.

In this conversation my esteemed *Reporter* editor Mike Jackson got to flex his editorial muscles, providing a comprehensive history of the term and tracing its origins from California to Greenfield over the span of 25 years. Somehow I was personally indicted in this history on three separate occasions, first with me being from California, the second with a Hadley flier using the term to advertise a show that my then-neighbors were throwing, and the third being fliers that I created while working for the Greenfield nightclub 20Backward.

The conversation illuminated the ways in which attempts at accessibility are sometimes misdirected and lead instead to inaccessibility, something that cannot fix the fact that basements are often down a flight of stairs.

“We're just trying different stuff – there's gonna be conflict and get heated. Hopefully it'll be useful in some way even if it's not perfect,” says Davidson.

I hope that this dive into TVSGSG helps illuminate some of the uses, drawbacks, and hopes for Signal in the Pioneer Valley. I would love to share it with the people in the group, but I cannot send it to the chat, for that would be breaking the rules.

True Love Will Find You In the End (TLWFYITE),
Mandi Mudballs

Senior Center Activities MARCH 10 THROUGH 14

GILL and MONTAGUE

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

Monday 3/10

10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
12 p.m. Pot Luck
1:30 p.m. COA Meeting

Tuesday 3/11

9 a.m. Chair Yoga
12:30 p.m. Tech Tuesday
3 p.m. Tai Chi

Wednesday 3/12

Foot clinic by appointment

Thursday 3/13

4 p.m. Mat Yoga

Friday 3/14

1 p.m. Pitch
10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
2 p.m. Chair Dance

LEVERETT

Chair Yoga classes are held Wednesdays at 10 a.m., hybrid, at the town hall and on Zoom. Foot care clinics are the third Tuesday of each month. Luncheons are the fourth Friday at town hall. For more information, contact (413) 548-1022 or coa@leverett.ma.us.

Please check the town news-

letter or LeverettConnects listserv for more info.

WENDELL

Foot care clinic is the first Wednesday of each month. The next clinic is April 2. Call Katie Nolan at (978) 544-2306 for information or appointments.

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

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Monday 3/10

9 a.m. Good for U
10 a.m. Seated Fitness
12 p.m. Pitch Cards

Tuesday 3/11

1 p.m. Yoga
9 a.m. Stretch & Balance
10 a.m. Line Dancing
11 a.m. Social Stringer

Wednesday 3/12

9 a.m. Interval Training
10:15 a.m. Chair Aerobics
11:30 a.m. Bingo

Thursday 3/13

9 a.m. Barre Fusion
10 a.m. Pilates Flow
12 p.m. Senior Tech Help

Friday 3/14

9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Quilting, Open Sew

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If you are interested in supporting and advocating for the Montague Public Libraries' future-focused programs, materials, services, and building projects, then this may be the volunteer position for you!

The Trustees support the operations and initiatives of the libraries by attending monthly general meetings and by participating in at least one of four subcommittees, which meet periodically. The Trustees' subcommittees include: *Strategic Planning, Personnel, Building, and Budget.*

The time commitment is typically 2 to 4 hours per month. All meetings are held virtually during the winter. You can find more information about the trustees' work here: <https://bit.ly/MPL-trustees>

Those who wish to run for an open trustee position must pick up nomination papers from the Town Clerk at 1 Avenue A by Monday, March 31 and return completed papers by Tuesday, April 1.

VALLEY VIEW from page B1 connect enough dots for that week's column. Instead, I teased it as an outbreak before ultimately deciding the story wasn't for me.

Enter *Reporter* editor Mike Jackson, with whom I discussed the tease and from whom I learned that the shelter being replaced has a Turners Falls address. Its location immediately brought me back nearly a half-century to the adjacent, old Montague landfill, and to a fair-weather day I spent trucking sandy fill from its eastern perimeter to a construction site.

If memory serves me, to get there I'd travel a dirt road within view of Judd Wire, following a slim border of tall pines a few hundred yards before dropping down into a sand-pit. There a bucket-loader awaited me. I'd swing the truck's nose right and back into a spot against a steep 15- or 20-foot escarpment to accept bucket loads of fill.

On my second or third refill, I watched the loader blade tap into a vein of what appeared to be the morbid, dried-up remains of many buried dog carcasses. Bony body parts and chunks of furry pelts dangled out of the bucket as others tumbled down from the fresh cuts in the sandbank.

Not a pretty or expected sight – nor one that would be soon forgotten by anyone who, like me, had grown up with pets.

I never really made much of it, or put an honest effort into determining exactly what we had tapped

into, but I never forgot it, either. So, now that nearly 50 years have passed, why not troll a bit? The statute of limitations passed long ago, and anyone directly involved has likely expired.

The problem is I that don't know the whole story, only what I saw. The bucket-loader operator shared my cluelessness as to the reason why the carcasses were there, and so did everyone else I queried. Then I just let it slip away, until this recent reminder.

Remember, that scene unfolded before I was a reporter. I was young, untamed, and hadn't yet figured out who I was. My job priority was facilitating the fastest track back to the office for 4 p.m. punch-out time.

Who knows? Perhaps our mass-grave discovery that day was an old veterinary burial pit for euthanized pets; maybe a hidden road-kill dump on an out-of-the-way, town-owned, sandy outwash plain. I don't believe the sheriff's dog shelter was there yet, but isn't it interesting that it ended up there?

Now that I've finally shed light on the incident, maybe a reader or two has insight. If so, don't hesitate to contact me at the email address below. Maybe community memory will finally provide answers.

I guess by now it's old enough to qualify as history, no?

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



Montague Community Television News Join a TV Show!

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

TURNERS FALLS – Would you like to be involved with Episode 2 of *The Lovelights'* children's TV show? MCTV is once again working with *Looky Here* to produce this much-anticipated second installment. If you have any interest in being a part of the cast, building sets and costumes, filming, or editing, please reach out to LookyHereGreenfield@gmail.com.

And if board and committee meetings are what you're look-

ing for, you know what to do! We have recent recordings from the Gill-Montague regional school committee, the Montague finance committee, and both the Gill and Montague selectboards.

All MCTV videos are aired on Channel 9 and featured on the MCTV Vimeo page.

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

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Twelve Angels Over Greenfield; Coyote With Glowstick; Guy We All Whisper About Loses a Ski; Goose Jaywalks; Musk Reportedly Held Captive; Frost Begins to Heave

Tuesday, 2/18

8:32 a.m. Caller concerned about very high snow banks making it impossible to see cars as you are turning from Randall Road onto Greenfield Road. DPW notified; they are working on pushing snow banks back in high traffic areas, and will be working on that area soon.
3:23 p.m. Report of unshoveled sidewalks on Turnpike Road. Referred to an officer.

3:54 p.m. Walk-in reports that someone broke into Suzee's Third Street Laundry Wednesday night. Report taken.

5:44 p.m. Report of tractor-trailer unit stuck in road on East Main Street. The truck is delivering railroad ties and is stuck in the snow. NE Central Railroad will send someone out to assist.

11:30 p.m. 911 caller reports that he struck a deer with his vehicle on Turners Falls Road. Advises he does not need an ambulance; no smoke, fire, or fluids from vehicle. Advised caller to park off the roadway safely and await an officer.

Wednesday, 2/19

5:01 a.m. Caller reports seeing a deer huddled near a guardrail on Route 63, about a mile up from Swamp Road. Officer confirmed deceased deer in the middle of the roadway. Officer advises deer was moved off to the side of the roadway. MassDOT contacted and advised.

10:37 a.m. 911 caller from Grand Avenue reports a corner inside his house is on fire. Transferred to Shelburne Control; PD responding.

7:21 p.m. 911 caller reporting twelve suspicious lights in a row in the sky above the Greenfield police station. Transferred to Greenfield.

8:19 p.m. Report of vehicle striking gate at pedestrian bridge on Old Greenfield Road; at least two parties were arguing; arguing has since stopped. Officer requesting EMS due to airbag deployment and tow for vehicle. Officer requesting DPW be notified that the barrier is totally destroyed but the snowbank should be enough for now.

Thursday, 2/20

8:25 a.m. Officer flagged down near Seventh and Park streets by someone reporting a possible hit-and-run accident. Witness saw a dark-colored Jeep hit a car and flee. BOLO issued for a dark-colored Jeep Wrangler with front right damage.

11:43 p.m. 911 caller from Taylor Hill Road reports

her husband saw a green glow stick type of light on his property, near his garage. Caller reports last time they saw the light was when it went towards their boiler, which is behind their shed. Officer advises area was checked. Animal footprints located in area where caller saw a light; possibly a coyote or other wildlife.

Friday, 2/21

2:29 p.m. 911 caller reporting smoke alarms and the smell of something burning coming from an apartment on Avenue A. Transferred to Shelburne Control; PD responding.
3:49 p.m. Caller from L Street reports that the neighbor's fire hydrant is buried and he is 78 and can't dig it out; looking for fire or police to assist. Message left with DPW.

4:40 p.m. 911 caller reporting male party lying in the middle of the road near Scotty's; will not move. Second caller reporting same. Officer advises male gone on arrival; checked with employees, who saw him in the road but did not see him lying down. Additional caller states male is walking down the hill toward Unity Park. Unable to locate.

7:55 p.m. 911 caller reporting disturbance on Fourth Street. Referred to an officer.

8:27 p.m. Caller from Avenue A reports that there is a Jeep in the spot that she chipped the ice from; it is in a handicapped spot, and they don't have a visible placard. Referred to an officer.

Saturday, 2/22

12:49 a.m. 911 caller reports vehicle into snowbank on Fairway Avenue. Officer requesting tow for vehicle; advises registered owner got a ride home with a friend.

Sunday, 2/23

8:58 p.m. Report of loose husky with red bandana in the area of Old Sunderland Road.

Monday, 2/24

4:54 p.m. Caller from Fourth Street stating that a party against whom they have a no-trespass order was seen on camera pulling on the door, trying to break the lock and enter the building. Officer advised. Party has a no-extradition warrant out of South Carolina. Officer spoke with property manager, who will send video from a Ring camera. Officer informed involved party that this address is not listed on no-trespass order; advised to amend the order to include all locations. Investigated.

5:56 p.m. Caller wanted to

note that he went to Food City and when he came out, his hatch/tailgate was open and he was missing a ski. He also notes two people were looking and whispering in his direction and thought that was weird. He will come in to file a report.

Tuesday, 2/25

2:47 p.m. 911 caller reporting that she was just rear-ended by another vehicle on Millers Falls Road. Second caller reporting that prior to the accident she witnessed the grey truck fishtail and then burn out at Industrial Boulevard. Third caller reporting same; states there should be more police present when kids are leaving at the end of the day; concerned for others' safety. Citation issued.

5 p.m. 911 caller reporting someone is locked in the bathroom at the Bookmill; they have been knocking for the past 15 minutes and no one is answering. Concerned as they cannot gain access from outside the door and someone overdosed in the bathroom there last week. Officer advised; Shelburne Control contacted. Medical on scene. Medical and MPD officer both report nobody in bathroom.

6:02 p.m. Caller from J Street reporting dead skunk; concerned about how it died; would like animal control officer to pick it up. Contacted ACO, who said he would pick it up in the morning.

Wednesday, 2/26

3:11 a.m. Shelburne Control advises they received a 911 call from Millers Falls and the caller stated she thought someone was in her house. During call, reporting party advised that it was her printer going off and making noise. Call logged.

11:20 a.m. Caller states that there is a goose jaywalking on the Canal Road bridge over the river, creating a traffic hazard. ACO responding.

11:36 a.m. Caller states that there is a male party on the sidewalk in front of an empty storefront on Avenue A harassing customers of nearby stores and building tenants. Male party advised of complaint and told to move along. Involved male called in to report that a female assaulted him by blowing her car horn in his ear while he was trying to copy her vehicle plate number. Officer spoke to female caller and business owner and advised them of options.

Thursday, 2/27

4:55 a.m. Caller advises he was out walking this

morning and observed a large amount of water rushing out of a pipe that connected to a house on L Street. Officer advises no water coming from location; caller may have seen water from a sump pump.

10:14 a.m. 911 caller has called multiple times this morning to report non-sensical things about Elon Musk being held captive in Austin, Texas by his own family. Officer knocked on caller's door several times; no answer.

3:51 p.m. Caller requesting that a man be removed as he was drinking wine out of the bottle in a paper bag on the bench outside Food City. While on phone, caller checked, and he was no longer there.

4:10 p.m. Caller from Our Lady of Czestochowa concerned about a male party who is screaming and acting belligerent. Second caller reporting that male party was in church and is now outside. Officer advises he was told the party took off toward Avenue A. Area checked; no one matching description located.

4:37 p.m. 911 caller reporting party sitting on bench outside Food City; related to previous two calls. Officer requesting backup; party urinating all over the store. Officer requesting CSO. Party removed to hospital.

Friday, 2/28

5:01 a.m. 911 caller from Grand Avenue reports hearing a static or crackling noise coming from somewhere behind her house. Caller states she does not see anything, but the noise is worrisome. Officer advised caller that a small electric ATV was stuck in ice and running. No further issues.

4:46 p.m. Caller reporting an injured bird on Fourth Street. Advised caller of ACO's working hours; dispatch will leave a voicemail.
6:54 p.m. Caller reports that he hit a pothole driving up the Third Street hill and got a flat tire. He has parked his car on Prospect Street for the night until he can get the tire fixed tomorrow. Report taken.


7:33 p.m. Report of disturbance in apartment above Millers Pub. Units clear; both parties advised of options.

Saturday, 3/1

3:10 a.m. 911 caller from Avenue A states she is being threatened by a female; requesting police presence in area in case female comes from Greenfield to start trouble. Multiple complaints of same. Officer checked area; no signs of anyone in area.

see MPD next page

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MPD from page B3
Sunday, 3/2

5:25 a.m. 911 caller reports a male at the house is under the influence of something and is causing an issue. Courtesy transport provided.

12:44 p.m. Caller states that a female who was visiting her stole her bank card, then left for Vermont. Advised of options.

1:38 p.m. Caller from 253 Farmacy states that someone tried to use a counterfeit \$100 bill. Report taken.

5:55 p.m. Caller reporting suspicious person in the area of the play structure at Unity Park; would like an officer to look into it. Officer advises nobody at park

upon arrival.
Monday, 3/3

1:54 a.m. 911 caller states someone was actively inside his property on Montague City Road. Caller states he can see someone from his cameras while he is at work. Caller described individual as wearing all black. Upon arrival, officer located involved male, who stated he had permission to be inside and on property. Called caller back; caller stated party did not have permission and should not have been there. A 48-year-old Greenfield man was arrested and charged with unarmed burglary and larceny from a building.



MUSIK from page B1

Arrow label, which was compiled from podcasts during the early pandemic days. And let's not forget his cameo in *There's Something About Mary...* It's on YouTube, if you haven't seen it. He has turned up in other cool and random places too.

Jonathan has played western Mass before, at places like the Iron Horse, and you should check him out ASAP. There's really never been anyone like him. When we spoke he was getting ready for extensive touring at the end of February. No shows are listed in Massachusetts this time, but dates include New Hampshire, Philadelphia and Baltimore. Keep your eyes and ears open; he may be back in our area in the fall.

MMM: Hi Jonathan! Did you get into music at a young age? Did you have a musical childhood in general, and what kind of stuff did you listen to first?

JR: The most musical part of my childhood was listening to the radio start-

ing in the summer of 1962 when I was eleven. I loved The Crystals, Little Eva, The Ronettes, The Supremes, The Lovin' Spoonful, and later the first Mothers of Invention album and then The Velvet Underground!

MMM: Do you have any thoughts about the VU documentary?

JR: Yah. I think John Cale's words were the best thing in it!

MMM: Can you talk about the song "Roadrunner"? It's one of our favorites... We love the extended version!

JR: "Roadrunner?" When I'd borrow my father's station wagon, cruising round alone, I'd usually drive down round Route 9 and the Mass Pike around Route 128. But... sometimes I'd head west towards Worcester. I'd maybe get as far as Marlborough.

Kind of a sad, isolated way to spend an evening for an adolescent. I can't fully recommend it. It might have been bet-

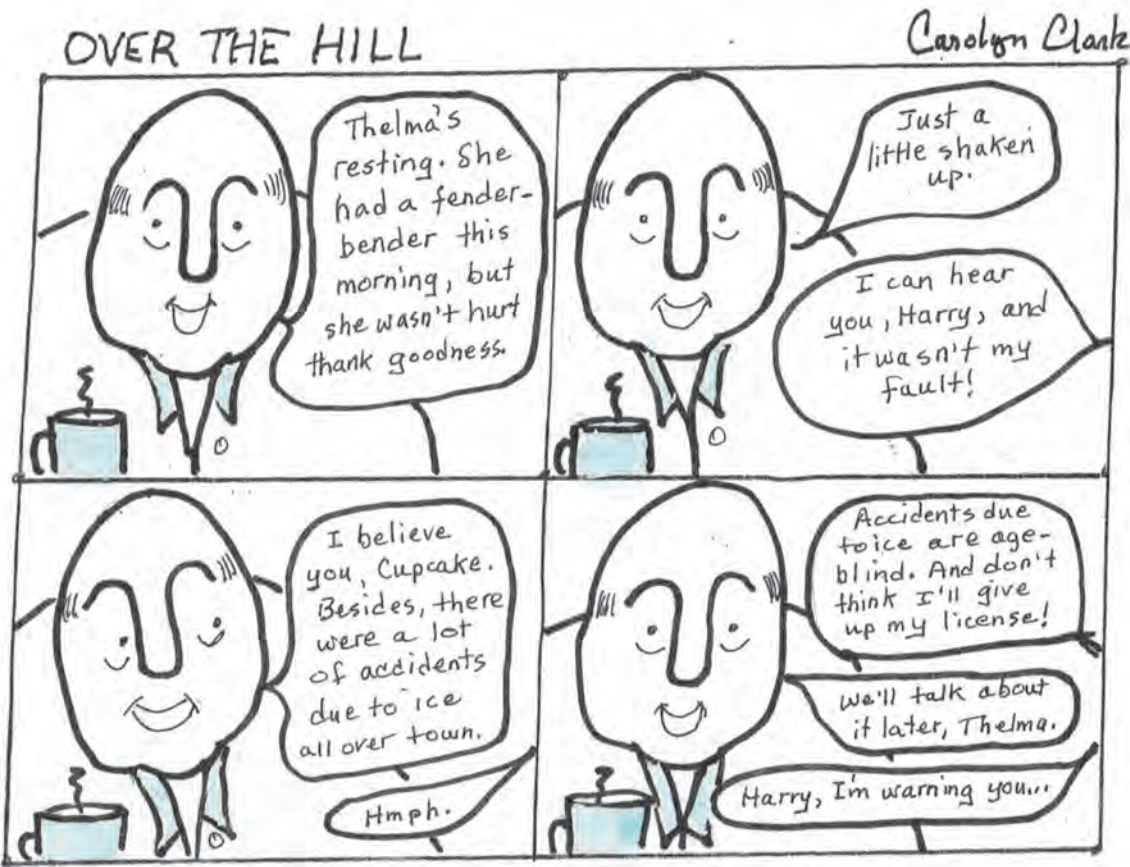
ter for me if no car had been available: I might have had to connect with other people. Or... walk!

MMM: Do you have any favorite restaurants?

JR: Do I have any favorite restaurants? Yes.

There is the Saegreifinn in the industrial part of the waterfront at Reykjavik in Iceland. There was mainly one thing on the menu: chowder. You ate that or you went someplace else. The old, stocky sea guys would come out to your picnic table in the parking lot in their aprons covered with gunk from the past. They'd throw the bowls down on the table. If it got on your pants, what were you there for? To eat, or to complain about stuff?

I do recommend that. See if you can go when the old crusty guys are behind the counter to snarl at ya. There's now women that work there too, but they're sort of friendly and that's not quite the vibe.



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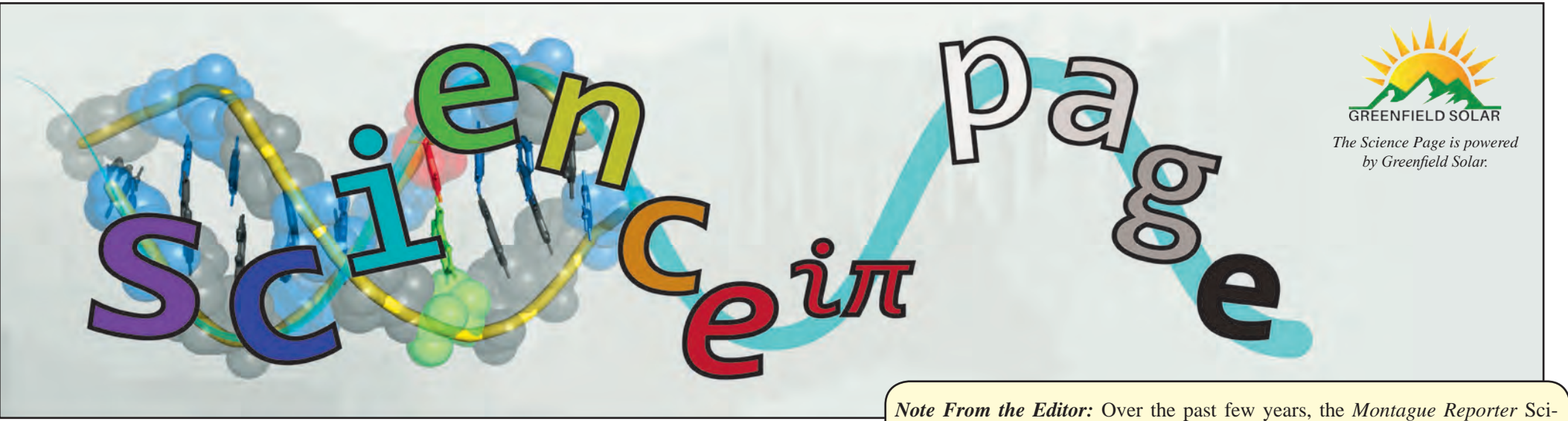
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Note From the Editor: Over the past few years, the *Montague Reporter* Science Page has included articles by research-oriented graduate students at UMass Amherst, and by a local medical doctor. In the interest of bringing more voices to the page we have begun a collaboration with the UMass graduate student organization Science Stories, and will be periodically putting stories from their “That’s Life [Science]” blog (www.sci-stories.org/thats-life-science) into print! This month’s feature is by Thomas Nuhfer, a Ph.D. student in the Organismic and Evolutionary Biology program at UMass. As always, we welcome scientifically-minded folks to submit their writing and analysis, or ideas for articles, to the Science Page at science@montaguereporter.org. – Spencer Shorkey

SCIENCE STORIES

Good Hosts, Good Guests: Parasitic Plants, Symbiosis, and Root Words

By THOMAS NUHFER

NORTHAMPTON – If you spend much time in Eastern deciduous forests, you’ve probably encountered several notorious local parasites. Chances are you’ve been bitten by mosquitos, ticks, or even leeches. But unless you’ve been looking very closely, you might not have noticed some of these forests’ most interesting parasites hiding in plain sight.

Epifagus virginiana, also called beech drops, is a small flower that exclusively parasitizes American beech trees (*Fagus grandifolia*). *E. virginiana* is the only species in its genus.

Most plants, including beech trees, get their energy from photosynthesis, where solar energy triggers a chemical reaction in the chloroplasts inside their cells. This process also gives beech leaves their green color. But while beech trees drink up the sun, beech drops take their sugars straight out of their host trees.

Beech drops and other parasitic plants have a special organ, called a “haustorium,” that pierces the tissues of the host plant and diverts or absorbs resources.

The word “symbiosis” is often used to describe a mutually beneficial ecological interaction – also called mutualism – but parasitism is also a type of symbiosis. Symbiosis literally translated means “living together.” Parasitism represents a finely-honed and intimate ecological relationship between parasite and host, where the parasite benefits and the host does not.

Beech drops aren’t the only plants using this clever resource-acquisition strategy – dodders, ghost pipes, and mistletoes also parasitize. Parasitism in plants has evolved independently at least 12 times.¹

While some parasitic plants engage in both photosynthesis and parasitism – also known as hemiparasitism – beech drops don’t photosynthesize at all. For that reason, these little plants have no chlorophyll – the stems and flowers are striped cream and purplish brown, and they have only tiny, vestigial leaves. From a distance, they look like dried twigs or sticks. Because these flowers die in the winter, they can’t continue to grow and feed from the same host year after year. For that reason, they don’t seem to do any significant damage to their hosts.

In fascinating and rare cases, beech drops have been observed in autoparasitic relationships, “feeding” from other members of their own species.²

These plants are very poorly understood. Only two papers about the species were pub-

lished in the last year. Beech drops mostly self-pollinate, and though they make a few flowers which may cross-pollinate, those cross-pollinating flowers are mostly sterile.³

Little is recorded about the pollination ecology of beech drops, though in 2013, researchers in North Carolina found ants visiting beech drops and carrying pollen.⁴ If there are animals that eat the seeds or browse the plants, those interactions are undocumented – and may be entirely unknown.

In the last few years, scientists have begun to document the microbiomes of beech drops in an attempt to better understand how the haustorium functions.⁵ For scientists, beech drops are an interesting lens into evolutionary processes because of how parasitism has allowed them to evolve away from photosynthesis.⁶ Because beech drops are sensitive to disturbance and prefer old, dense beech stands, they’ve been used as indicators to assess forest community health.⁷

But another parasite is putting beech drops at risk.

Litylenchus crenatae mccannii is a parasitic nematode responsible for Beech Leaf Disease.⁸ This new disease spreads rapidly and kills young beech trees at high rates. This will lead to a massive shift in Eastern deciduous forests in the United States, where

beech trees are foundational species.⁹ Since beech drops depend on the health of their beech tree hosts, these mysterious flowers may begin to disappear.

The words *host* and *guest* both come from the proto-Indo-European root word *ghos-ti*.¹⁰ *Ghos-ti* meant both “guest” and “host,” since it was assumed that hospitality was always broadly reciprocal. Beech trees host beech drops, and beech drops host their own secret ecosystems of microbiota and symbionts.

As I’ve learned more about mycorrhizae, soil microbes, and the human microbiome, the term *ghos-ti* has increasingly influenced my understanding of ecological interdependence. Beech drops, like the rest of us, take their turns as guests and hosts.

And beech drops, amazing little flowers that they are, have intrinsic value. They can remind us of the multitudes of unseen organisms living in strange, fascinating ways all around us. For every beech tree that is lost in this biodiversity crisis, we may lose many more living beings, and we lose the chance to understand them.

But it isn’t too late to get to know beech drops better. The other early meaning of the word *ghos-ti* was “stranger.” Who is a stranger but someone you haven’t met yet? Want to study beech drops? Please – be my guest!

Left column, top to bottom: American beech (*F. grandifolia*); beech drops (*E. virginiana*); microscope images of *L. crenatae mccannii*; beech leaf disease caused by *L. crenatae mccannii*. You can report sightings of beech leaf disease at www.mass.gov/guides/beech-leaf-disease-in-massachusetts.

Below, left: Flowers of *E. virginiana*. Below, right: Herbarium specimen of *E. virginiana* engaged in autoparasitism, rooted in another member of the same species instead of a beech tree.



CC PHOTO BY KATJA SCHULZ



CC PHOTO BY GILLES AYOITE

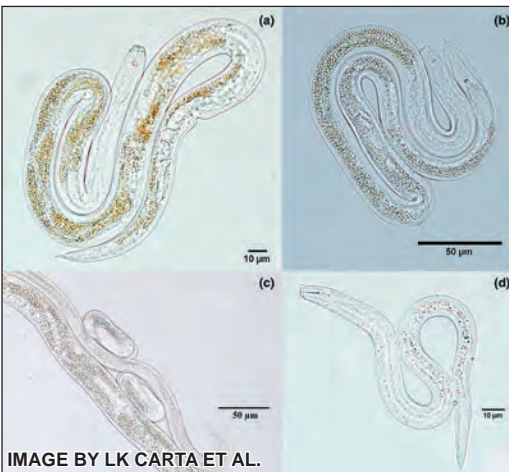


IMAGE BY LK CARTA ET AL.



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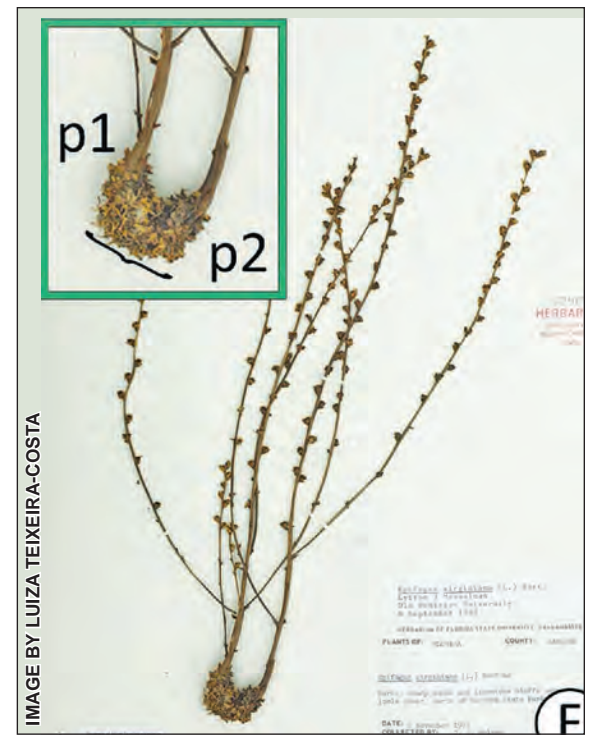


IMAGE BY LUIZA TEIXEIRA-COSTA

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66 AVENUE A • TURNERS FALLS

EVENTS

THURSDAY, MARCH 6

Brewery at Four Star Farms, Northfield: *Silverback Swing*. 6 p.m. No cover.

Greenfield Garden Cinemas, Greenfield: *Film Sprint Festival*. 6:30 p.m. Free.

Taproot, Williamsburg: *Clancy Conlin, Wendy Eisenberg, Aviva Yarrow*. 7 p.m. \$.

Nova Arts, Keene: *The Rear Defrosters*. 7 p.m. \$.

YMCA, Greenfield: *Pioneer Valley Roller Derby* recruitment night. No experience or gear required. All genders and bodies welcome. Register at pioneervalleyrollerderby.com. 7:15 p.m. Free.

FRIDAY, MARCH 7

Canalside Rail Trail, Turners Falls: *Nice & Easy Walk*. Easy-paced, one- to two-mile guided walk, geared for seniors, but open to all. Meet at the Great Falls Discovery Center. 1 p.m. Free.

Waterway Arts, Turners Falls: *Sadie's Bikes Gumball Machine Takeover*. Featured artists *Mo Schweiger* and *Lindee Deal*; tarot by *K. Adler*. Refreshments. 5 p.m. Free.

Montague Common Hall, Montague Center: Film, *Casablanca* (1942). BYOB and snacks "speakeasy" with music at 6 p.m., feature at 7 p.m. By donation.

Bishop's Lounge, Northampton: *Ruth Garbus Trio, Stella Kola, Cowperson, The Classics, Ruby Lou*. See www.backporchfest.com for full schedule. 6 p.m. \$.

33 Hawley, Northampton: *Cedric Watson & Bijou Creole, Expandable Brass Band, CJ Chenier & The Red*



Documentaries on the Millers Falls Tool Company (left) and Montague Mill (right) screen Saturday at the Discovery Center.



Hot Louisiana Band. See www.backporchfest.com for full schedule. 6 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Drew Paton*. 6:30 p.m. No cover.

Buoyant Heart, Brattleboro: *Slow Pony, Zoë Basha, Wishbone Zoë, A Dusk on the Land, Sneff the Clown*. 6:30 p.m. \$.

Unnameable Books, Turners Falls: Reading, *R. Kay, Michael Fracentese, Zac Smith, L. Scully, Mayah Monet Lovell*; open mic. 7 p.m. Free.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Carol Devine & The Mighty Fine*. 7 p.m. No cover.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: Opening reception, *New Roots in River Banks: Polish and Other Eastern Immigrant Stories*. A work of love and family genealogy, New Roots draws on historical and personal family documents, photographs and other aspects of material culture to present the experience of three Eastern European immigrant families and their process of settling and thriving in the Connecticut River Valley. 7 p.m. Free.

Nova Arts, Keene: *George,*

David Kontak. 7 p.m. \$.

Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *Next Stop Comedy*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

The Tank, Agawam: *Conifere, Prayer Position, Compress*. All ages. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Suzanne Vega*. 8 p.m. \$\$.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *Ben Richter*. 8 p.m. \$.

Cold Spring Hollow, Belchertown: *Windscur, Cryovacs, Plucking Feathers From a Swan Song, Silbert/Tonne*. 8 p.m. By donation.

Roos-Rohde House, Hampshire College: *Bromp Treb, Bird Organ, Giant Enemy Cancer Cult*. 8 p.m. \$.

Academy of Music, Northampton: *The Songs of Neil Young*. 8 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, MARCH 8

Greenfield Public Library, Greenfield: *Winter Farmers Market*. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. \$.

Pratt Music Hall, Mount Holyoke College: *Sahana Banerjee*. 10 a.m. Free.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: Reception for *New England Dreamscapes*, exhibit by Sarah Adam. 11 a.m. Free.

Brewery at Four Star Farms, Northfield: *Maple Fest 2025*. 12 p.m. No cover.

Leverett Crafts & Arts, Leverett: Reception for *Louise Minks and Friends* exhibit. 1 p.m. Free.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: Films, *The Mill at Montague* (1991) and *Factory Tour of Millers Falls Tools* (1943), with questions and answers, presented by Montague Historical Society and the Friends of the Discovery Center. For teens and adults. 2 p.m. Free.

Northampton Friends Meeting, Northampton: *Annual Celebration of International Women's Day*, presented by *Western Mass CodePink* with a focus on indigenous and immigrant women. Includes guest speakers and musicians. 2 p.m. Free.

Retreat Farm, Brattleboro: *Thus Love, Everwhat Brass Band*. 5 p.m. \$.

Bishop's Lounge, Northampton: *Goldsetter, Sapien Joyride, Jeff Coyne, Splendid Torch, Norma Jean, Karlo Rueby*. See www.backporchfest.com for full schedule. 5 p.m. \$.

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| Feb 22 COLLAGE CLUB! 1-3pm \$10 | Feb 26 OPEN MIC FOR WRITERS! 7-9pm \$10 | Feb 27 Figure Drawing 6-8pm \$15 |
| March 1st Vision Mapping 1-3pm \$15 | March 2 Writing Workshop with Stella Corso 4-6pm \$40 | Tuesdays in March Expressive Arts Shindig 6:30-9pm \$15 |
| March 5 Risograph Mini Zine Workshop 5-8pm \$60 | March 6 Still Life Social 6-8pm \$10 | March 8 Simple Darning Workshop 1-3pm \$15 |
| March 9th Quilting 101 Part 2 (3 week series) 3:30-6pm \$155 | March 12 Make a Marionette! (7 week series) 6-8pm \$225 | March 15 Needle Felt Penguin 12-3pm \$35 |

Find tickets and details at LOOKYHEREGREENFIELD.COM

EXHIBITS

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Atomic Dog: What I did to beat the blues*, paintings by Ryan McGinn, through April.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Where We Are, Together*, paintings by Cameron Schmitz, through May 26. *Deep Roots: A History of Agriculture in the Connecticut River*, hallway display.

Montague Center Library: *Ann Feitelson: Quilts*, through May 2. Reception next Wednesday, March 12 at 5:30 p.m.

Sawmill River Arts, Montague Center: *Jacqueline Strauss*, soft sculpture creatures, through March, followed by *Hallie's Comet Fine Jewelry* by Christina Giebner, March 20 through May 20.

Leverett Library, Leverett: *Feathers and Fur*, by Mary Schreiber, through April.

Leverett Crafts & Arts, Leverett: *Louise Minks and Friends*, historical portrait work by Minks and student works. Through March, with a reception this Saturday, March 8, from 1 to 4 p.m.

Artspace Gallery, Greenfield: *Teen Art Show*, work by youngsters across Franklin

County, March 14 through April 25, with a reception Friday, March 14 at 5 p.m.

Looky Here, Greenfield: *Kids' Art Show*, works by area youth, through March 28.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *New England Dreamscapes*, new paintings on slate by Sarah Adam, through April. Reception this Saturday, March 8 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Fiddleheads Gallery, Northfield: *Annual Photography Exhibit*, nineteen New England photographers exhibiting in black and white and color. Through March 30.

Gallery A3, Amherst: *Sue Katz and Gloria Kegeles*, photographs, painted wood, and assemblage. Through March 29, reception this Thursday, March 6, at 5 p.m.

Shelburne Arts Coop, Shelburne Falls: *Animal, Vegetable, Mineral*, paintings by Edith Bingham.

Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne: *Student Art Exhibit*, by fifth and sixth graders at Mohawk school district. Through April 27. Reception Saturday, March 15 at 2 p.m.

CALLS FOR ART

The Montague Center Library is looking for artwork and poetry for a community

exhibit from May 5 to July 2. Create an artwork inspired by a poem, or write a poem inspired by an artwork, and bring both the piece and the inspiration to the library on April 30. For information, email kmartineau@cwmares.org.

Greenfield Community College's *literary journal, Plum*, has sent out a call for poetry, fiction, essays, and visual art for their spring edition. Work will be considered from artists and writers in the region and anyone affiliated with the college. Submissions will be accepted through April 1. Guidelines and more information at gcc.mass.edu/plum.

CASTING CALL

The **Wendell Meetinghouse** is looking for two actors who can play a man and a woman, mid-20s to 50, in a production of *Swamped*, a full-length play written and directed by Court Dorsey. Stipends available if cast. Rehearsals will take place at the Wendell Meetinghouse. Respond to courtcdorsey@gmail.com for more information or to arrange audition. Rehearsals begin soon, and proceed on a slow track until the production in June.

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CALENDAR



looking forward...

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19

Brick House Community Resource Center, Turners Falls: *Community & Family Cooking Class with Dinner*. Kyle from Just Roots will lead participants in cooking a meal which they will then enjoy together. To register, contact Stacey Langknecht at (413) 800-2496 or slangknecht@brickhousecommunity.org. 5 p.m. Free.

THURSDAY, MARCH 20

Easthampton High School, Easthampton: *The Performance Project* presents *Mother Tongue*. For ages 12 and up. 6:30 p.m. Free admission.

SUNDAY, MARCH 23

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Rare Geese, Connect 4, rev.web, Zane Kanevsky*. 9:30 p.m. \$.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26

Space Ballroom, Hamden, CT: *Horsegirl, Free Range, Pulsr*. 8 p.m. \$.

THURSDAY, APRIL 3

Belltower Records, North Adams: *Erica Dawn Lyle & Marshall Trammell, belltonesuicide, Hurry Scurry, Cryovacs*. 7 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, APRIL 5

Whately Town Hall, Whately: *Max Wareham & The National Bluegrass Team; Berklee Women and Non-Binary People Ensemble*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, APRIL 12

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Joan Osborne*. 8 p.m. \$

SATURDAY, MAY 3

French King Bowling, Erving: *Bowl for Kids' Sake*, fundraiser for *Big Brothers Big Sisters of Western Mass*. Register your team at www.bbbswm.org/events. 10 a.m. \$.

SATURDAY, MAY 24

Palladium, Worcester: *Obituary, Nails, Terror, SpiritWorld*. 7 p.m. \$.

TUESDAY, JUNE 10

Tree House Brewing, Deerfield: *Aimee Mann, Jonathan Coulton*. 7 p.m. \$\$.

MONDAY, JULY 21

Look Park, Northampton: *Iron & Wine, I'm With Her*. 6:30 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 9

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Bonnie "Prince" Billy*. 7 p.m. \$ (Tickets go on sale this Friday.)

Montague Common Hall, Montague Center: *Common Hall Open Mic*, with featured performer *m & e duo: Malgorzata Lach*, guitar, and *Eileen Ruby*, voice. 6:30 p.m. By donation.

Pioneer Valley Brewery, Turners Falls: *Chick-N-Wire*. 7 p.m. No cover.

Academy of Music, Northampton: *The Travelin' McCourys, Sam Grisman Project, East Nash Grass*. 7 p.m. \$\$.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Surfajettes, The Black Widows*. 7 p.m. \$.

Loculus Studios, Holyoke: *Subharmonics*, a talk by *Jake Maginsky*, with videos by *Sarah Lanzilotta, Slipper Grass*. \$ 7 p.m.

Vermont Jazz Center, Brattleboro: *Hunbertones*, six-piece jazz-funk. 7:30 p.m. \$\$.

Symphony Hall, Springfield: *An Acoustic Evening with Trey Anastasio*. 7:30 p.m. \$\$.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *SoulKeys*. In the lobby. 8 p.m. \$.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *The Surfajettes, The Black Widows*. 8 p.m. \$.

Firehouse, Worcester: *Bromp Treb, Bicentennial Memorial, Accordion Chair, Playbackers*. 8 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *BTown Jazz Trio*. 9:30 p.m. No cover.

SUNDAY, MARCH 9

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Robbie Fulks, Whiskey Treaty Roadshow, Tony Trischka's Earl Jam*. See www.backporchfest.com for full schedule. 1:45 p.m. \$.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Quabbin Obscura: The Swift River in Black & White*. Artist *Burt V. Brooks (1849-1934)* captured the landscapes and daily life in the "drowned towns" before the Quabbin Reservoir was filled. 2 p.m. Free.

Sweeney Concert Hall, Smith College, Northampton: *Expressivo! Piano Quartet*. 3 p.m. \$.

Unnameable Books, Turners Falls: Reading, *Amanda Nadelberg, Asha Futterman, Hannah Brooks-Motl*. 4 p.m. Free.

Epsilon Spires, Brattleboro: *Abstract Turntablism Workshop by Maria Chavez*, 5 p.m., followed by a concert at 8 p.m. \$.

Quarters, Hadley: *Dungeons & Dragons Trivia Night*. 7 p.m. \$.

Academy of Music, Northampton: *Lucinda Williams*. 7 p.m. \$\$.

Sulis Studio, Florence:

Axine M, Karol Konstancia, Joe Mygan. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Cold Spring Hollow, Belchertown: *RAFGAK, Rare Geese, Swamp God, Barbie.AI*, more. 7:30 p.m. \$.

MONDAY, MARCH 10

Stone Soup, Greenfield: *Community Soup Night*. 5 p.m. By donation.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Enter the Haggis*. 7 p.m. \$\$.

TUESDAY, MARCH 11

Erving Public Library, Erving: *Red Cross Hands Only CPR*. No sign-up, open to all. Free. 5:30 p.m.

Bombyx Center, Florence: *Alan Doyle, Fortunate Ones*. 6:30 p.m. \$.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12

Montague Center Library, Montague: Reception for *Quilts*, exhibit by *Ann Feitelson*. 5:30 p.m. Free.



Ragged Blue play the Full Moon Coffeeshouse at the Wendell town hall next Saturday, March 15. Proceeds benefit the Wendell Free Library.

Greenfield Public Library, Greenfield: *Death Café*. Part of a series on death and dying. 5:30 p.m. Free.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Enter the Haggis*. 7 p.m. \$\$.

The Drake, Amherst: *Sean Mason Quartet*. 7:30 p.m. \$\$.

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

THURSDAY, MARCH 13

New Salem Public Library, New Salem: *West African Drumming Class*, presented by *Jafar Manselle and the Wendell Warriors*. Performance followed by drumming workshop. Drums provided, or bring one from home. 6:30 p.m. Free.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Griffin William Sherry*. 7 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Honky Tonk Heartbreak*, vinyl listening party. 8 p.m. No cover.

FRIDAY, MARCH 14

Riverside, Gill: *Nice & Easy Walk*. Easy-paced, one- to two-mile guided walk, geared for seniors, but open to all. Meet at the Great Falls Discovery Center in Turners Falls. 1 p.m. Free.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Kidleidoscope Story Hour* for ages three to six, accompanied by an adult. Learn about spring in the Connecticut River Watershed through story, activities, and crafts. 1:30 p.m. Free.

Artspace, Greenfield: Reception for *Teen Art Show*. 5 p.m. Free.

Montague Common Hall, Montague Center: *Montague Square Dance*, with the *Old Fashioneds* and caller *Will Mentor*. Jammers welcome. Families welcome for circle dances and beginner squares. 6:30 p.m.; regular squares, 8 p.m. By donation.

Unnameable Books, Turners Falls: Reading, *Dana Maple Feeney, Colin Weinstein*, mystery guest. 7 p.m. Free.

Looky Here, Greenfield: *Open mic for writers*. 7 p.m. By donation.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Great Craic Blackguard*, Irish band. 7:30 p.m. No cover.

Floodwater Brewing, Shelburne Falls: *Moon Hollow*. 7 p.m. No cover.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Alash Ensemble, Garth Stevenson*. 7 p.m. \$.

Nova Arts, Keene: *Charlie Chronopoulos, Midnight Betty*. 7 p.m. \$.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Cinemastorm* movie double feature: *Office Space, Idiocracy*. 7:30 p.m. Free.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Wishbone Zoë Band* playing *Cheap Trick, Pearl Sugar, Cowperson*. 8 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Ashley Rhodes*. 9:30 p.m. No cover.

SATURDAY, MARCH 15

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Mud Season* feat. *The Dave Bulley Band, Bow Thayer, Lee Toten, Chica Fuego, Valerie Newman, Pre-Emption Road, Space Bar*, more. 12 p.m. \$.

Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne: Reception for *Student Art Exhibit*. 2 p.m. Free.

Montague Common Hall, Montague Center: *The Rhizome Project with Moira Smiley*. Community singing workshop, 3 p.m.; potluck, 5 p.m.; concert, 6:30 p.m. No one turned away for lack of funds. Tickets at www.weathervane-arts.org. \$.

Four Phantoms Brewing, Greenfield: *Derek Bridges*. 6 p.m. No cover.

Brewery at Four Star Farms, Northfield: *PJ Pacifico*. 6 p.m. No cover.

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

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *All Cooped Up!* Franklin County Musicians Cooperative presents *Orlen, Gabriel & Avery, Small Change, Larry LeBlanc, Pat & Tex*, and many more solo artists, duos, and small groups. Folk, rock, country, Celtic, jazz, swing. All ages. 7 p.m. By donation.

Mount Toby Friends Meetinghouse, Leverett: *Colleen Kattau*. 7 p.m. \$.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Big Bad Bollocks*. 7 p.m. \$.

Institute for Musical Arts, Goshen: *Jami Sieber, Kim Chin-Gibbons*. 7 p.m. \$.

Full Moon Coffeeshouse, Wendell: *Ragged Blue*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Stationery Factory, Dalton: *The Slambovian Circus of Dreams*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

The Drake, Amherst: *Mengers, WAAH, Sapien Joyride, Phrøeggs*. 8 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Folly of Three, The Fake Nudes, Creative Writing*. 9 p.m. No cover.

SUNDAY, MARCH 16

Element Brewing, Millers Falls: *Boys of the Landfill*. 1 p.m. No cover.

Erving Public Library, Erving: Author talk, *Judy McIntosh*, discussing her writing journey and her latest book, *Swift River Secrets*, a contemporary mystery with family feuds and grudges going back to the drowning of four towns to create the Quabbin Reservoir. Registration appreciated at (413) 423-3348, but not required. 2 p.m. Free.

Brewery at Four Star Farms, Northfield: *Ragged Blue*. 3 p.m. No cover.

Unnameable Books, Turners Falls: Reading, *Ariel Yelen, Ari Banias, Phoebe Glick*. 4 p.m. Free.

Feeding Tube Records, Florence: *Ian St. George, Franklin's Mint*. 4 p.m. \$.

Darlings, Easthampton: *Space Camp, Landowner*. 7 p.m. \$.

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SECOND HONORS
Louis Burek, Makhi Doyle, Kenzie Flaxington, Carter Greene, Hanna Kyselyova, Ivy O'Donnell, Anthony Warren

THIRD HONORS
Madden Coates, Rylee Malek, Ava Sena, Jaxson Yates

– Grade 7 –

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THIRD HONORS
Makenzie Angove-Disciuolo, Lylah Brocklesby, Eliza Carew, Samuel Choleva, Kylie Collazo, Audrina Gexler, Lailah Jenks, Jamison Johnson, Mariah Larson, Leana Lopez, Malakai Patnode, James Sanchez, Rhiannon Smith, Westin Tela, Leon Tomas Mejia, Parker Walters

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THIRD HONORS
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BOOK from page B1

only successfully challenged the status quo of their times, but continue to resound today as our country backslides into its unfortunate, mostly forgotten-by-design history.

Imagine Belinda X. Kidnapped in Africa and shackled below the deck of the ship that transported her across the Atlantic, she was enslaved for more than 50 years until 1775, when her owner Isaac Royal took refuge from the American Revolution in England. Seventy years old with an infirm daughter, she sued Royal's Massachusetts estate for reparations for her unpaid labor. And won!

How about Paul Jennings? Enslaved as a servant in James Madison's White House, he loyally helped Dolly Madison flee Washington as British troops approached the city in 1814. Later, while enslaved as a servant to Daniel Webster in 1848, he helped orchestrate the largest mass escape of slaves in American history. All 77 of the escapees were captured, but their being sold afterwards to plantations in Georgia and Louisiana led to the passage of a law in the nation's capital that made illegal the sale of already enslaved people.

Enter Mary Ellen Pleasant, whose pledge of continued support for John Brown was found in his pocket after he was arrested for leading the attack at Harper's Ferry; Henry

Harland Garnet, who advocated for Black students to have the benefit of Black as well as white teachers; and Robert Morris, who argued that segregation created inferior schools for white as well as Black students.

Sarah Parker Remond brought national attention to the sexual exploitation of enslaved Black women; Moses Brown, a former slave trader, turned ardent abolitionist when 109 of the 169 captured Africans he was transporting to America died at sea; Elizabeth Buffum Chace fought to have Black abolitionists accepted as equals by white abolitionists; Jane Swisshelm undermined Daniel Webster's campaign for the American presidency by exposing in the *New York Tribune* his continual drunken state and his illegitimate mixed-race family; and Delia Webster (no relation) served her sentence for assisting fugitive slaves as the only female prisoner in the prison in Frankfort, Kentucky.

Is it any wonder the stories of these heroic people have been marginalized to the point of eventually being forgotten? To what extent might our country's current history be different if their voices hadn't been perceived, and then framed by those in power, as threatening the status quo?

To what degree do these distant mirrors reflect the current practice of reversing the



Authors Amilcar Shabazz (left) and Tom Weiner will speak at a book launch in Hadley next Thursday, March 13.

social progress made by movements which advocate for "diversity, equity, and inclusion?" When did these words, which convey such noble sentiments, suddenly make white people feel uncomfortable? What fears of possible retribution by those at the centers of power led so many organizations to eliminate any future efforts in this regard?

Why should today's students be denied the opportunity to have their inherited ideas

and values challenged by exposure and discussion? When did one history come to represent the story of so many people whose American experience might be different?

Weiner and Shabazz, in their own ways and for similar reasons, are not much different from the historic personages in their book, the defiant aim of which is "to introduce readers to people not so widely known but who should be, and to show how they made a history worth looking at, honoring, and learning from today."

What would such a country look like? Imagine a nation that recognized not one history but many histories, believed not in one faith but many faiths, favored not one language but accepted many languages, celebrated not one culture but many cultures, respected more than two genders, and judged people, in the dream of Dr. Martin Luther King, "by the content of their character."

Odyssey Books in South Hadley will host a book launch for Tom Weiner and Amilcar Shabazz on Thursday, March 13, starting at 7 p.m. The event is free and open to the public. In Defiance: 20 Abolitionists You Were Never Taught in School is also available for purchase at other local bookstores and Amazon.com.

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Amanda Gorman, *The Hill We Climb*

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