

The Montague Reporter

A Simple Friday Tradition: The Fab Five Make Their Mark



Left to right: Sherry Wood, Carol Gloski, Charlotte Choleva, and Susan Hastings meet every Friday morning in their corner booth at the Shady Glen, continuing a tradition that began in 1982.

By MIKE JACKSON

TURNERS FALLS – “One Friday,” Charlotte Choleva begins to explain it, “we had gone to church, because our friend’s mother had passed away, it was a funeral mass, and we decided to come and have breakfast before we went to school. And we loved it.”

That was 1982, and no one could have known then that a routine breakfast meetup among a group of Turners Falls elementary school teachers would last for years, and then decades, and that over time the colleagues would become best friends and then something quite like family.

It is Friday morning, and we are sitting in

the corner booth at the Shady Glen – the corner booth, as it turns out, occupied most Fridays since then. Today is a special occasion, as the diner’s ownership has authorized the group to mount a small plaque in the booth: *Fabulous Five, Est. 1982.*

“We would do the first Friday for a couple-three years,” Choleva recalls. “And then we would go every other Friday. And then we forgot what Friday it was, either on or off, so we started coming every Friday. And even during during the summer and vacations...”

For the first five years, the breakfast lineup was Choleva, Susan Hastings, Sylvia Hassett, and Connie Sicard. In 1987, Sherry Wood was invited to join them.

see **FABULOUS** page A4

LEVERETT SELECTBOARD Highway, Fire Departments Make Case for More Staffing

By GEORGE BRACE

Annual budget hearings continued on a cold night in Leverett on Tuesday, with the selectboard and finance committee reviewing draft budgets from the highway, police, and fire departments. The board heard recommendations from the personnel board and an update on the town’s health insurance situation, and set a tentative schedule for the remaining budget hearings.

Board member Jed Proujansky served as chair, as Patricia Duffy was participating remotely.

Highway superintendent Matt Boucher received a round of applause for the department’s work clearing roads of snow the previous two days and acknowledged that he hadn’t slept much recently before presenting a draft budget of \$159,165 for non-salary expenses, meeting the selectboard’s guidance of a maximum 2.5% increase over the current year.

Boucher said this draft also fulfilled the board’s request for a level-services budget and, with the addition of a new “mixed duty” employee whose salary was not yet included, his desired budget.

The three non-salary lines for which Boucher is seeking increases are repairs; winter maintenance; and parts, tools and equipment.

see **LEVERETT** page A5

GILL SELECTBOARD Town Budget Getting Close To Levy Limit

By KATE SAVAGE

On Monday, the Gill selectboard braved the lingering snowstorm to vote on the tax rate and discuss school regionalization votes.

Gill households will pay an average of \$5,029 in property tax this year, up \$333 from last year. Bill Tomb of the board of assessors presented the numbers, with a new tax rate of \$14.91 per \$1,000 in value, up 25 cents from last year’s rate. House values have also increased 5.8% on average since last year.

Tomb noted that the current budget puts the town only \$14,000 below the maximum allowable levy. That leaves little wiggle room in upcoming budget discussions, and the threat of triggering a Proposition 2½ override vote. Last year, the excess levy was \$121,000.

The selectboard voted to keep a single tax rate for all properties, with no exemptions for open space, residential homes, or small businesses. There was some discussion of a residential exemption which would allow the town to charge higher taxes on vacation homes and short-term rental properties, but

see **GILL** page A6

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD Plans for Vote On Six-Town Regionalization Emerge Slowly

By JEFF SINGLETON

On Monday, the Montague selectboard endorsed a new letter requesting special state legislation to allow residents of Gill, Northfield, Bernardston, Leyden, and Warwick to vote on a regional agreement to create a new school district. A similar letter was sent earlier this month, but since then legal counsel for the state Senate clarified the process.

The updated letter was being drafted by the Six Town Regionalization Planning Board (STRPB), the committee writing the regional agreement, at the request of state senator Jo Comerford and representative Susannah Whipps.

It was a busy meeting, with the board members approving three new hires, four employee status changes, and two resignations. They also reviewed in great detail Montague’s two most recent community development block grants (CDBG), which provide the town funding for social services, housing rehabilitation, and development.

Town administrator Walter Ramsey began the discussion of the school district vote by

see **MONTAGUE** page A7

Resident-Led Group Charts A Path Toward Housing Security In Montague

By CHARLOTTE MURTISHAW

MONTAGUE – Pushing for the redevelopment of the Farren Hospital property to prioritize affordable housing has been a long road – but for Jenna Weld, it’s far from the end of the line, as attendees will learn at the Montague Housing Coalition’s public launch event at the Brick House next Wednesday evening.

“Community should be a safe space,” says Weld. “It should be people that are standing up to make sure that their neighbor is there for them if they need it, and that they’re there for their neighbor.”

Weld has the credentials to back up the talk. Since moving to town over a decade ago with her husband and infant son, she has become heavily involved in community advocacy. She is a member of the Peer Ambassadors program, a group for parents and caretakers to support each other, and also advised town officials on the recent Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness program.

In all these conversations, Weld says, housing insecurity has been a throughline, signaling the need for more attention and resources – more than any single model or development can solve.

“The Farren project was not small. It

see **HOUSING** page A6



“It’s not pretty,” Gill-Montague business director Joanne Blier told the school committee Tuesday.

G-M SCHOOL COMMITTEE Admin Nixes New Positions, Must Still Cut \$1.14 Million

By MIKE JACKSON

GILL-MONTAGUE – A deficit in the regional school district’s FY’27 budget that stood last week at \$2.17 million had been reduced to \$1.14 million by Tuesday, when the Gill-Montague school committee voted unanimously and without much discussion to approve a preliminary budget.

“It’s not pretty,” business director Joanne Blier told the committee.

Blier explained that \$795,000 had been eliminated since the prior week by eliminating every proposed “new” position, including part-time human resources and assistant pupil services roles, a new custodian, a number of instructional assistants, and the restoration of two previously eliminated positions, the director of teaching and learning and the school police officer (SRO).

“That doesn’t mean that we’re going to not bring any of those back,” she said, “but it does mean that right now we’re removing them for the purpose of voting this preliminary budget.”

Revenue estimates for two categories of state funding – Chapter 70 education aid and rural school aid – were revised upward by \$45,000 and \$195,000 respectively. Blier said that though governor Maura Healey’s

see **GMRSD** page A4



Photojournalist Joe R. Parzych reported on Sunday’s epic snowstorm from the loading docks at Foster’s Supermarket *ni Greenfield.*

A Reliable Way to Acknowledge Another Week Has Passed

Leaves Little Wiggle Room.....	A1	Reports of Flickering Lights.....	A6	A Very Loud Weird Noise.....	B3
What We Have Is Always Changing.....	A2	The Exposure of Spiritualism.....	A7	Place Where You Sink in Mire.....	B4
Find Yourself in Deep Horror.....	A2	A Full Court Alley-Oop.....	A8	Nuts and Seeds and Pine Needles.....	B4
Tend to Your Nervous System.....	A3	Reemerging From the Shadows.....	B1	Mental Reaction of Musicians.....	B5
Over Light and Raisin Toast.....	A4	Parts of an Interwoven Braid.....	B1	Magic Tuber, Fragile Rabbit.....	B6
Flurry of Communications.....	A5	Just Practicing Noticing.....	B2	Aalfs, Brotto, Yaya Bey, Knoll.....	B7
Poison Pill in the Process.....	A6	Prized for Its Tough Skin.....	B3	Shift to an Alternate Plane.....	B8

The Montague Reporter

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August 2002

Moderation

We encourage your letters! Please keep them coming. As a reminder, we ask readers to limit themselves to four letters in a year. (Please don’t make us do the work of counting!) We also request a maximum of two letters within a given three-month span, and two a year on any one topic. Thanks! This is for your safety.

Letters

to

the Editors



Involve Yourself In the Town Budget

There is a new page on the Town of Montague’s website this year that provides helpful information about the Town’s annual budget process – a process that is underway right now. Currently, the “FY27 Municipal Budget Planning Page” can be found under “Latest News” the left side of the town website home page, or accessed directly at www.montague-ma.gov/n/425/.

We applaud the town’s effort to create more transparency about the budget, and we encourage Montague residents to review this new resource to better understand how the budget is developed, who is involved, and how residents can participate in the process.

Between now and April, consider attending Selectboard and Finance Committee meetings, which take place every week on Zoom, to gather information and make sense of how our money is being spent. Meeting agendas are posted in advance on the town website so that residents can plug in where they have a particular interest or specific concerns.

Ultimately the budget is reviewed, discussed and approved at town meeting – scheduled this year on Saturday, May 2. While only town meeting members can vote on the budget, all residents are encouraged to attend.

In light of unprecedented federal funding cuts and skyrocketing expenses, municipalities are facing greater challenges to prioritize how their resources are deployed. As citizens, we can provide valuable input that allows our town leaders to make smart budgetary decisions.

**Judith Lorei
Leigh Rae
Montague Center**

‘Democracy in Action’

Any town, in order to consider and decide whether or not to pass a non-binding resolution, has to engage in a democratic process. The community gathers together at a Town meeting to hash out the pros and cons and democratically decide the issue.

The issue was not “pulled” into the “civic identity” of towns, as if by force or coercion. Montague decided, democratically, as a group of moral human beings, to adopt a non-binding resolution to declare itself an “Apartheid Free Community.” The community decided to express its collective sentiment on the ongoing domination, subjugation, oppression, and genocide of the Palestinian people by Israel.

Residents are free to object to this decision, but this is how healthy pluralistic democracy operates in a town, and an example of what makes a free society possible.

Some argue that “apartheid” is historically loaded, and that’s because it is an historical reality. Apartheid is an actual thing in international law. It refers to the cruel organized system of oppression and domination

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or the final week of December.*

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NINA ROSSI ILLUSTRATION



Dr. Sylvia Ban and Dr. Myeong Chae recently purchased the Apex Dental practice at 173 Avenue A in downtown Turners Falls. They plan to rebrand it as “Avenue A Family Dental,” and will handle everything from pediatric dental care to root canals.

‘Before There Is No Safe Place’

I am a Jewish resident of our community and I am against fascism in the United States, in Israel, and anywhere in the world. I am in strong support of the Apartheid Free Western Mass pledge.

Apartheid is a system where one group has more power and rights than another. Palestinians in the occupied territories live in an open-air prison without basic human rights – Israel controls how much food and water enters Gaza, which is not enough for them to survive.

This level of fascist subjugation resembles our own treatment of immigrants in the US – snatching people off the streets and throwing them in an ICE detention facility, killing residents like Renee Good and Alex Pretti. This is similar to the horror that Palestinians experience in the West Bank and in Gaza every day.

The charge of “apartheid” is not hyperbole, or opinion. It is the conclusion of every major human rights organization focused on the region – including Human Rights Watch, B’Tselem, Al-Haq, and Amnesty International.

The pledge is about wanting freedom and safety for Palestinians and *all* people. Signing it means we care about human rights and equality anywhere, including our own country. Allowing, and financially enabling, Israeli violence against Palestinians means that the same fascism will be allowed anywhere.

Now, with the killing of Renee Good and Alex Pretti, we know that no one is safe until everyone is safe. Let’s call for an end for Israeli-Jewish supremacy and domination in Israel, which our tax dollars enable, and an end to white supremacy and fascism in the United States, which is fueling the imprisonment of immigrants and the murder of anyone who tries to fight back.

If you find yourself in deep horror about what is happening in our country but still are unable to see the fascist parallels with Gaza and the West Bank, and what we support with our tax dollars, I plead for you to raise your voice now, before it is too late, before there is no safe place in this world.

**Mariel Berger
Northampton**

Donate Supplies!

Hi neighbors: the Finders Collective’s Free Store has been open at 104 Fourth Street since October 2022, and we’re still here!

We’re open from 3 to 6 p.m. on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. We’ve got free clothes, books, household items, food, toys, and seeds, and a lending library. What we have is always changing, depending on what folks drop off to share and what sources we connect with, and we do our best as volunteers to keep it all organized. Nobody has to fill out any forms or prove anything to come here.

We also pass along supplies to unhoused neighbors, largely via connections with people who are or were homeless around Northampton and Greenfield. The winter cold hit hard and early this year, and we wanted to share this list of requested supplies from our friends in the Touch the Sky mutual aid organizing network. We’re collecting all of these things:

- Hats, gloves, winter socks
- Handwarmers (e.g. “hot hands”)
- Body wipes
- Non-perishable snacks, meal replacement shakes
- Warm sleeping bags, sleeping pads, tarps, tents
- Money to fill propane tanks

Our community is generous, and we remember how many people responded when we reached out for supplies to send to North Carolina after Hurricane Helene. There’s a lot of need, and a lot of possibilities, close to home, too.

If you haven’t been in to the free store yet, we invite you to drop by sometime. And if you’d like to support the continued existence of this hub for resource-sharing, one way to do that is to donate to our online fundraiser at givebutter.com/finders.

We believe that if we’re going to make a better life for everyone in the midst of a seemingly crumbling world, we’ll need to nurture a culture of solidarity and mutual support, recognizing that everybody’s well-being is connected. We see evidence all the time that it can be done.

**Andrew Chataigne,
for the Finders Collective
Turners Falls**

WE WELCOME YOUR LETTERS!

ORIGINAL CONTENT ONLY, PLEASE LIMIT 4 PER YEAR

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TURNERS FALLS AND VICINITY.

Compiled by MIKE JACKSON

That was a **huge, proper snow-storm** we got Sunday into Monday.

Perhaps it was the storm’s nearly nationwide impact, perhaps it was the week of excited forecasting leading up to it, but people in this vicinity seemed to take it very seriously, and though the powder was deep it was light and relatively easy to clear. Neighbors helped each other shovel and push cars out and in some places volunteered to snow-blow entire blocks of sidewalk, and the late-night DPW crew went above and beyond in nudging aside the berms and helping restore easy access from the street to businesses, including ours. (Big thanks!)

The deep freeze continued all week, and as of press time the downtown zone is still a little civic wonderland, with enormous, orderly, rectangular snowbanks in every direction. It squeaks marvelously under one’s boot.

No one can agree whether we’re in for more this weekend, but whatever happens, let’s hope the melt is gradual rather than all at once.

A long-promised **trinity of bus linkages** was launched this week, with the Berkshire Regional, Franklin Regional, and Pioneer Valley transit authorities cooperating to set up new routes between Northampton and Pittsfield, Pittsfield and North Adams, and most excitingly in this vicinity, North Adams and Greenfield.

“Link413,” as these new county-to-county routes are collectively called, costs \$10 a ride, with discounts available for eligible discountees. Check out the website at bit.ly/link413 for route info.

Four “903” buses run from North Adams to Greenfield and vice versa each weekday, two in the morning and two in the afternoon each way, passing each other somewhere on Route 2. We’ll be able to leave from Greenfield at 7:30 or 9:30 a.m., spend the day in North Adams, and be back at 5:45 or 7:45 p.m.

With an interconnection to the “901” bus, furthermore, it should be possible to leave Greenfield at 9:30 a.m. and return at 5:45 p.m. having spent just over three hours in *Pittsfield*, though this little day trip will cost \$40 at full fare.

The downside is that there is no weekend service – yet. This is a pilot program, funded by a Regional Connectivity and Innovations grant from MassDOT, and as with all things public transit the best way to support increased routes in the future is to contribute to ridership in the present.

The first candidate (to our knowledge) has **thrown in her hat** for Natalie Blais’s seat in the state legislature this November: Corinne Coryat, who has worked as Blais’s legislative aide since 2021. The Williamsburg native and Deerfield resident sent around a press release Tuesday, which includes her campaign website, www.corinneforma.org.

One of the big spending decisions voters in most Franklin County towns will be asked to make this year will be on **funding for a new tech school building** up on Indus-

trial Way. The Tech is hosting a public informational forum on the proposed construction on Tuesday, February 10 at 6 p.m. at Greenfield Community College.

(I’ll likely be covering the Gill-Montague school committee meeting at the same time – a budget hearing and possibly hiring a new superintendent – so if you’re interested in trying your hand as a reporter at the Tech forum, please reach out!) (Anyone can practice journalism; it just takes attention to detail and a commitment to approach subjects with as neutral an eye as possible. We’ll provide the rest.)

Boosting this one from Wendell: Sunday’s snowstorm caused a barn in that town housing cows and key equipment for Freedom Farm – the Smith and Burton family – to collapse. An **online fundraiser to help them rebuild** can be found at gofund.me/ab2f34945 and looks to be well underway as of press time.



ANNE JEMAS PHOTO

Anne Jemas sent **the above photo**, taken on Unity Street. “Sign of the times,” she wrote.

Jen Audley, noticing that I’d mentioned a United Way food drive in last week’s column, pointed out another one worth promoting:

The Community Health Center of Franklin County is lending its mobile clinic **van to gather food for the Franklin County Community Meals Program**, which serves hot meals and to-go bags every Monday at Our Lady of Peace Church here in Turners, and every Tuesday and Wednesday at the Congregational church in downtown Greenfield, in addition to sites in Northfield and Orange.

The van will be parked outside Stop & Shop from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. this Friday, January 30, and outside Food City for the same time range next Tuesday, February 3.

Contribute some non-perishable food, diapers, menstrual products, household cleaning supplies – use your judgment. The grocery stores will be located conveniently nearby.

More good news: Back in 2021 **the United Arc**, the longtime local organization that supports individuals with disabilities and their families, was struggling badly and was forced to surrender its state contracts to run residential programs. The organization has persevered

and rebuilt with new leadership, and is now back on its feet – this coming Monday afternoon at 2 p.m. they’ll be cutting a symbolic ribbon at their Hastings Street location in Greenfield.

Coming back from that kind of decline is no small feat, and the Arc deserves the congratulations of the wider community.

For the next two Friday afternoons, January 30 and February 6, the Brick House is trying out a new event in its upstairs movement studio: a free, hourlong “restorative jam,” time set aside to **“tend to your nervous system when everything else feels too much.”**

Attendees are asked to arrive between 3:45 and 4:05 p.m., and the doors will close at 4:10. After some group grounding exercises, community engagement coordinator Kaia Jackson (no relation) writes, “the rest of the hour is yours – nap, stretch, move, read, or just be still.

No agenda. No performance. Just permission to rest.”

The Brick House is located at 24 Third Street in Turners, and the studio is, unfortunately for some of our neighbors, up a flight of external stairs. According to Jackson, this is a “two-week trial” to see if there is enough interest to continue. As with the regional buses, if you want it to continue, you should go!

On Wednesday the Montague public libraries made a public announcement that over the weekend **a swastika was spotted** by a sharp-eyed patron “leaning against the wall” at the Carnegie Library.

“Let us be extremely clear in stating that hate symbols have no place in the Montague Public Libraries,” libraries director Caitlin Kelley and library trustees chair Will Quale wrote. “The libraries’ mission statement notes, ‘everyone is welcome through our doors,’ and we mean it.... We do not take this for granted and we are aware that seeing a hate symbol on our walls could erode and damage that trust.”

The officials added that International Holocaust Remembrance Day was this week, and called for remembrance of “the six million Jewish victims and the millions of other victims of Nazi persecution.”

I found the part of the press release about the “leaning” hate symbol a bit curiously worded, so I asked

Mr. Quale, who occasionally writes for this newspaper, to explain how it had been constituted.

“Legos,” he wrote back. “On the bright side, it was very easy to clean up.... It was likely made with legos from the library’s bin of legos for Lego at the Library, though I suppose we can’t be certain it wasn’t someone else’s Legos.”

Over on Facebook, discussion of the libraries’ announcement went predictably to current events. One local commenter squarely blamed the “hateful” resolution by Montague town meeting condemning discrimination by the Israeli state against Palestinians. Another tried to attract engagement by calling the swastika a “symbol of peace.”

A third accused the libraries of “fear mongering.”

“[J]ust cus your supporting illegals and that goes against the rules of the land Dosent mean that makes America Nazis that’s a key word given to you by the same people fear mongering and hear you are eating it all up worried more about someone that’s never seen the street of the town you live in then the people around you,” he elaborated.

The *Montague Reporter’s* books have been **settled and reconciled for 2025**, and I think it’s worth sharing an outline of our nonprofit operation:

- We made \$44,731 in ad revenue in 2025, down 5.0% from the year before. Please consider buying an ad this year! They’re very cheap. You may not have a business to advertise, but you can always place an ad to congratulate a friend or family member, or to make fun of them.
- Our revenue from subscriptions and newsstand sales totaled \$56,286, up 9.1% from the year before. This is pretty good – and both subs and store sales went up about 9% – but it should be noted that last January we raised our cover price from \$1.50 to \$2, and we didn’t see a 33% bump in store revenue. Our subscription prices have stayed the same since July 2022, so maybe the increase nudged some readers to subscribe?
- The combination of donations, fundraising, and receipts on swag appears to have grown pretty significantly, but drilling in we notice that one major donation to our 2024 Writers’ Fund campaign landed on the 2025 books, and if we shift it to the previous year we find these categories totaled \$38,321, up 2.8% from the prior year.

On the other side of the ledger...

- The costs of publishing and distributing the paper rose 2.3%, to \$52,749; fees, stipends, and pay for contributors and staff rose 5.1% to \$62,359; and all other expenses – rent, office, and administrative costs – rose a collective 9.4% to \$16,713.
- All told, our revenue grew 3.1%, while our expenses were up 4.5%.
- We nevertheless landed in the black by a modest margin, with all the surplus being earmarked for our Writers’ Fund, rolling over into paying for work in 2026.

I’m finding the national and world news **extremely discouraging**.

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PERSONAL INJURY, WILLS & ESTATES, WORKER'S COMP

GMRSD from page A1

proposed budget would not be released until Wednesday, a sneak peek had been published in the form of the state’s so-called Cherry Sheet, listing a slightly higher total figure for Chapter 70 than the district had assumed.

Healey’s proposal for rural aid was also expected to increase to \$20 million statewide, and Blier increased her estimate of Gill-Montague’s share from \$480,000 to \$675,000.

The governor’s proposal, released Wednesday, confirmed these figures. These changes left another \$1.14 million labeled as “Other reductions TBD,” split provisionally among the administrative, instructional, student services, operations, and benefits sections of the budget. The majority of these planned cuts, \$630,000, is targeted at instructional expenses – a 5.1% cut from level services, and a 2.1% cut in absolute

terms from the current year.

The category includes the salaries of all teachers, principals, paraprofessionals, and interventionists, as well as textbooks and classroom supplies.

“We still have a long ways to go,” Blier said.

“If we were to characterize the budget as it’s being presented right now,” Montague school committee member Steve Ellis asked, “it is essentially a level-services budget?”

“If that,” Blier responded.

“We haven’t added any new positions or substantive expenditures?” Ellis continued.

“Right, but we will be removing some,” she told him.

The committee voted somberly to approve a preliminary operating budget of \$25,645,530, and to draw \$400,000 from the dwindling excess and deficiency account, the district’s equivalent of free cash.

A public hearing on the budget

is scheduled for February 10.

“In March, you’ll vote again after we’ve done a lot more deep work,” Blier said, “meeting with each of the principals and department heads.”

“There is still a long road with the budget,” Gill-Montague Education Association vice president Nikki Henderson told the *Reporter* when reached for comment on behalf of the union. “Our hope is that after talking with building administrators and staff, finding out more concrete numbers from the state, and working the numbers further, we can still prioritize student-facing positions.”

Blier did not respond to a request for additional comment as of press time.

Other Business

The school committee unanimously approved a trip by the Turners Falls High School baseball team to Cooperstown, New York,

to visit the Baseball Hall of Fame and play against the Pioneer Valley team on Doubleday Field.

The two teams would charter a bus together, coach Scott Minckler said, leaving and returning on the same day, with all expenses covered by prior fundraising.

A \$2,500 donation from the Montague Elks to the Helping Hands Committee, a program of the athletics department that helps students and families in need, was approved. “The Elks Club is so supportive,” school committee chair Jane Oakes said. “And this is a huge amount – it will help a lot.”

Interim superintendent Tari Thomas praised the Montague and Gill public works department for their coordination with the district during the weekend’s snowstorm.

“They were both so responsive, and welcoming to work with,” Thomas said. “That doesn’t always happen, sometimes.”

Thomas also highlighted that January is School Board Appreciation Month, and praised the committee. “Very often your work goes unappreciated or unrecognized,” she told its members. “It’s a nice time to pause and thank you.”

The screening committee for a new superintendent is in full swing, chaired by Turners Falls High School student Olivia Walbach, and the school committee will return next Tuesday – the fourth of five consecutive weekly meetings – to hear the names of its recommended finalists.

In the ensuing weeks, Oakes said, committee members “will have the opportunity to visit the home districts of the candidates, and they will have an opportunity to visit us,” and a forum will be held for members of the public and staff. The committee hopes to make a selection on February 23.



FABULOUS from page A1

“When I joined, I sacrificed church,” Wood says, to laughter around the table. “Well, I would go to church *some*, but mostly I would come and save the booth for us.”

When Hassett, a kindergarten teacher, passed away in the early 2000s, there was a spot at the table for the newly retired Carol Gloski, and the group was five again.

“It was always five,” says Wood. “I was a young single teacher, got married, had a family, and my children have grown up with these ladies – these are like their aunts.”

Wood remained teaching in the Gill-Montague district long after the rest of the group had retired, spending her last half-dozen years at Gill Elementary and finally retiring in 2024. Last year, the surviving members of the Fabulous Five – Sicard died in December 2023 – served as flower girls in Wood’s daughter’s wedding.

“We’re family, and true friends,” Choleva chimes in. “Like I always say to you guys, friends are gifts from God. We were meant to be.”

Hastings, Choleva, and Gloski all grew up in Montague, attended now-closed elementary schools, left town to study teaching at state schools, and ended up back in the district. Choleva, a graduate of the Class of 1954 at Turners Falls High School, returned to teach in 1958, got married in 1960, and took an enforced break beginning in 1961.

“When you were pregnant and you started to show, you couldn’t teach anymore,” Wood explains of the era.

“I could have taught,” Choleva argues. “I mean, nowadays they practically have a lesson – ‘Here’s how a baby’s born!’”

More laughter. The four women

finish each other’s sentences, and the stories flow sideways and forward and backward through time: chaotic classroom reassignments after the 1987 fire at Sheffield Elementary, and again after the building eventually reopened with air quality concerns....

“That’s when Dan Morrison went to Rockdale and bought beach towels to hang, because the Hillcrest auditorium was also used at the classroom,” Choleva recounts. “I was lucky, because I had just come from Hillcrest, so the principal gave me my own classroom back!”

They also talk about missing their departed friends, and remembering how the young upstart Wood used to get into it with the ‘staunch’ conservative Hassett, who served on the Greenfield school committee and whose son, Kevin, became a famous and influential economist; the years when district Christmas and retirement parties were held at the social clubs downtown; the era, they all insist, when teachers worked late hours and teaching itself was *fun*.

Asked what the cut-off year was for that, Wood answers immediately: “No Child Left Behind,” meaning 2002, the onset of federal standardized-testing mandates.

This reporter gets an earful. “They spend so much time on curriculum in kindergarten and first grade, instead of learning how to talk to each other and negotiate,” Wood, impassioned and a little angry, says of the testing era, which her colleagues in the booth mostly missed. “I mean, that’s the foundation of the world – of life! And that’s what’s happening in the government! Nobody knows how to talk to each other, and we’re just making it worse.”



Clockwise, from front left: Carol Gloski, Connie Sicard, Susan Hastings, Sherry Wood, and Charlotte Choleva, in an earlier photograph brought to the diner Friday in memory of Sicard.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS



The historical placemarker installed at the Shady Glen last Friday.

The Fabulous Five seem to see eye-to-eye on this, but the group is not about politics.

Wood, who grew up in Deerfield, jokes that she is the “outsider.”

Choleva marvels at the close-knit community in town, with its generations of intermarried families. “If you go somewhere and meet somebody and you talk,” she explains, “just chit-chat, you’ll find out that somebody you know knows somebody in Turners. We’re related, we all say – everybody in Turners is related in some way.”

Hastings, the group’s “historian,” went to kindergarten in the Patch, and remembers being in the high school band with the mother of Chuck Garbiel, now the owner of the Glen. She started teaching in 1971 at the Central Street school.

“I didn’t know you were in band!” Wood exclaims. “What did you play?”

“Bass clarinet,” Hastings replies with a grin.

Hastings also keeps scrapbooks of the Gill-Montague Education Fund, the district’s independent educational support group which various members of the Five have been instrumental over the decades. She also recounts teachers’ union meetings at St. Kaz, planning workplace action when contract negotiations were at a standstill.

Gloski, the sole member of the group who attends services at Our Lady of Czestochowa rather than Our Lady of Peace, is ribbed admiringly by the others for never, ever changing her order.

“Connie never changed either,” Wood points out. “Over light, and raisin toast.”

There are sighs, and smiles.

“Sometimes – like last week – I change,” Choleva says. “We never look at the menu. We just know what we want.... We sit here for over an hour on Friday and catch up, and they don’t throw us out, because they know this is where we live.”

Each week, members contribute \$5 to a fund for special occasions, and once there is enough in the fund the group goes out together – for dinner.

“We share a religion, we share teaching, we share happiness,” Choleva says. “We share sorrow, we share laughter. We shed tears.... It just happened, it was meant to be.”

Finally, it is time for the big moment. As the adhesive backing is peeled off the *Fabulous Five* plaque, the old friends banter and debate where it should be mounted: over the sign that says booths may not be saved?

No, under it.

The women show a photograph of the five of them in the booth, with Sicard. All four reach out and touch the photo.

“It’s just a big support group for each other,” Hastings reflects.

This reporter has to turn down the offer of a second cup of coffee.

“When you leave here,” Choleva says, “you’re just going to be beaming – and have so much love that you’re going to spread it all over.”

She’s right.



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LEVERETT from page A1

He said there were “so many unknowns” with these items that it was hard to predict where money will be needed, but that he is usually able to shift among accounts to cover costs.

Boucher said he would like to see the winter maintenance fund “higher... by a lot,” but that this was “not totally necessary,” and that the department has stayed on track most winters. Having a lower budget encourages conservation, he said, but “at the end of the day we need to make the roads safe for people, and that’s really what matters,” whether the board decides to increase the budget or allow him to overspend when necessary.

Boucher requested that the town’s half-time custodian position be changed to a full-time, “mixed duty” job, with the additional hours devoted to highway tasks, including snow plowing, which it is sometimes difficult to find enough part-time drivers to cover.

Personnel and selectboard member Tom Hankinson reported that the personnel board had recommended this change, contingent on seeing an outline of the employee’s duties at the highway department and how he would be supervised.

Boucher also commented on his capital spending requests, including the purchase of “wing plows,” which he said could reduce the time required to plow the entire town from seven to four hours, and save money on road maintenance by reducing stress on the roads.

Fin com member Steve Weiss said he had recently seen a complaint on an email listserv wherein a Shutesbury resident berated their highway department after driving into Leverett and finding its roads in much better condition.

Hankinson’s final comment was less positive, asking why the plows always knock down his sister’s mailbox, and saying that it had just happened for the fourth time.

“It must not be a very good mailbox,” Boucher replied.

Firefighters Stretched

Leverett’s new fire chief Mike Visniewski presented three options as requested by the selectboard, all of which included salaries. His desired budget, which included salaries, came in at \$201,292, a 4.9% increase over the current year, and would re-establish a paid deputy chief position at 11 hours to provide fuller weekday coverage. Money for vehicle maintenance would also see an increase.

Visniewski said his own 40-hour position does not allow him to cover five weekdays and attend drills and other commitments, leaving the station unstaffed on Fridays. Two members are needed to respond to each call, he said, and the department’s 235 calls in 2025 represented a 6.3% increase over 2024, or a call every 37 hours on average.

In six years, he predicted, that rate will rise to once every 24 hours, and call firefighters tend to have full-time jobs elsewhere, and are becoming more difficult to recruit. “We’re going to burn out our firefighters, and there’s not going to be anyone to heed that call,” he warned.

Visniewski also alluded to the town’s aging population driving up the volume of medical calls.

Fin com member Nancy Grossman, a former call firefighter, noted

that Amherst EMS responds to most medical calls in Leverett.

Visniewski replied that immediately prior to the meeting he had responded to a call for an 18-month-old child who was not breathing, and arrived at the scene in four minutes. Amherst was busy and could not dispatch an ambulance, he said, and the one sent from South Deerfield did not arrive for 19 minutes. He added that the child recovered.

Hankinson reported that the personnel board had voted to recommend the part-time deputy chief.

Police On Track

The selectboard signed an update to Leverett’s intermunicipal policing agreement with the town of Wendell.

Police chief Scott Minckler presented two draft budgets, excluding salaries: one with a 2.5% increase to \$47,699, and one with a 4.9% increase to \$48,936, which he said would be necessary to maintain level services, and was also his desired budget.

In the smaller budget, the entire increase would be \$1,163 for software support.

Minckler’s desired budget would also add to the “supplies and equipment” line, covering the cost of defibrillator equipment, which the police department currently borrows from the fire department.

Recommendations

Hankinson reported that the personnel board was in favor of adding a five-hour position at the library to cover Fridays, was against increasing the hours of the Council on Aging’s community and events coordinator from 15 to 20 per week, and recommended a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for town employees of 3.2%, following consumer price index data.

Grossman said she was “a little horrified” by her property tax bill, and felt that “over and over, we’re not making the hard decisions.”

Personnel and finance committee member Liz Kiebel responded that the personnel board made its recommendations based on what it felt was best for the town, with the knowledge that the fin com would review the budgetary impact and may recommend a different number for the COLA.

Timeline

The selectboard and fin com set a tentative schedule for remaining budget hearings: February 10 for the transfer station and Leverett Elementary School, and April 7 for the final overall town budget.

The officials hope that by that time the town’s assessment from the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District (ARPS) will be available so that its impact can be assessed, a final recommended budget can be published in the town newsletter, and sufficient public notice given before the annual town meeting on May 2.

Town administrator Marjorie McGinnis added that she should be able to provide salary projections for the departments, based on the COLA recommendation, before the next selectboard meeting.

Other Business

Weiss reported that he attended the first meeting on January 21 between representatives of the four towns working on the ARPS budget

and the regional school committee’s fiscal sustainability subcommittee. The group exchanged ideas about where to focus its efforts, he said, and will begin meeting regularly next month.

Weiss added that this group was unlikely to produce immediate solutions to the “serious financial issues” facing the district, as they are so complicated, but that its members showed a positive attitude and “unanimity” in the opinion that the only way to solve the problems is to “work together.”

Proujansky reported that attendees of a recent meeting of the Massachusetts Municipal Association seemed subdued and distracted by national events. Still, he said, he spoke with contacts about bringing affordable housing to Leverett, and with a consultant who is putting together a municipal health insurance package that would have comparable benefits to the plan the town currently offers but would see single-digit, rather than double-digit, annual increases in premiums.

McGinnis informed the board that residents may soon be able to apply for state housing rehabilitation grants through a program that had gone fallow in Leverett. Hankinson said he would investigate this.

Hélène Cousin was appointed to the zoning board of appeals, filling a longstanding vacancy.



NOTES FROM THE ERVING SELECTBOARD

Snow Delays Hearing; Tanker Deal Inked

By KATIE NOLAN

The Erving selectboard met on Tuesday, rescheduled from Monday because of the snowstorm. The meeting, originally planned as an operational and capital expenses budget hearing for FY’27, considered only administrative topics because a quorum of the finance committee was unable to attend. Selectboard member James Loynd was also unable to attend on Tuesday.

The board accepted Jennifer Watroba’s resignation as police community services cadet. Watroba did not provide a reason for the resignation in her letter to police chief Robert Holst. “It was a pleasure working alongside such a dedicated team and gaining insight into the important role each person plays,” she wrote. “I truly appreciate the opportunity and the experience I gained, and I wish you and the department continued success.”

Watroba, who is also the town treasurer, was appointed as cadet in October.

Selectboard chair Jacob Smith said he had discussed the resignation with Watroba, and “she had a lot of good things to say about the program.” He added, “We’ll regroup on what to do next after speaking with chief [Holst].”

The board approved the \$743,351 bid from Greenwood Emergency Vehicles, LLC to provide a new pumper/tanker truck to the fire department. The truck can store 2,000 gallons of water, and pump at 1,500 gallons per minute. The expenditure requires a town meeting vote.

Town administrator Bryan Smith told the board the draft warrant for a special town meeting (STM) Erving hopes to hold in February or March needed further

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Gill-Montague Regional School District
PUBLIC HEARING on the FY27 BUDGET

Tuesday, February 10, 2026 at 6:30 p.m.
Turners Falls High School
School Committee Room M228

To access the FY27 Preliminary Budget information for the Public Hearing please visit the School Committee page of the district website www.gmrtd.org on or after Friday, February 6, 2026.

The School Committee strives to meet the needs of all students while also employing sound fiscal management. The Preliminary FY27 Gill-Montague Regional School District budget was approved by School Committee at their last January meeting.

The Preliminary Budget is based on Montague’s Affordable Assessment and State Aid Revenue Estimates. Some major factors influencing the budget include the following areas:

1. The ESSER funding has expired
2. Rural School Aid fluctuations
3. Continued staffing to meet student learning needs
4. Student enrollment & impact of state funding formulas
5. Revenue sources & balancing the proposed budget



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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Icy Roads, Medical Calls, Unease

Monday, 12/1

8:54 a.m. South Cross Road party stated he confronted a male who was trespassing.

3:06 p.m. Report of a vehicle driving in the middle of the French King Highway. Erving PD advised.

3:23 p.m. Vehicles reported sliding off Main and Mountain roads. Winter road conditions.

8:25 p.m. Caller advises his pickup truck with a plow slid down a bank. Will remove it in the morning.

Friday, 12/5

8:21 a.m. Memorial Grove Road caller states another driver drove into him. Two-car accident with no injuries, airbag deployment, or fluid leakage.

5:52 p.m. Officer out with a car stuck in the snow down an embankment, Main Road. Successfully removed by a truck.

Monday, 12/8

3:34 p.m. Medical emergency on Memorial Grove Road.

Tuesday, 12/9

8:25 a.m. Small SUV disabled on the French King Highway; ruptured oil line. MassDOT requested for sand and speedy dry. Vehicle towed.

8:33 a.m. Medical emergency on the French King Highway.

4:41 p.m. Christmas tree in the travel lane, French King Highway.

Wednesday, 12/10

9:32 a.m. Highway department closed River Road for the season.

11:05 a.m. Medical emergency on Mountain Road.

Thursday, 12/11

8:52 a.m. Medical emergency, Main Road.

9:54 a.m. Received call about a stolen trailer.

10:48 a.m. Tree down, Hoe Shop Road. Highway notified.

Friday, 12/12

8:55 a.m. French King Highway caller reported an uneasy interaction the previous day.

Monday, 12/15

6:08 p.m. Medical emergency on West Gill Road.

Wednesday, 12/17

10:34 a.m. Accidental 911 pocket dial from a party out ice fishing.

Thursday, 12/18

12:15 p.m. Medical emergency on South Cross Road.

2:02 p.m. Custody issue, Lamplighter Way.

7:19 p.m. Elderly male who walked away from a store reported missing. Subject located.

Friday, 12/19

9:54 a.m. Disabled tractor-trailer unit, French King Highway. Truck moved; highway clear.

11:02 a.m. Branches removed, Center Road.

9:01 p.m. Medical emergency on Boyle Road.

9:51 p.m. West Gill Road caller reported the sound of a gunshot from a neighbor's house, and people with flashlights.

Saturday, 12/20

7:31 p.m. Report of cows on Main Road.

Sunday, 12/21

11:24 a.m. South Cross Road caller complained about a neighbor speeding.

12:20 p.m. Medical emergency on West Gill Road.

Monday, 12/22

2:22 p.m. Medical emergency, Main Road.

8:16 p.m. Assisted motorist with a tire change, South Street.

9:10 p.m. Medical emergency on West Gill Road.

Tuesday, 12/23

3:28 p.m. Tree reported on power lines, West Gill Road. Determined to be on cable lines. Verizon notified.

4:58 p.m. Missing person reported, French King Highway. Family later located individual.

7:55 p.m. Wintry mix causing icy roads. Highway department treating the roads.

Wednesday, 12/24

11:08 a.m. Medical emergency on the French King Highway.

1:53 p.m. Tree hanging over the power lines, West Gill Road. Eversource notified.

Thursday, 12/25

1:43 p.m. Welfare check requested for a house sitter, Peterson Way. Contact made; subject advised to call the owner.

Friday, 12/26

6:56 p.m. Medical emergency on West Gill Road.

Saturday, 12/27

12:33 a.m. Medical emergency on West Gill Road.

6:30 p.m. Multiple reports of flickering lights, French King Highway. Eversource searching for the cause.

9:58 p.m. Welfare check on Peterson Way requested. Party located inside; EMS requested.

Monday, 12/29

6:01 a.m. Medical emergency on West Gill Road.

4:27 p.m. Officer escorted a Chappell Drive party to their residence.

5:40 p.m. Chappell Drive party requested an escort.

6:43 p.m. Vehicle hit the guardrail on Main Road due to icy roads.

Tuesday, 12/30

8:19 a.m. Branch removed from the roadway, River and Grist Mill roads.

Wednesday, 12/31

2:13 a.m. Report of a vehicle stopped in the middle of the French King Highway with an unconscious operator. State police responded.

GILL from page A1

the board voted unanimously to continue with one unified rate.

School Regionalization

Selectboard member Greg Snedeker explained the possibility of proposing two school regionalization plans to Gill voters: one for a six-town district and another for a five-town district. Under this proposal, Warwick, which has recently created its own municipal school district, could vote to remain independent and the other five towns could still merge their school districts.

Snedeker, who also serves as vice chair of the Six Town Regionalization Planning Board, said people in other towns were worried Warwick “could potentially be a poison pill” in the process.

“It just seems a little messy,” countered selectboard member John Ward.

“It makes the voting complicated,” said town administrator Ray Purington, “but I think the overwhelming reason for having the two votes now is we’ve got everybody engaged in the conversation, we avoid having to restart the whole planning board process, and all of the data is freshly-crunched.”

“It will save a lot of time and money,” Snedeker agreed.

The board agreed to send a letter expressing their preference for including both six-town and five-town options on the ballot. (See Montague selectboard notes, Page A1.)

Other Business

Vicky Jenkins, chair of the energy commission, presented on upcoming energy efficiency plans in town. The commission has decided to focus on the public safety complex, which houses the police, fire, and highway departments.

The group plans to get a free comprehensive building assessment and explore potential upgrades, such

as installing mini-splits, adding electric vehicle chargers, or using geothermal energy.

Jenkins thanked Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) employee Tamsin Flanders for the support she provided. “She’s been the push that we needed,” Jenkins said, “because we were totally overwhelmed.”

David Conway has resigned from the sewer commission. There is now an opening in the commission for a Riverside resident who uses the sewer system and wants to help set rates, determine policies, and brainstorm ways to improve the town’s sewer infrastructure.

The board appointed Zachary Ozdarski as a firefighter. Ozdarski served as a junior firefighter for the town when he was younger.

Small towns like Gill receive occasional technical assistance through FRCOG. The selectboard determined the town’s greatest need for technical help was on the matter of the relicensing process for the Turners Falls dam and Northfield Mountain pumped-storage project. Other priorities include an unpaved roads assessment and floodplain map changes.

Purington reported “excellent turnout” and “a really good community discussion” at the first community input session to create a municipal vulnerability preparedness plan. The program aims to make towns more resilient to climate change, and an up-to-date plan will make the town eligible for state grants.

“Every minute was the kind of neighbor-to-neighbor conversation that you want to hear,” Purington said.

The next input session will be held Wednesday, February 11 at 5:30 p.m. at the town hall, and will focus on “identifying and prioritizing actions that reduce vulnerabilities and reinforce strengths.” Food will be provided.

Selectboard chair Charles Garbiel asked if the town should approve a special one-day liquor license for that meeting as well. “I don’t think that’s a vulnerability we need to address,” Purington answered.

HOUSING from page A1

was a lot of pushback,” Weld testifies of the decisions last fall by the planning board and town meeting to support a dense, mixed-use redevelopment of the former hospital site. “So when it got approved, the major question was: ‘What’s next?’ I already knew the answer was a coalition.”

In the course of working together on the Farren project, Montague town planner Maureen Pollock was able to bring in a grant for Weld and a small group of residents to partner with the Citizens’ Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA), a Boston-based nonprofit focused on affordable housing and community planning. Since last May, CHAPA has provided guidance on how to set up an effective and equitable grassroots initiative.

Prior to the launch, the coalition also plans to meet with similar, more established efforts, including Housing Greenfield, an outgrowth of Greening Greenfield that began in 2021.

The Montague launch event will fall just a few weeks prior to the end of the town’s contract with CHAPA, but if all goes well, the organizers hope it will kickstart an expansion in the resident base of the coalition, which is to be led by a six-member steering committee and supported by a broader pool of fellow advocates.

As the coalition grows, Weld and fellow steering committee member Derek Birr say they envision gathering information about housing needs throughout the town, bringing issues to town meeting to seek support for a range of housing scenarios and needs across the five villages.

Birr is a walking example of modern housing stories. He has lived in and around Montague for a dozen years and says he hopes his unusual – but successful – liv-

ing situation can help dissipate the stigma of not fitting into traditional housing models as the affordability of those traditional models dissipates as well.

A year ago, Birr and his fiancée were living in Amherst, but they ended up moving back to Montague after Birr’s ex-partner inherited her grandmother’s home – coincidentally, not far from the Farren parcel – and found herself struggling to stay on top of maintaining an older house while raising their son. Birr and his current partner moved in, making it a household of four that was able to balance their different needs and resources.

“We all get along, we’re all friends. We’ve developed our own little family here,” he tells the Reporter. “It’s just this unique situation we had to create to survive in this world where everything is so expensive, and so against us. It feels that way – it feels like the world is against you. And so we came up with this situation, and it made life a lot easier for all of us, actually.”

Now that he has found a stable berth in Montague, Birr says he hopes to grow the sense of community he feels in town through another initiative he calls the Village Project, which aims to create opportunities for neighbors to get to know each other. The Village Project is also in its fledgling stages, but it is how Birr connected with Weld and others involved in the Housing Coalition.

Birr says he is excited to present at the Brick House event and move into the spotlight come February 4. Attendees can learn more about the current effort, CHAPA’s involvement, visions for fair housing beyond the Farren project, and how to join or work with the coalition.

The event will also feature a corner with kid-friendly activities and childcare, Spanish interpreta-

tion if it is requested in advance, and free raffle drawings.

The organizers say the event is for just about anyone who lives or works in Montague. Weld, who moved to Turners Falls from Greenfield after landing an apartment that would take her Section 8 voucher, demonstrates an empathetic, big-tent approach to housing, acknowledging just how complex and extreme the landscape is: “A lot of people don’t know how many people don’t have a roof of their own over their head, or even a roof at all, and it’s scary.”

Weld says she hopes the coalition will include homeowners struggling with the costs of ownership. “Do people feel that they can take care of their homes after they’ve purchased them?” she asks. “I know so many people that can’t even get their septic tanks flushed because it’s so expensive.”

She also sees potential partnership with local businesses and organizations. The Turners Falls Pizza House, the Rendezvous, and the Upper Bend have all offered financial support to the coalition, and the Brick House has been a significant partner; Brick House program director Stacey Langknecht serves on the steering committee.

But at the end of the day, everything comes back to people: “My goal has always been to lift people,” says Weld. “I just want to see people look at themselves in the mirror and say, ‘I’ve got this. And if I don’t feel like I’ve got this, then I know where to go, and I know who to talk to.’”

The Montague Housing Coalition kick-off event will be held Wednesday, February 4, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at the Brick House Community Resource Center, 24 Third Street in Turners Falls. Childcare is available onsite. RSVP to sratliff@chapa.org is suggested, but not required.

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MONTAGUE from page A1

noting that the selectboards of every town in the proposed district had requested permission to hold the vote by ballot elections, rather than at town meetings.

Under state law Montague, which has a representative town meeting, is required to hold the vote by general ballot, but the other five towns are required to take it up at their “open” town meetings, which some residents have argued are less accessible.

Comerford, who represents all six towns, had informed them Monday morning that legal counsel for the Senate had affirmed the legislature’s power to allow ballot votes in all six towns without amending the law governing the formation of districts, or passing a separate “home rule petition” for each town. She requested that all six towns send her and representative Whipps an identical request to file such legislation.

“I urge your reply,” she wrote. Timing is too tight as is...” Addressing the possibility of scheduling the vote to coincide with town elections this spring, she noted that “while we will file the bill, it may not be possible to have it heard in committee and advance it to law in this tight timeline.”

“We’ll absolutely try our hardest,” she added.

Ramsey asked that the board give chair Matt Lord the authority to sign the as-yet-undrafted letter.

“They’re hoping to get it back to Jo Comerford later this week,” he said, “because it’s already in a very tight timeframe to be able to get this special legislation passed in advance of a potential spring election.”

Member Rich Kuklewicz moved to endorse the letter, noting that the vote will likely include options for six- and five-town districts in case Warwick, which recently created its own school district, opts not to join.

The motion passed, though Lord said he would not support a special election if the vote cannot be held during the spring election, and would prefer bundling it with the September primary or the November general election. The other board members seemed to agree with his sentiments.

The finished letter, obtained this week by the *Reporter*, states that while timing the vote with the separate May elections in each town “remains the preferred approach,” “a separate special election – potentially in June – may offer a more practical path for the towns to coordinate around a single date while providing you with the maximum possible time to complete the legislative process.”

“If it turns out that the legislature cannot pass this in time to be voted at the usual spring town

meetings,” Lord reiterated when reached for comment, “I would advocate that the votes happen either at the September primary or the November election.”

As of press time, all six towns had reportedly endorsed the new request.

The STRPB, which met January 15 and 22 over Zoom, also plans to request state funding for the transition to a new school district, if voters in all five or six towns approve the agreement, as well as for the new district’s central office costs in its first year of operation.

Federal Block Grants

Brian McHugh of the Franklin County Regional Housing and Re-development Authority reviewed in great detail the town’s two current rounds of CDBG funding, which cover social services, housing rehabilitation, and planning and development projects.

As he always does, McHugh reminded the board not to become confused by the grants being named for the fiscal year in which the federal funding is appropriated, rather than the one in which the town may spend the funds. Lord seconded this comment.

Montague’s annual CDBG grants generally total around \$850,000 and fund social services, renovations to property owned by low- or moderate-income residents, public facility improvements, infrastructure projects, and pre-development planning. The funds originate with the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development and are channeled through the state Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities.

McHugh began with the FY’25 grant, currently underway. It includes funding for streetscape and sidewalk improvements on the northwest side of Avenue A and five local social-service agencies, but not for housing rehabilitation, he said, due to a lack of applications.

McHugh said the town had been asked to provide more detailed budgets for the social-service spending and a “project map” with US Census information to establish that the users of the improved sidewalks would predominantly be low- and moderate-income residents. He had prepared detailed responses to both these requests, which were approved by the board. The board also approved contracts with the housing authority, for administering the grant, and with the social service agencies.

McHugh then began a required “informational meeting” about the proposed FY’26 grant. The town’s application is due April 22.

This application, McHugh said, will include all potential categories, including more streetscape

work, social services funding, a public facilities project – potentially work at the senior center – and planning. It will also include housing rehab, as McHugh said he expects a higher number of responses from potential recipients on the program’s waiting list.

The selectboard approved a request to the state for a waiver allowing Montague to submit the application even though some of the money earmarked for housing rehab under the FY’24 grant still remains unspent. “We’ve never had to do [this] in the 37 times we’ve done it on your behalf in Montague,” McHugh told them.

Other Business

Acting as the personnel board, the selectboard approved the appointment of Seth Thompson as the part-time community relations coordinator at the public libraries, Anthony Montivirdi as the full-time administrative assistant at the Clean Water Facility, and Brandon Bryant as a full-time police officer.

Bryant will receive a \$10,000 signing bonus because his hire is considered a “lateral transfer,” as he has worked in the Erving police department for the last three years and will not require extensive police academy training at Montague’s expense.

The board endorsed pay scale changes for four town employees and accepted the resignations of David Dempsey and Tim Van Egmond from the energy committee, which still has the number of required members to maintain a quorum.

At Ramsey’s request the board set a submission deadline of Wednesday, March 11 for articles for the annual town meeting, which will take place Saturday, May 2.

Ramsey also announced that the town’s new emergency notification platform, Rave Alert, is “up and running,” and that residents who were enrolled under the previous platform, CodeRED, will need to sign up again.

For the most basic text alert system, which will warn of snow emergencies and other events, users may text the word “Montague” to 77295. Residents interested in more extensive notifications, or in receiving notifications via email or telephone call, can find a link on the town website to set up an account.

On the cultural front, the board voted to approve a \$15,000 agreement with the state cultural council to fund events in Montague and approved a one-day beer and wine license for the Common Variety Café and Market on Route 63 on Valentine’s Day, Saturday, February 14.

The next selectboard meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 2.



LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here’s the way it was on January 28, 2016: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

Giving Trees

“You guys are way ahead of other towns,” said Mary Prais, the land use planner who directed a Turners Falls tree inventory. Her report found that 82% of the trees in the study area, all on public property, are in good condition. According to a “National Tree Benefit Calculator,” these trees provided roughly \$46,800 in annual benefits to the town. The calculator takes several factors into account: the gallons of stormwater intercepted by a tree; the impact of shade on the amount of summer gas and electricity used; in-

creased property values attributed to shade; the impact of trees on air quality; and the amount of CO₂ sequestered by a tree.

If At First You Don’t Succeed

On Monday, Mickey LaClaire of the Gill highway department told the selectboard that the sewer pump repairs were complete. After having its seals, bearings, and shaft replaced, the pump leaked worse than before. The technician rechecked everything, put it all back, and it still leaked. Then he looked at everything again and found that a steel sleeve had a split in it so minute a magnifying glass was needed to see it. Once that was replaced, the pump stopped leaking.

20 YEARS AGO

Here’s the way it was on January 26, 2006: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

Monitoring the Millers

On January 24, ten people attended a training session on using benthic macro invertebrate (BMI) surveys to evaluate the health of the Millers River environment. Benthic creatures live at least

part of their lives underwater; macro invertebrates are too large to fit through a standard 0.5-mm screen. BMI surveys show a longer history of river health than chemical analysis does, because populations take time to get established and to diminish if the water quality degrades. Sampling is done by standing in the river and disturbing the river bottom, collecting what floats free just downstream.

140 YEARS AGO

Here’s the way it was on January 27, 1886: News from the Turners Falls Reporter’s archive.

Turners Falls and Vicinity

The selectmen have forbidden all coasting on the streets of Turners Falls.

The fellow who has had an auction room in Keough’s block for some time, cleared out, and beat people out of some bills.

C. Church has played the good Samaritan by going to the expense of fitting up a pipe from his spring to run into a tub on Fifth street, where all the famishing people of that neighborhood may come and drink of the waters that flow freely, or carry it home for cooking purposes.

Broom corn, formerly an extensive crop in the Connecticut valley, but lately neglected for tobacco, has taken a boom lately, and gone up from four to ten cents a pound, and brooms have gone up accordingly. If the price keeps up the “tall broom corn” will doubtless become a familiar crop in Massachusetts again.

The Turners Falls Company have added a new pump of large capacity so that a water supply may be had at all times whether the water be out of the canal or not, and now the village is supplied with an abundance of water,

greatly in excess of all possible needs. Had this arrangement been completed six months or a year ago, not a word would have been said by the people, and blessings instead of curses would have been poured on the heads of the Turners Falls Company. The trouble has been that the village was piped from a little spring for about 1,500 people, and when 4,000 people demanded water, and becoming educated to the use of more or less soap, the system was found a good deal like the old man with the little boy’s pants on.

The new canned goods law went into effect January 1. Cans containing preserved food, excepting milk, must now be labeled with the name, address and place of business of packer, and of the wholesale dealer who handles the goods, and soaked goods must be marked “soaked.” A fine of \$50 for each offense is imposed on retail dealers who violate the law. Grocery men should look into the matter for their own protection.

Prof. Dayton had good audiences at Colle’s opera house on Saturday and Monday evenings, to witness the exposure of spiritualism. He did all the tricks they do at Lake Pleasant, only a hundred times better, and then exposed them. Their simplicity, when shown, tickled the audience almost to death.



Montague Community Television News

Watch ‘Swamped’ or Catch Up

By HANNAH BROOKMAN

TURNERS FALLS – Watch a full recording of *Swamped*, a play written and directed by Wendell resident Court Dorsey; catch up on the local I.C.E. protests, including the latest at Home Depot; keep informed on local town meetings with MCTV’s full coverage of the Montague finance committee, the Montague selectboard, and the newest Gill-Montague regional school committee meeting.

Find all these videos and even more on the Mon-

tague Community Television website, *MontagueTV.org*, and our Vimeo page, which you can find by clicking the “Videos” tab on the website.

If you would like to make a video, or if you know of an event that should be filmed, let us know. You can come by the station at 34 Second Street in Turners Falls to talk with Dean or Deirdre, Mondays through Fridays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. You can email us at infomontaguetelevision@gmail.com or even call us up at (413) 863-9200.

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The Week In High School Sports: Big Win for Boys' Thunder

By MATT ROBINSON

TURNERS FALLS – Last Friday, January 23, the Turners Falls Thunder trounced the Tigers of Westfield Tech, 86 to 50. It was the most points scored by the boys' basketball team since January 2015, when they beat Pioneer 86-79.

Because of snow emergencies and the continuing frigid polar vortex, it was the only game this reporter attended in the past week. When I arrived at the gym, the Turners JV team was ahead 51 to 17, and they coasted to a 76-46 final.

There was no school on Friday because it was turnaround day for teachers, so there were no cheerleaders or pep band to rile up the home crowd, but there were a bevy of alumni in attendance. In my section alone there were seven folks who graduated from Turners between 1971 and 1979, and of course – as always – there was one who graduated during World War II.



Turners Falls senior Cam Johnson drives the baseline against Westfield Tech last Friday. Johnson scored 13 points in Thunder's 86-50 win over the visiting Tigers.

Although Westfield's JV wore yellow jerseys, their varsity squad was clad in black, and it seemed that these Black Cats brought some bad luck with them. Ten seconds into the game, Jackson Cogswell went down and was helped off the court. The visitors proceeded to hit a three-pointer and took a temporary 3-0 lead.

Cogswell returned in short time, though, and Turners began dominating on the boards. A full court alley-oop gave Turners a 10-9 lead, and from there it was all uphill for the Thunder. Not only were they winning the rebound war, they were also passing the ball multiple times on each possession, pulling the Tiger defense out of their zones. After one quarter, they were ahead 17-11.

The second quarter opened with a fast break, and Turners was off to the races. When they doubled up the Cats, 34-17, the bench began cheering "D-Fence." The boys on the court responded, contesting every pass, going for steals, and blocking shots. As the buzzer sounded to end the first half, Cogswell hit a three-pointer, and Turners went into the break leading 41 to 20.

In the third, Blue instituted a full-court press and began dropping three-point bombs. Suddenly it was 61 to 28. When the score reached 84-41, coach Mullins emptied his bench. The Tigers drew a foul with 1.1 seconds left in the game. They sank both free throws to give Black a respectful 50 points.

The Boys in Blue hit nine three-pointers on the night, and nine free throws. Scoring for Turners were Kainen Stevens (20), Cogswell (16), Freilyn Abarua (14), Cameron Johnson (13), Brayden Sloan (10), Sergy Aleseyenko (9), and Robert Goff and Curtis Kretchmar (2 each).

The 36-point win gives the Blue Thunder their third victory of the season. This Friday they face their cross-town rivals at Franklin Tech, and next week they will conclude their regular season with games against Smith Academy, Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion, and Smith Vocational.



DAVID HOITT PHOTOS

Turners Falls High School senior Kainen Stevens takes it to the net for two of his 20 game points last Friday. The Thunder roared loudly over the Westfield Tech Tigers with an 86-50 hometown win on Youth Night.


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WEST ALONG THE RIVER

INDIAN NAMES IN THE
MEMORYSCAPE, PART I

By DAVID BRULE

PESKEOMPSKUT – We are living in a landscape, a *memoryscape*, where Indigenous place names are commonplace, yet few realize or even notice it.

This region was populated for more than 10,000 years by Indigenous peoples who named every part of the landscape that is so familiar to us now. These places have ancient names, some of which are long lost, while others have endured, much like the tribal peoples themselves.

These names make up what some call a “memoryscape” of ancient voices that are still in the air that we breathe, and whose modern-day descendants are here among us.

Historian Christina M. DeLucia gave rise to the concept in her book *Memory Lands*.

“By getting back into place,” she writes, “into specific terrain, rivers, swamps, islands and cities of the Northeast, we can begin to better comprehend those secret, semihidden, or willfully forgotten contours of early America...”

Many of us searching to uncover the original names of such places are in fact seeking to remember and bring forward the poetry of Native placenames, to help reconnect and recover the spirits and sense of place of our prehistory.

We often say that the trees, the waters, the rivers, the features of our landscape know their real names, names that were given to them by the First Peoples, and which have no longer been pronounced or called forth, have even been erased, but only in the last 400 years. It is our desire to speak their names once again, so that they know we are here, and recognize them. They

will know us in turn.

It is estimated that at the time of the arrival of the first English colonizers in the Northeast, the Indigenous populations can be calculated as being about 25,000 to 30,000.

Those numbers were physically decimated by war, disease, poverty, and depredations by the white colonizers. The same colonizers managed to generate narratives of extinction, disappearance, and erasure.

But in recent years, those erasure narratives have been shown to be misleading, if not patently false.

Despite 450 years of devastation, massacres, and assimilation, the Indigenous populations of the Northeast have persisted and survived. They are now reemerging from the shadows and invisibility into which they had been forced.

Many Indigenous place names in the landscape have endured, and modern-day descendants of those historical families are reclaiming Native space, reminding all of the perseverance of their cultures and languages.

What are the tribal placenames in our region, and what do they mean? What do they tell us of deep history?

This essay in multiple parts will attempt to provide a primer, to share place names accessible to us, using the falls at Peskeompskut as a geographical starting point.

It must be noted that some places are already familiar to us by their Native names, whereas others are the focus of research attempting to recover their original names. Those names were buried in colonialist attempts to make all memory of Native presence disappear.

I am far from alone in attempting

see **WEST ALONG** page B4



Peskeompskut, a painting by Wampanoag artist Robert Peters, hangs in the Montague town hall.

NOTES FROM THE HEARTFELT CAFE

by Trouble Mandeson

By TROUBLE MANDESON

GREENFIELD – Happy New Year, readers. I’m back after a hiatus and revving up to talk about winter squash, which, if you can believe it, was the subject of my very first column nearly five years ago. I’m delving into butternut, acorn, Blue Hubbard, honeynut, and delicata, a sampling of the varieties we enjoy here in the eastern states.

Squash is native to the Americas, with the earliest documented crops grown domestically in eastern North America about 7,000 to 8,000 years ago. It would be another thousand years before Native Americans began to cultivate corn and beans which would lead to their staple diet known as the “Three Sisters.”

The Three Sisters are corn, beans, and squash, the results of an integrated farming system. A mutually beneficial relationship exists between the three crops with corn providing a stalk for beans to climb, beans enriching the soil with nitrogen, and squash keeping the soil moist, deterring pests, and suppressing weed growth.

This symbiotic relationship provides a protein- and nutrient-rich diet that resonates with a deep connection to the land. Not only are necessary nutrients provided, but corn, beans, and winter squashes with their hard skins are all excellent for long periods of storage, especially during the cold months when growing is out of the question.

Once harvested, squash needs to be cured in order to harden the skin and sweeten the flesh. This involves harvesting with a two- to three-inch stem on top and



MANDESON PHOTO

A pot of pumpkin soup, bound for the stove, combining a classic French mirepoix made from carrot, celery, and onion with peeled and chopped butternut squash. Once tender, the soup will be blended and cooked down.

drying in a warm, humid place for a couple of weeks. Cold storage will allow them to last for weeks, sometimes months. With good air circulation and temperature between 50° and 55° F, a pantry, basement, garage,

see **HEARTFELT** page B3

BOOK REVIEW

Whose Truth Shall Make You Free?

David Detmold, *Keeping the People Alive: Reflections From a Bicycle Journey Through Native Homelands on the Columbia Plateau* (Off the Common Books, 2025)

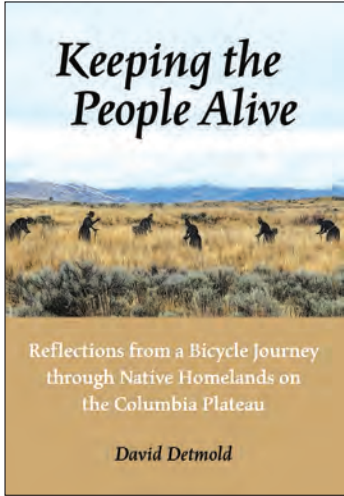
By RICHARD ANDERSEN

Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past.
– George Orwell

MONTAGUE – Right now, at the dawn of the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution, two distinct narratives are vying for control of our country’s history.

One narrative is wide-ranging and comprehensive. It includes, for example, the 1823 Supreme Court decision that “right of discovery supersedes right of habitation.” Just because you live on land that has been occupied by your ancestors for centuries doesn’t mean you own it.

The competing narrative is Donald Trump’s, and he wants it to be everybody’s. Built upon our country’s traditionally sanitized history, it holds in highest esteem the white, rich, heterosexual, Christian men who



helped make America great, but whose narrative is being threatened by people who want their historically ignored or marginalized stories included. It may feature the martyrdom of the right-wing youth icon Charlie Kirk, but won’t mention the Smithsonian Institution’s “Peoples of the United States” collection: the skulls of more than 13,000 Native Americans whose heads were cut off and sent to Washington, DC during the “Indian Wars” of the 19th century.

David Detmold’s *Keeping the People Alive: Reflections from a Bicycle Journey through Native Homelands on the Columbia Plateau* will not be a part of the Trumplican story.

Imagine these three narrative threads as if they were parts of an interwoven braid: Detmold’s adventures with his bicycle; the histories of the places he visits; and the human condition of the people currently living there.

One role of the bicycle is to provide humor, the

see **BOOK REVIEW** page B8

Pet of the Week



CARMODY COLLAGE

‘KONA’

Meet Kona, a seven-month-old boxer. Her previous humans describe her as loyal, loving, and kind. She loves to play fetch, is super cuddly, and loves all types of toys.

Kona still has lots of puppy energy, and would benefit from some training classes to help her be the best dog she can be.

Kona’s \$550 adoption fee includes spaying, rabies and kennel cough vaccinations, a heartworm test, current parvo/distemper vaccines, microchipping with registra-

tion, flea and tick treatment, a vet exam and health certificate at Dakin, and a free vet exam within 30 days of adoption with participating veterinarians.

If you’re ready to learn more about, meet, or adopt this pet, 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., or calling us at (413) 781-4000, or visiting www.dakinhumane.org.

DIY Bodywork For All

simple tips for self-care monthly

By JAMIE SIMPSON

TURNERS FALLS – Your head weighs about 10 to 12 pounds. And if you’re reading these words with your head reaching forward to see the page, it feels much heavier to your neck and shoulders.

Many of us sit for hours every day, day after day, staring at screens, generally with our head forward of our center axis, shoulders and upper back rounded, upper chest muscles held in a shortened position. We’re surrounded by tech devices at work, in the car, at home, and the way we use them places enormous strain on our eyes, and the rest of our body. Smartphones are the worst: not only is our head reaching forward, it’s also looking down, making the neck’s job even harder.

Our body performs many key tasks automatically – breathing, digesting, pumping blood, etc. – but it isn’t so great at maintaining an optimal posture without our conscious participation. Long-term chronic misalignment can lead to imbalances from muscle overuse and underuse; neck, shoulder, and back strain and pain; headaches; jaw tightness; reduced breathing capacity as our forward-hanging head and upper body compresses our abdomen and respiratory diaphragm, making it hard to fully inhale...

You get the picture. Left undressed, all of this can actually reduce our life span.

First, let’s define ideal posture. This is the posture that minimizes how hard the body must work to hold the position, and maximizes our breathing ability, so it can put its energy toward other functions. This definition describes folks who are temporarily able-bodied; others may adjust it to fit their situation.

Our head should be vertically aligned over our shoulders, shoulders relaxed and over hips, and if we are standing, hips over ankles. We’re not trying to remove the natural curves of the back. We also need to engage our low abdominal and other postural muscles in the trunk, just enough to maintain that alignment. If we are sitting, feet flat on the floor, hip distance apart, toes and knees pointing directly forward. (This is much easier when sitting closer to the front of our seat, where we can feel our “sits bones,” the lowest points of your pelvis, pressing into the seat.) When standing, place equal weight in both legs and feet.

But how do we remember to do that when we’re so busy doing other things?

When you know you’re going to be in front of a screen for a long period of time, set a timer to a shortish interval (15, 20, or 30 minutes, for example). When it goes off, notice your posture. Don’t be discouraged if you’re slumping; we’re just practicing noticing. The more often we notice, the sooner and more often we can see and correct any imbalances, until good posture becomes automatic.

cles to relax and shorten, while the upper chest gets a good stretch.

“Claw hand” relief: Our fingers can feel stuck in flexion from long periods of texting, phone-holding, or using remotes, controllers, etc. In the 1980s, many office workers and others suffered hand and wrist inflammation from months and years of repetitive movements. This would compress the median nerve that passes through the narrow opening in the wrist, leading to carpal tunnel syndrome, and in some cases to permanent loss of function in the wrist and hand.

Here are two ways to counter that. First, place your palms together, then press the finger pads together as you pull the heels of the hands away from each other. Holding this finger and wrist extension for 30 to 60 seconds, breathe slowly and fully. Another option: interlace your fingers together, turn your palms away from you, and extend your arms forward or up to the ceiling.

Combo meal: Here’s a way to reach all the above areas at once. Reach your arms out to the sides, at or just below shoulder height, as if trying to touch opposite walls. Start moving your outstretched arms back until you feel the front of your chest open. As you go, extend your fingers and spread them as far apart from each other as you can, and then bend the hand back at the wrist, as if trying to lay your fingernails on the “top” of the forearm. When your fully extended arms, hands, and fingers are as far back as you can go, breathe for 30 to 60 seconds.

Before bed: At the end of your day, give your neck some love. Lie face up on the bed or floor, with a rolled-up hand or bath towel giving gentle pressure on the back of your neck. Close your eyes and take a few breaths. Then, very slowly, start to nod your head “yes,” then shake it “no,” several times. Add any movements that feel good. Your neck will thank you.

Next month, I’ll focus on hip health.

Senior Center Activities

FEBRUARY 2 THROUGH 6

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

Tuesday 2/3
8:15 a.m. Nail Clinic
8:30 a.m. Nurse
9 a.m. Stretch & Balance
10 a.m. Line Dancing
11 a.m. Social Stringer
1 p.m. Friends Meeting

Wednesday 2/4
9 a.m. Interval Training
10 a.m. Chair Aerobics
11:30 a.m. Bingo
1 p.m. Veterans’ Services

Thursday 2/5
9 a.m. Barre Fusion
10 a.m. Pilates Flow
12 p.m. Brown Bag Lunch

Friday 2/6
8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Quilting and Open Sew

GILL and MONTAGUE

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

Monday 2/2
10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
1 p.m. Kitchen Club
3 p.m. Beginner Yoga

Tuesday 2/3

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

Wednesday 2/4
9 a.m. Veterans’ Agent
10:15 a.m. Aerobics
11 a.m. Chair Exercise
4 p.m. Mat Yoga

Thursday 2/5
10:30 a.m. Brown Bag Lunch
1 p.m. Pitch
3:30 p.m. Montague Neighbors Board Meeting

Friday 2/6
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. The next clinic is February 17.

Luncheons are the fourth Friday at town hall. For more information, contact (413) 548-1022 or coa@leverett.ma.us. Check the town newsletter or the Leverett-Connects listserv for info.

WENDELL

Foot care clinic is the first Wednesday of each month. The next clinic is February 4. Call Katie Nolan at (978) 544-2306 for information or appointments. For Senior Health Rides, contact Nancy Spittle at (978) 544-6760.

Try a simple exercise: Take a slow, easy, full breath in through the nose while your torso and head are rounded and reaching forward, respectively. Now sit upright, head directly over shoulders, shoulders relaxed and directly above your hips, and try again. Which position makes it easier to take in a full breath?

On average, we take about 20,000 to 25,000 per day. Multiplied by 365 days in a year and an average life span of, say, 75 years, this comes out to over 500 million breaths. If even 10% of those breaths are shallow due to our posture, that’s about 55 million breaths that deliver less of the oxygen and nutrients we need, and that fail to fully expel all the metabolic waste we normally exhale.

Sound grim? Good news: we can slow and even reverse the ill effects of poor posture with some simple changes.

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HEARTFELT from page B1

or root cellar can make an ideal storage.

It's these same crops that enabled the first European colonists to exist in their new home of America. Initially ignoring the indigenous peoples' practice of storing crops for winter survival, they eventually learned from the Wampanoag who taught them to hunt, fish, and grow the Three Sisters. This provided a balanced, sustainable food source for new Americans who earlier would have died from starvation and disease.

Once early colonists embraced the staple of winter squash, stewing or baking it with animal fats and maple syrup or honey, it evolved into the versatile holiday and everyday food we eat today. Settlers cultivated Boston Marrow, Hubbard, and Turban squash, which spawned today's readily available butternut, acorn, and spaghetti varieties.

Today, Mexico and Spain top the charts for international commercial production of winter squash, while in the US it's grown in Texas, Tennessee, Virginia, and North Carolina. Our nation's favorite is butternut squash, with its sweet nutty flavor and versatility. It can be baked, steamed, boiled, mashed, and used in soups and alongside roasts. It's rich in beta carotene, fiber, and other nutrients.

Consumed around the world, squash may become part of a hearty stew in Peru, a fritter in the Caribbean, a spicy Mexican *mole* sauce, or an Indian *samosa*.

Another popular winter squash Americans enjoy is spaghetti squash, native to Asia. In the 1930s it was introduced to the US by the Burpee Seed Company. Later, in the 1980s and '90s, it was marketed as a low-calorie alternative to pasta. I remember my mom, always on a diet, feeding the family Italian pasta while she dined on the low-fat spaghetti squash as a substitute. Today it's popular for gluten-free and keto diets.



The author poses with her favorite squash, delicata, which she slices and roasts with apples in olive oil and maple syrup.

Have you ever seen those huge, blue squash for sale locally? Some are as big as 40 pounds! The Blue Hubbard is an heirloom squash with New England roots, prized for its tough skin, sweetness, and ability to be stored for up to six months. Its taste has been compared to sweet potato, and it pairs well with spices like cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, cumin, or curry powder. It may require a cleaver to split.

While in Australia I had my first taste of a "pumpkin soup" that was so rich and creamy and delicious I ate enough to get a stomach ache. It was not made of what we call "pumpkin," though – there, they are typically referring to butternut squash, both have a sweet nutty flesh. I never had pumpkin as a vegetable on my plate until I was in Australia, but have incorporated a lot more squash and pumpkin into my cooking repertoire since then.

With all the tough-skinned winter squash available, delicata squash is unique as the only one with a skin soft enough to be edible. Originally introduced in the US in the 1890s, it lost its



Winter squash watercolors, painted by the author for a guide created by a local farm CSA.

popularity due to its mildew susceptibility until a disease-resistant variety was developed at Cornell University in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

I like to use my mandoline to thinly slice unpeeled delicata and apples, drizzle them with olive oil and maple syrup, salt, and pepper, and then roast them at 400° for about 30 minutes. Fresh herbs – think thyme or rosemary – can also be scattered before baking. It's a natural pairing of the tart apple with sweet squash.

Not just found on the dinner table, winter squash also has its place in literature, often appearing as a symbol of abundance and fertility and linked to winter themes of reflection, endurance, and transition. The image of squash summons up a cozy domesticity: a savory pot of butternut soup bubbling on the stove, a loaf of warm pumpkin bread baking in the oven.

I'll share a pumpkin soup recipe here for you, inspired by www.allrecipes.com, to heat up and scent your own winter kitchen. I like to serve this soup very thick.

Trouble Mandeson shares a cozy home with her wifey and cat. She is mostly retired but keeps busy as a hospice volunteer, writer, reader, artist, cook, and dreamer.



PUMPKIN SOUP

4 cups pumpkin or squash purée
6 cups chicken stock
1 tsp. chopped fresh parsley
1 cup chopped onion
½ tsp. chopped fresh thyme
1 clove garlic, minced
salt and fresh ground black pepper to taste
¼ to ½ cup heavy whipping cream

To purée your own squash: Cut it in half and remove the seeds and fibers. Grease the cut edges with olive oil, turn it upside down on a parchment-papered baking sheet, and roast for 45 minutes at 400° until tender.

Allow to cool, scrape the insides from skin, and use it in this recipe and/or others. Use or freeze the extra squash for soup and baked goods.

In a large pot, heat all the ingredients except the whipping cream. Bring to a boil, reduce to low, and simmer for 30 minutes uncovered.

Purée the soup in small batches with an immersion blender or food processor. Return to the pan, bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, for about 30 minutes, or until your desired consistency.

Stir in heavy cream. Serve garnished with fresh parsley.



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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MONTAGUE POLICE LOG

Hide-and-Seek Effort Summons Drones; Local Wild Man Agrees to Move Along; Propane Tank Sale Causes Controversy; Defroster Adjustment Causes Collision; Tow Trucks Unavailable in Snowstorm

Monday, 1/19
7:24 a.m. 911 caller from Canal Street reports an electric heater in their kitchen won't turn off, and is glowing bright red. No flames, but starting to have a burning smell and smoke. Transferred to Shelburne Control. Officers advised.
4:28 p.m. 911 caller from Lake Pleasant Road reports alarms are going off; smelling smoke but can't find where it's coming from. Transferred to Shelburne Control. Officer can smell smoke inside but is not seeing flames; possible electrical fire. Negative findings at this time.
11:26 p.m. Caller from Fourth Street states the people in a nearby apartment are yelling and fighting again; states PD was there earlier for same thing. Both parties were given a chance to grab items they needed and were told not to talk to or bother each other for the rest of the night.
Tuesday, 1/20
2:46 p.m. Party from Old Stage Road into station to report that his pearl gray Trek mountain bike went missing from his garage on Sunday. It had a saddlebag attached.
Wednesday, 1/21
10:47 a.m. Caller states that his bag of medication was stolen from his home. Officer met with caller, who is not sure when it went missing; apartment door has been unlocked. Investigated.
6:42 p.m. 911 caller states her five-year-old daughter is missing. Officer searching house; K9 and drone units requested. Officer states child has been located inside the home; she was hiding under wet clothing in the washer.
Thursday, 1/22
12:53 a.m. Caller from Avenue A states that a tall male party outside the building is continuously ringing the buzzer asking to be let inside. Caller advises he told the male to leave, and the male begs to be let inside. Advises this happened multiple times tonight. Area checked; unable to locate.
11:37 a.m. Officer reporting fraudulent charge on his gas card issued by the sheriff's department. Investigation shows that Cumberland Farms puts a pending full charge on the gas card until the transaction has been cleared by the card company, then the pending charge is released.
12:29 p.m. Report of a possible stolen package on Avenue A. Report taken.
5:14 p.m. Caller from Seventh Street reports a male dressed all in black is beating a backpack with a stick. Officers out with male party. Involved male declined any need for services; states he's a "wild man" and is moving along.
Friday, 1/23
5:20 p.m. Caller from East Main Street requesting officers to building; involved female is throwing things at the walls and doors and screaming, causing a disturbance. Both parties advised of harassment order options; situation mediated.
7:11 p.m. Walk-in reports she ran out of gas at the intersection of Turnpike and Turners Falls roads. Waiting for someone to bring her gas. Officers pushed vehicle into public safety complex parking lot, out of traffic.
9:34 p.m. 911 caller driving on Main Street reports he has been followed by a red Mustang since Belcher-town. Mustang was originally in front of him and slamming on the brakes. Caller then turned onto another road; the Mustang followed him and is now behind him. Officers behind vehicle at Greenfield and Hatchery roads. Officer has vehicle stopped. Seems to be coincidental at this time. Operator works in Greenfield and is headed there. Officers have dealt with involved male in the past; no issues.
Saturday, 1/24
4:58 a.m. Caller from East Main Street states a female who lives in her building is beating up a dog. Caller states she could hear the female yelling at it and could hear the dog yelping. Officer unable to gain entry into building. Attempted to call reporting party back, but call went to voicemail. Officer states no noise heard while officers were on scene. Message left for on-call animal control officer. ACO called back and advises they will check on the wellbeing of the dog this morning. ACO at location; involved female agreeable to speaking with him. ACO advises no issues with dog.
Sunday, 1/25
11:20 a.m. Store manager called stating she is worried that a male is going to come to Cumberland Farms as he believes that the store should not have charged him sales tax on a propane tank, and he is demanding the money back. Officer spoke to both parties and advised male of options.
11:24 a.m. Caller states he has had two 20-pound propane tanks stolen in the past 20 days. He went and bought a new one at Cumberland Farms, and he is concerned they charged him wrong. Wants to file a report. Referred to an officer.
12:07 p.m. Caller from Station Street states a very loud weird noise is coming from a house vent; concerned and wanting someone to check it out. Officer and MCFD advised.
2:31 p.m. Caller states she was trying to turn her defroster on because her wipers were stuck to the window and she took out the median sign at Depot Street and Montague City Road. DPW notified.
5:39 p.m. DPW requesting officer assistance in getting cars moved from Fifth and L streets for snow removal. Officer advises he spoke to the DPW and advised them that tow companies are not available this storm; passed down from day shift sergeant.
5:53 p.m. 911 caller reports that a car has been parked on the side of Central Street for weeks that won't be able to be moved for snow removal; she feels the town should tow it. Caller advised of proper usage of 911 phone system. No tow companies available for car removal. Officers advised.
10:01 p.m. 911 caller reporting that a male was banging on his girlfriend's door and he shouldn't be there. States male left the property; caller is now following male and screaming at him. No orders in place; caller states female dropped the orders, but male has been harassing her since. Can hear involved male in background requesting to be left alone. Caller yelling derogatory terms at involved male. Officer spoke to involved male; he reports his truck broke down and he was trying to walk to the gas station, and that when he walked by the female's residence the caller started yelling at him and following him. 911 open line received from caller again making threatening comments to involved male, stating he is going to hurt him and put him in the ground. Officers on scene with caller. Officers spoke with all involved parties and received additional information. Officers strongly encouraged the female to seek an emergency 209A restraining order as this is an ongoing incident.

WEST ALONG from page B1

to recover the Native names. I find many very poetic in the sound of their names, yet many are simply pragmatic descriptions provided by Native inhabitants of this place.

There are places which translate roughly into English: *podunk*, “muddy place where you sink in mire” or *squamskut*, “good fishing place.”

Such places sound better in Algonkian, as you will see!

I’ll narrow down this discussion to two categories: the first being those names known to us by their everyday names, the second being those names that have existed and were lost, erased, and otherwise buried out of sight.

Some examples of the first category are place names like *Mount Tom* and *Agawam*. Mount Tom is shortened from *Tomhegan-omp-skut*, meaning “tomahawk stone place,” and *Agawam* means “open meadow.”

Those are easy enough, but the second category is much more challenging. Painstaking research done by Abenaki scholar Marge Bruchac offers the example of the original name of the Sawmill River: *Sawwatep-chechuwas*, meaning “continuously runs over sloping ledges,” and “pouring forth alone it comes.”

Some other familiar names have been known and accessible for a long time: Squakheag (Northfield), Pocumtuck (Deerfield), Puckomeag (Greenfield), Hockanum or Nonotuck (Hadley), Norwottock (Northampton), and so forth.

Others can be drawn from some of the original Indian deeds going back to the 1600s. But researchers have been confronted by a number of linguistic and transliteration problems. Many of the names have been extremely distorted, written down by English colonists who were clearly incompetent in Indian languages, and often not even competent in their own English language.

It has been noted that the early Puritans made prejudiced attempts to form Algonkian phrases and names to fit into Latin or Greek molds. Some even used the Hebrew language as a linguistic structure, in the belief that the Indigenous populations were actually the descendants of the Lost Tribes of Israel!

It also has been observed that misunderstanding between tribal informants and English settlers created confusion. When a tribal person was asked for the name of a place, that person often replied by giving his own name.

In the introduction to his *Indian Place Names of New England*, John C. Huden notes that “translation was difficult, pronunciation even worse. The Elizabethan English rendition of Indian words could give a completely different meaning even if slightly mispronounced.”

Huden also points out how letters could be misrepresented, and the spellings that have come down to us could be misrepresented and are not necessarily reliable.

For example, the letters *-r*, *-f*, *-ph* can be incorrectly copied, and an English ear might hear the letter *-b* instead of *-p*, or *-d* instead of *-t*. Even more confusing, the sounds *-l*, *-n*, *-r*, and *-y* were often interchangeable from one dialect to another.

A case in point is the place name for the Peskeompskut falls, located between the present-day towns of Montague and Gill. In this name, the noun in question is either *pesk-* meaning “explosion or thunder” or *peske-* meaning “split.”

Did an English-speaking person hear the slightly aspirated “e” as in “eh,” or did he hear just *pesk-* and write it down one way or the other?

And who assigned this name to begin with? Was this truly an Algonkian name, or one made up by a white antiquarian like George Sheldon?

Hudin provides an amusing list of the 50 spelling variations on Lake *Winnepessauke*; every spelling from *Winnepessiokee* to *Winnepessioca* to *Winnepessocket*.

A final note on the many pitfalls of place name research is that in some places, place names in Indigenous languages were changed completely to fit English comprehension.

The Niantic name *mosketuauke*, “grassy hill,” for a location in their homelands became Mosquitohawk, Rhode Island!

In future columns, I’ll present a number of local names and attempt to parse out their meanings.



ARTIST PROFILE

ML Basket Designs

By MELISSA WLOSTOSKI

GREENFIELD – I occasionally find artists I want to do profiles of at the Greenfield farmers market. They have one in the summer outdoors, and one in the winter in the library.

At one of the winter markets, I saw a woman named Marsha Leavitt selling these pine needle wall hangings that I was drawn to. They looked really unique.

I learned from her that she has been doing the pine needle work for nine years. “I have been weaving baskets for 30 years,” she added, “all different kinds of baskets.”

Leavitt said this is the second year she has been doing the Greenfield winter market. Another place she has sold her work is the Ashfield Farmers Market, which also takes place in the winter. A couple of her pieces of art are in the Fiddleheads Art Gallery in Northfield. She calls her baskets and other pieces by some interesting names, such as “Catching Stars,” “The Light at the End of the Tunnel,” and “Collaboration.”

You can possibly learn how to do some of this work from Leavitt. She has taught a lot of classes about her craft in the area. The wall hangings that so interest me are the most pop-



COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

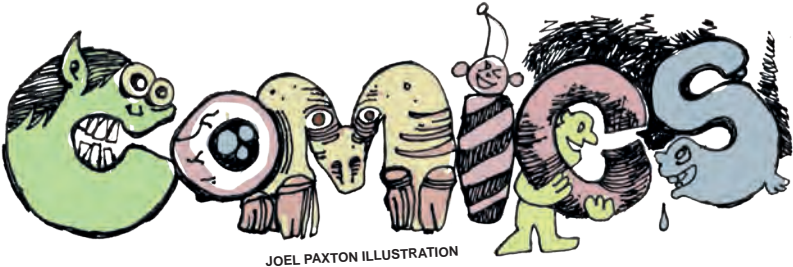
A wall ornament crafted by Marsha Leavitt using pine needles, wire, and beads.

ular, she said, when it comes to the kinds of classes she teaches. One time she taught a course in Orange.

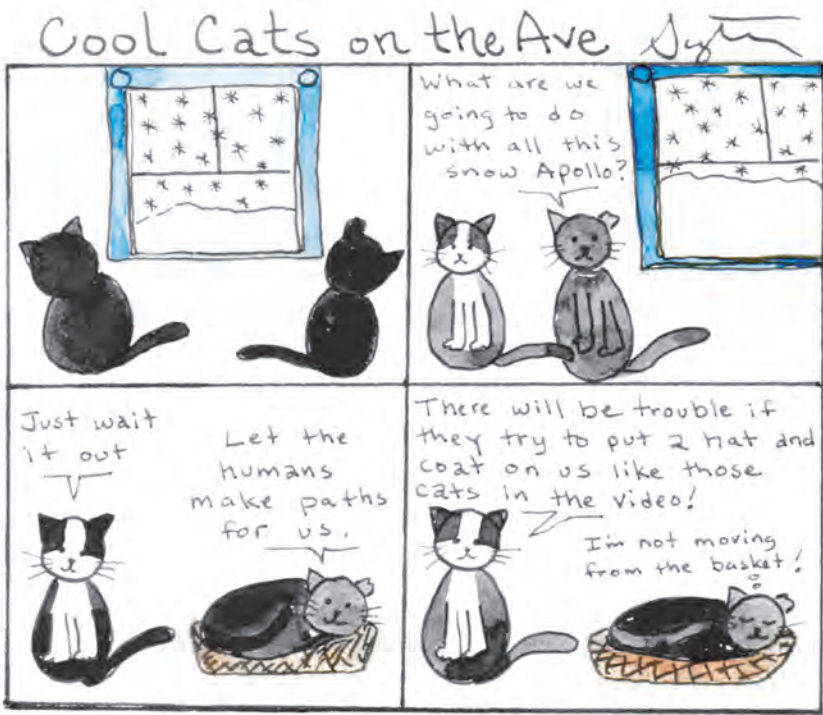
Leavitt said her wall hangings sell more than the baskets she makes. They feature images of trees, cats, and owls. When it comes to her craft, she said, “I like using natural materials, like nuts and seeds and pine needles.”

Other things Leavitt makes include gourds and ornaments. The ornaments look like the wall hangings and they have been out for years, all along. \$45 and under is their price. The gourds that she makes are quite beautiful.

To see what I am describing here and more of Leavitt’s art, you can go to www.MLBasketDesigns.com.



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Above: Pipes and glass at the Église Saint-Denis in Amboise, France.

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GOING BACK TO KALI

Ratios of Divine Melancholy

By JOSH WATSON

TURNERS FALLS – This past November the composer Kali Malone released her latest album, *Magnetism*, in collaboration with Scottish composer and musician Drew McDowall. Malone, who turns 32 this year, was born in Denver, Colorado, but, after a brief stint at Simon’s Rock College in Great Barrington, enrolled at the Royal College of Stockholm in Sweden to study electroacoustic composition. Since 2019, Malone has been creating and performing inspiring and unsettling works of hypnotic music on medieval pipe organs in cathedrals throughout Europe, on modular synthesizers such as the composer Éliane Radigue’s ARP 2500, and performing and recording with a series of like-minded musicians, including her husband Stephen O’Malley of the drone metal band Sunn O))),

In Stockholm, Malone apprenticed with an organ tuner and repairman, Jan Börjeson, with whom she studied, and soon obsessed over, the mechanics and tuning of enormous, centuries-old church pipe organs in towns and cities across Sweden. “I wanted to work with instruments that used air as their main energy source and propellant,” Malone told the *New York Times* in 2024, believing that the “human fragilities” it represented could inspire “another life force in the work.”

The genre of music known as drone is based on long, sustained notes, and the notes Malone employs often vary from 12-tone equal temperament, the basis of most of the music composed in the Western world for the last 300 or so years.

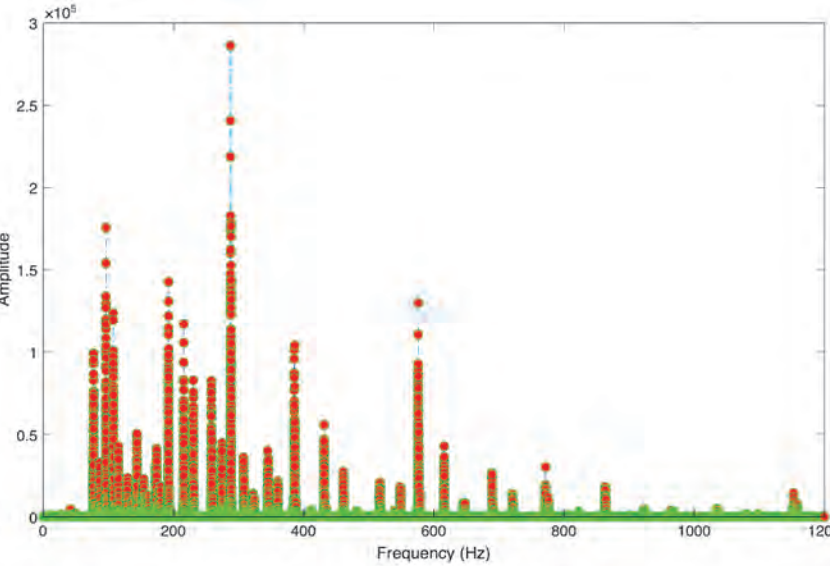
In 12-tone equal temperament each octave is divided into 12 notes, with the frequency of each successive note a ratio from the previous note of 1.059:1. (To raise a note by an octave is to double its frequency, so we find this ratio by taking the 12th root of 2.) The logarithmic increase of an octave, from the first note to the 12th note, is sometimes measured as a total of 1,200 “cents,” the math of which may be familiar to musicians, but which is a bit too much to explain here.

If you start with standard “A”

at 440 hertz (Hz), and multiply it by 1.059, you’ll have a 466 Hz “B flat.” Multiply again and you’ll have a 494 Hz “B.” Yet, between those frequencies lie multitudes of microtones neglected for fear of dissonance.

The history of octaves divided into discrete notes parallels the introduction of the keyboard as the primary method of controlling pipe

The disassociative nature of Malone’s works, in which, if one is not prone to losing oneself to timelessness and infinite space, one might find themselves transported, psychologically, into the plot of an early David Cronenberg movie, or, as a local 11-year-old described it, “immediately traumatized,” perhaps stems in part from her use of “just” intonation.



Frequency (Hz)	Closest Note	Difference (in cents)	How it sounds
96	G2	-33	Flat
108	A2	-33	Flat
193	G3	-30	Flat
216	A3	-33	Flat
288	D4	-33	Flat
386	G4	-26	Flat
576	D5	-33	Flat

MONTAGUE REPORTER IMAGES

Top: A plot of the discrete Fourier transform of Malone’s composition “All Life Long (Organ)” indicating dominant frequencies in Hz along the x-axis, and amplitude of frequencies, expressed as the absolute value of the signal at each frequency, along the y-axis. Above: The dominant frequencies in “All Life Long (Organ)” compared with familiar notes found on a modern piano; the difference in cents of each from the familiar notes; and our experience of the dominant frequency.

organs. Pipe organs, first used in Greece in the 4th century, began to migrate across Europe over the next several hundred years.

The avant-garde composer and microtone advocate Harry Partch, in his 1949 treatise *Genesis of a Music*, describes the intonations of the 16th century evolving because “...the form of the keyboard, the chief reason for temperament, was already a habit, and therefore tempering was a habit, and therefore the mental reaction of musicians was a habit. In short, inertia had the day.”

Just intonation commonly divides the octave into whole-number ratios, but it also can refer to a variety of alternative tuning systems which seek to fine-tune musical intervals to find consonance and defy dissonance, each of which has historically inspired strong feelings among its proponents. A friend with extensive musical training, when texted about the topic, responded: “Oh dude – that is a very deep rabbit hole.”

Certainly it is possible that this article, a brief and fleeting intro-

duction to this topic, may conflate or elide enough detail to annoy many of the trained musicians among its readers. In any event, just intonation is alien enough from 12-tone-equal temperament to sound, at times, dissonant.

Malone recorded the instrumental version of the title track of her previous album, *All Life Long*, sometime between 2020 and 2023 on a meantone-tempered pipe organ at the Orgelpark performance space in Amsterdam.

The digitized audio information contained on the MP3 file for “All Life Long (Organ)” can be taken from the time domain, where it exists as an 8 minutes 38 second composition, and moved to the frequency domain using a discrete Fourier transform. The plot at left displays a sample of the dominant frequencies in Malone’s piece along its x-axis and the amplitude of each frequency along the y-axis.

The notes are discernibly flat to our ears, but in concert with each other, the harmony somehow welcoming and alienating at the same time.

Though Malone’s compositions are recent, drone music played on cathedral pipe organs has an ancient history. In his 2002 essay “The Eternal Drone,” the critic Marcus Boon writes that “[t]here was no electricity in the cathedrals of medieval Europe, such as Notre Dame in Paris, where enormous pedal organs tuned to specific, harmonically related pitches accompanied drone or sustained tone based vocal recitations... the organs were vast, and the cathedral functioned as a resonant chamber that amplified the organ so that the space was saturated with rich overtones, as strange psychedelic colour effects created by the stained glass windows illuminated the walls and the faces of the congregation.”

Interviewed in *Tank Magazine* in 2025, Malone was asked about the opening lyrics on *All Life Long*, which, translated from the Italian, read “There is a profane contagion, a touch that disenchant and returns to use what the sacred had separated and petrified.” The lyric is taken, she said, from a 2007 essay “In Praise of Profanation” by the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben.

“[Agamben] defines profanation

as the act of bringing back to communal use what has been removed through sacred jurisdiction,” she responded. “Through the act of play, we can bring objects and activities previously confined to the sacred sphere back to the use of humanity. The pipe organ is perhaps the most gatekept instrument, and playing secular contemporary music in a church and using the organ outside of mass might be an artistic act of profanation. It opens the instrument to artistic exploration beyond religious ritual and liturgical agenda, bringing a broad range of listeners into the church for the sole purpose of music.”

Indeed, a 2023 concert planned for Saint Cornély de Carnac church in Carnac, France was canceled when members of the right-wing extremist – nominally Catholic – organization Civitas protested that her “electro” music would profane the venue.

The title “All Life Long” is taken from Arthur Symons’s 1901 poem “The Crying of Water,” which W.E.B. Du Bois also used as an epigraph to the first chapter of *The Souls of Black Folk*:

*O water, voice of my heart, crying
in the sand,
All night long crying with a
mournful cry,
As I lie and listen, and cannot
understand
The voice of my heart in my side
or the voice of the sea,
O water, crying for rest, is it I, is
it I?
All night long the water is crying
to me.*

*Unresting water, there shall never
be rest
Till the last moon droop and the
last tide fail,
And the fire of the end begin to
burn in the west;
And the heart shall be weary and
wonder and cry like the sea,
All life long crying without avail,
As the water all night long is
crying to me.*

To listen to Malone’s compositions is to inhabit, for a while, this melancholic searching and spiritual estrangement, as her otherworldly tunings employ dissonance to touch the divine.


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Saturday, January 31 at 2 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 29

Great Falls Discovery Center,
Turners Falls: *Nice & Easy Walk*. 1 p.m. Free.

Last Ditch, Greenfield: *Ska Night*. 7:30 p.m. No cover.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 30

Stop & Shop, Greenfield: *Community Food Drive*, sponsored by the Community Health Center. “Drop off canned goods, boxed meals, or other non-perishable items.” 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Free.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Kidleidoscope Story Hour: Owls*. Ages 3 to 6. Story, activities, and crafts. 10:30 a.m. Free.

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls: *Lofi Creativity Zone*. A creative hangout for tweens and teens. 4 p.m. Free.

Brick House Community Resource Center, Turners Falls: Documentary screening, *Join or Die* (2023), followed by soup and community discussion at 7 p.m. Launch event for The Village Project, a new initiative to bring a “village feel” back to the neighborhood. 5 p.m. Free.

Element Brewing Company, Millers Falls: *David Brule and His Irish Band*. 6 p.m. No cover.

Unnameable Books, Turners Falls: Reading, *Michael Burten and Andy Robinson*. 7 p.m. Free.

Incandescent Brewing, Bernardston: *Moon Hollow*. 7 p.m. No cover.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Michael Nau, Magic Tuber String Band*. 7 p.m. \$.

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *Teen Driver, True Jackie, Don't Tell Iris, The Maladaptive*. 7 p.m. \$.

Shelburne Falls Theater, Shelburne Falls: Pothole Pictures presents *WALL-E* (2008). Music at 7 p.m.: *James Smith and Lonesome Jenny*; movie at 7:30 p.m. \$.

Colonial Theater, Keene: *Los Lobos*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *The Wonder Yearz*. 8 p.m. No cover.

Shutesbury Athletic Club, Shutesbury: *The Pistoleros*. 8 p.m. No cover.

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Four Sticks*, Led Zeppelin tribute. 8 p.m. \$.

The Drake, Amherst: *Cheem, The Missing Peace, Slow Degrade*. 8 p.m. \$.

Sulis Studio, Florence: *Bastian Void, Feldspar00000, Alice Hixon Kirk, ZBS.fm*. 8 p.m. \$.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Open Jam Night*. 9:30 p.m. No cover.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 31

Shelburne Falls Theater, Shelburne Falls: Pothole Pictures presents *WALL-E* (2008). Music at 1:30 p.m.: *Same Old Same Olds*; movie at 2 p.m. \$.

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls: *Winter Wonderland Family Fun*. Winter-themed crafts and hot cocoa. 2 p.m. Free.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *The Secret World of Freshwater Mussels*, presentation by malacologist Virginia Martell. 2 p.m. Free.

Element Brewing Company, Millers Falls: *Vimana*. 3 p.m. No cover.

Haze, Northampton: *Virgo's Moon* (EP Release), *Amateur Club, People's Princess*. 4 p.m. \$.

Feeding Tube Records, Florence: *Tashi Dorji, Che Chen*. 4 p.m. By donation.

Great Falls Harvest, Turners Falls: *Jack Haley, Reklama, Part-Time Job, The Worse the Better, DJ Mophead*. 7 p.m. \$.

Asbestos Farm, Hadley: *Big Destiny*, album release show, with *Lucy, Magick Lantern, Kahoots*. 7 p.m. \$.

Shelburne Falls Theater, Shelburne Falls: Pothole Pictures presents *WALL-E* (2008). Music at 7 p.m.: *Snapdragons*; movie at 7:30 p.m. \$.



Experimental guitarists Tashi Dorji (above) and Che Chen (75 Dollar Bill) play *Feeding Tube* this Saturday.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Lez Zeppelin, Led Zeppelin* tribute. 7 p.m. \$.

Hutghi's, Westfield: *Gloons, Fragile Rabbit, Cacia, Sunless*. 7 p.m. \$.

Colonial Theater, Keene: *Reggie Watts, Adam & The Flood*. 7:30 p.m. \$.

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

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *DiTrani Bros, Moon Hollow*. 8 p.m. \$.

Tourists, North Adams: *Haley Heynderickx*. 8 p.m. Free.

Rendezvous, Turners Falls: *Snowglobe Almanac, The Same Old Same Olds, BB Dozer*. 9:30 p.m. By donation.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *Film & Gender, AFK, Sgraffito Kill*. 10:30 p.m. \$.

EXHIBITS

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Will Close*, paintings showing the beauty and complexity of the natural world, with text from experts and longtime New Englanders. Through January.

Montague Center Library, Montague: *Mark Mariani*, pastel paintings, through January.

Sawmill River Arts, Montague Center: Guest artist *Annaleah Moon Gregoire* presents paintings at the gallery through January.

Rhodes Art Center, Northfield Mount Hermon, Gill: *Pieces of HerStory: A Fabric Collage Celebration of Black Women*, portraits of 32 trailblazing women of color by self-taught artist Kasandra Pantoja. Through January.

Leverett Library, Leverett: *Meandering Through France*, photographs by David Pueschel, through February.

Geissler Gallery, Stoneleigh-Burnham School, Greenfield: *Earthly Possessions*, sculpture by Cassie Brown, through March 3.

Greenfield Library, Greenfield: *Evolution: From Photojournalism to Abstraction*, photos by John Nordell, through January. *If I Can Paint, You Can Too*, oil paintings by Fran Corriveau, February 2 to 28.

Looky Here, Greenfield: *Psychedelic Filly*, art by Emily Tatro, through January.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *Trees*, informational exhibit celebrating tree projects in Greenfield, through February with a reception next Thursday, February 5 at 5 p.m. *Positively Deerfield Street*, photographs by Geoff Bluh spanning several decades of changes in the Deerfield Street neighborhood, through February with a reception Saturday, February 7 at 11 a.m.

GCTV, Greenfield: *Eve Christoff's Gallery of Work*, large-scale vibrant paintings celebrating the natural world and divine female energy. Through March, with a reception Friday, February 6 at 6 p.m.

Hope & Olive, Greenfield: *Flora, Fauna, & Figures*, paintings by Julie Kumble, through March 15.

Artspace, Greenfield: *Making Light*, community art show featuring work by 28 local artists on the theme of illumination, through February 20.

Greenfield Community College, Greenfield: *Rachel Portesi: The Nature of Things*, an installation that examines themes of mortality, regeneration, and interconnectedness. In the South Gallery through February 27.

Augusta Savage Gallery, UMass Amherst: *Reserved Passages*, watercolors by former teacher Richard Yarde and his student Susan Montgomery, through February 26.

Hampden Gallery, UMass Amherst: *Fragile Connections*, neon-lit sculpture and delicately engraved glass forms

by scientific glass blower Sally Prasch. Through May 8, with a reception Thursday, April 23 at 5 p.m.

Gallery A3, Amherst: *Alliterations*, paintings by Gordon M. Green, and *Radical Hope*, paintings by Evelyn Pye. Both through January.

Shelburne Arts Coop, Shelburne Falls: *Magic of Moonlight*, member exhibit, through January 26, followed by a member exhibit in February on the theme *Heart to Heart*.

Black Birch Vineyard, Hatfield: *Quabbin Art Association*, member exhibit featuring a wide range of media, through February.

Split Level Gallery, Northampton: *Listen to My Photographs*, photographic art by members of the Care Center, a GED program for young mothers in Holyoke. Through February, with a reception Friday, February 13 at 5 p.m.

Downtown Northampton: *15th Annual Ice Festival*, 17 ice sculptures created by artists throughout the downtown this Saturday, January 31.

CALL FOR ART

The **Deerfield Art Association** seeks work for the Sixth Annual Photography Exhibition at Fiddleheads Gallery in Northfield. Phone or camera, black and white or color, but no AI-generated or enhanced work. Submission deadline is February 6; contact margedvaa@gmail.com to submit. Exhibit opens February 14.

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CALENDAR

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1

Town Hall, Gill: Documentary screening, *An Act of Conscience* (1997), about the years-long struggle that ensued after the IRS seized the home of war tax resisters in Colrain. Discussion to follow. 1 p.m. Free.

Looky Here, Greenfield: *Craft Club*. Open studio time: bring any project, use sewing machines, glue guns, and other resources. Free for members. 1 to 3 p.m. \$.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: *First Sunday Word*. Open mic with featured writers *Karina Lutz* and *Janet Aalfs*. 1 p.m. By donation.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: Documentary screening, *Fire of Love* (2022). Two French scientists are in love but die in a volcano. 2 p.m. Free.

33 Hawley, Northampton: *Poems with Wings*. Cellist *Eugene Friesen* and actor and writer *Court Dorsey* collaborate in an improvised performance of poems by Dorsey and others. 2 p.m. By donation.

Athol Congregational Church, Athol: *Quabbin Valley Pro Musica* sings Dvořák's "Mass in D Major," four spirituals. 3 p.m. \$.

Groff Park, Amherst: Community celebration, *Groundhog Day's Eve*. Dances, groundhog effigies, songs. Dress warmly. 4 p.m. Free.

Feeding Tube Records, Florence. *Roger Miller*. 4 p.m. No cover.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2

Greenfield Community College, Greenfield: *Health Occupations Job Fair*. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Free.

Four Phantoms Brewing, Greenfield: *Monday Night D&D*. Single-session games. 6 p.m. No cover.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3

Food City, Turners Falls: *Community Food Drive*, sponsored by the Community Health Center. "Drop off canned goods, boxed meals, or other non-perishable items." 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Free.

Olver Transit Center, Greenfield: Author *John K. Bollard* discusses his recent book, *Protesting with Rosa Parks: From Stagecoaches to Driving While Black*. Register at www.tinyurl.com/symposiaparks. 2 p.m. \$.

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls: Montague selectboard member *Marina Goldman* drop-in office hour. 4 to 5 p.m. Free.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4

Greenfield Community College, Greenfield: *Music Matters*, benefit luncheon for Música Franklin, which provides free, accessible music education to students in grades 1 through 12. Complimentary lunch. Register at musicafranklin.org/musicmatters. 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. By donation.



This Sunday, Gill Indivisible will screen and discuss An Act of Conscience, a documentary about the struggle over the home seized in Colrain in 1989 from war tax resisters Randy Kehler and Betsy Corner (above), at Gill town hall.

Music Connection, Turners Falls: *JOJI* album release listening party. 5 p.m. Free.

Element Brewing Company, Millers Falls: *David Brule and His Irish Band*. 6 p.m. No cover.

Greenfield Community Television, Greenfield: Reception for *Eve Christoff* exhibit. 6 p.m. Free.

Woodlands Social Dance, led by honored guest *Annawon Weeden*. 1 to 4 p.m. By donation.

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: Reading, *David Detmold* (see book review, Page B1). 1:30 p.m. Free.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: Screening, *Greenfield's Winter Carnival, 1923*, a restored 9-minute film from that year, looping in conjunction with this year's Winter Carnival. 2 to 4 p.m. Free.

Four Phantoms Brewing, Greenfield: *Just Fine Thank You Band*. 2:30 p.m. No cover.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: Local history talk, *Quabbin Obscura: The Swift River in Black and White*. 3 p.m. Free.

Bicycle World, Greenfield: *Fatbike Group Ride* through the Greenfield Ridge. Departs 3 p.m. Free.

CitySpace, Easthampton: *CitySpace Bluegrass*. Jam session. 4 p.m. Free.

Unnameable Books, Turners Falls: A.A. *Telmasani*, reading; *Rachid Halihal*, oud. 6 p.m. By donation.

Iron Horse, Northampton: *The Nields, Wheelzie*. 7 p.m. \$.

Full Moon Coffeehouse, Wendell: *John Sheldon*, benefit for Good Neighbors. 7:30 p.m. \$.

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Jatoba, 2 Car Garage*. 8 p.m. \$.

The Drake, Amherst: *Landowner, Outro, Slant of Light*. 8 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Kidleidoscope Story Hour: Winter Insects*. Ages 3 to 6. Story, activities, and crafts. 10:30 a.m. Free.

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: Workshop, *Zine on the River*. For teens and adults. Drop in and make a Connecticut River zine. 3 to 5 p.m. Free.

Greenfield Common, Greenfield: *Torch Lighting*, to mark the beginning of the 104th Annual Winter Carnival. 4 p.m. Free.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7

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

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Valentine Making*. Children of all ages welcome with caregivers. Materials provided. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Free.

LAVA Center, Greenfield: Reception for *Positively Deerfield Street*, exhibit of photographs by *Geoff Bluh*. 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free.

Central Square, Keene: *Ice & Snow Festival*. Ice carvers, pony rides, s'mores, etc. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Free.

John Zon Community Center, Greenfield: *Cribbage Tournament*. Registration starts at noon. 1 to 4 p.m. \$.

Greenfield Community College, Greenfield: *Full Snow Moon Gathering & Eastern*

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8

Garden Cinemas, Greenfield: Screening, *The Goonies* (1985). 10 a.m. Free.

Montague Elks, Turners Falls: *Self-Love Spiritual and Wellness Fair*. "Spiritual and healing sessions, metaphysical and wellness vendors." Cash bar and lunch available. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. \$.

Beacon Field, Greenfield: *Winter Carnival*: cardboard sled contest, music, snack bar, cookie bake-off, chili cook-off, horse-drawn wagon rides, vintage snowmobile show and rides, tug of war, K9 keg pull, flash mob, yeti yell, more. 12 to 4 p.m. Free.

Amherst Regional High School, Amherst: *What's the Status of Our Connecticut River?*, panel with *Eve Vogel* (UMass Amherst), *Sarah Matthews* (Western MA Rights of Nature), and *Nina Gordon-Kirsch* (Connecticut River Conservancy). Refreshments. 1:30 to 3 p.m. Free.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9

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

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12

Leverett Library, Leverett: *A Night of Palestinian Poetry*, with *George Abraham* and *Hannah Moushabeck*. 5:30 p.m. Free.

Millers Falls Library, Millers Falls: Local author talk, *David Detmold*. 6 p.m. Free.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13

Cold Spring Hollow, Belchertown: *Melty Kiss, Big Mess, No One and the Somebodies, Rong*. 7:30 p.m. By donation.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20

Looky Here, Greenfield: Reading, *Adrie Rose, Liz Falco, Melissa Dickie*, open mic. 7 p.m. By donation.

Holyoke Media, Holyoke: *Perennial, Big Girl, Sapien Joyride*. 7 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21

Mount Toby Friends Meeting, Leverett: *The Secret Chord*, Leonard Cohen tribute. 7 p.m. \$.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22

Iron Horse, Northampton: *K-Pop Demon Ravers Kids' Rave*. 12 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28

Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: Local history talk, *Getting Across: Connecticut River Ferries*. 2 p.m. Free.

FRIDAY, MARCH 6

Academy of Music, Northampton: *Jonathan Richman*. 8 p.m. \$.

FRIDAY, MARCH 13

Shea Theater, Turners Falls: *Max Creek*. 8 p.m. \$.

SATURDAY, MARCH 21

MASS MoCA, North Adams: *Yaya Bey*. 8 p.m. \$.

SUNDAY, APRIL 12

Stone Church, Brattleboro: *Pallbearer, Knoll*. 7 p.m. \$.

FRIDAY, APRIL 24

Marigold Theater, Easthampton: *The Toasters, Turkey Blaster Omega, Pink Slip*. 7 p.m. \$.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 27

Pines Theater, Northampton: *The Indigo Girls*. 7 p.m. \$\$.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 28

Pines Theater, Northampton: *The Indigo Girls*. 7 p.m. \$\$.

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BOOK REVIEW from page B1

kind that lightens the reader’s burden from having to continually bear narrative witness to the many injustices suffered by America’s Native population at the hands of its white brethren. Like when Detmold comes across inviting patches of grass where he can plant his sleeping bag. Did he really think that being continually awakened at various times in different locations by automatic water sprinklers with minds of their own were isolated incidents?

When we meet Detmold in his new book, we find him at the Colville Reservation in search of the memorial erected to honor Chief Joseph, the Nez Perce leader whose tribe by 1855 had already given up more than seven million acres of land in exchange for being allowed to continue to live in peace where they were. The discovery of gold in 1860 forced Chief Joseph to give up another 90% of what was left. Then, in 1877, orders arrived from the nation’s capital: the Nez Perce had 30 days to move to land reserved for them in Idaho.

That’s when hostilities broke out, 18 invading occupiers known as “settlers” wound up dead, and the cavalry was called. That’s also when Chief Joseph led 740 poorly-equipped Native men, women, and children on a winding 1,170-mile march toward safety in Canada. He fell 40 miles short.

What Chief Joseph is most remembered for, however, is his surrender speech: “I am tired; my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands, I will fight no more forever.”

But that’s not the end of the story. After agreeing to live on the reservation in Idaho, Chief Joseph and 431 tribal survivors were shipped to Kansas and later Oklahoma to die out through inbreeding, a common American government policy since 1873, when the Modoc Natives who lived on the Oregon/California border became the first tribe to leave the reservation established for them and return to their ancestral grounds.

Chief Joseph’s head is not among the Smithsonian Institution’s collection of Native skulls because he set a good example for other tribes. By continually negotiating treaties, he was eventually allowed to return to his ancestral land with 149 tribal members.

Captain Jack, the leader of the Modocs, was set up as a different kind of example. His head specimen number at the Smithsonian is 2250670.

Did I mention Detmold’s sense of humor? It’s not limited to slapstick. Anyone who’s ever spent more than ten minutes with him has experienced his martini dry acerbic wit, which he often puts to good use while on the Colville Reservation:

All I had in my bike bag was an unripe plum and a six-ounce cup of the Northwest’s finest yogurt: Marionberry. Until I biked the Pacific Northwest, I thought Marionberry was just a former crack-addicted mayor in our crime-ridden capital city, with no pull in Congress.

With few restaurants and seemingly even fewer people to ask for advice, David often went long hours without any food:

The fillings in my teeth were rattling. I was surviving on fumes. I was not in the mood for scenery.... I was in the mood for a hot meal, and I finally found one.... I was over the rainbow. “If pretty little goats can fly, then why, oh why, can’t I?”

Humor also serves as survival tactic:

Washington bike trails are laid by a secret society that knows all turns, but are not eager to divulge that knowledge to novices.... The bike trails are well marked at the start, but then veer off into some other dimension leaving you wondering, “Where did I go wrong? Is there some hidden gear on some special derailleur that would allow me to shift to an alternate plane where the grades are all gradual and you always turn right and the repair stands have tire pumps in working condition?”

I rode back to look at the sign. No clear directional marking. I returned to the trail-head parking lot hoping someone might help me. A park ranger. A yogi bear. A homing pigeon. Anyone.

At last, a sign:

But it pointed both ways, as impartial as a scarecrow with no hint as to which way led where.

By the time Chief Joseph died in 1904, the American government had decided genocide was too expensive and took too many lives. White lives. It also came with a bad rep. Soldiers bludgeoning to death 900 horses belonging to the Coeur d’Alene and Spokane people in 1858 to save bullets may have marked an early time for reconsideration.

The chosen alternative was colonization. To better prepare Native children for their “civilized” futures, the federal government created boarding schools where the students, often taken forcefully from their families, had their hair cut short, were forced to wear “white” clothes, and were forbidden to speak their Native languages. If they misbehaved or tried to run away, they were placed in cells that often resembled those in prisons.

It is conservatively estimated that in 417 federally administered schools, 973 Native children died.

Flash forward. The year is 1953. Colonialism by now had proven less expensive than conquest, and domination less stressful than subjugation, but the “Indians” hadn’t shown much interest in cooperating in their own assimilation. So the federal government came up with a new policy, known as “Termination,” declaring it was no longer responsible for any commitment to any Indigenous tribe regardless of any treaty that may have been signed.



Author David Detmold (at right, holding this newspaper’s 1000th edition), with Rick Sherwood at the Spokane Powwow Grounds in Wellpinit, Washington in September 2024.

Over the next 20 years, Congress terminated its recognition of 109 tribes – and confiscated more than 1.3 million acres of land. In compensation, Natives were offered sizeable sums of money to set up residence on privately held land outside of the reservations. Many took the money and ran.

Not Lucy Covington. A Colville citizen and great-granddaughter of the Columbia River leader Chief Moses, she started a newspaper called *Our Heritage*, which informed the Colville people and members of other tribes across the country what giving up their sovereignty to a bunch of “Liquidationists” would mean to them in terms of land, natural resources, and culture.

Working the roads, streets, fields, and selling the descendants of her great-grandfather’s herd of horses to afford airplane tickets to meet tribal leaders and politicians in Washington, Lucy not only delivered the death blow to termination but also gave birth to a Native American Renaissance paralleling the ones decades earlier in Harlem and Dublin.

Only those who attempt the absurd will ever achieve the impossible.

– Miguel de Cervantes

This thought comes to us through Don Quixote in 1605, but it also applies to David Detmold, who came to Montague on his bicycle from Omaha, Nebraska in 1978 to participate in the struggle to close Vermont Yankee.

To meet the challenge of informing the greatest number of people in the shortest amount of time for the least amount of money about the dangers of living downwind from a nuclear power plant, Detmold helped found the *Montague Reporter* in 2002. It was a time when hundreds of newspapers across the country were going out of business, but Detmold served as its editor for the next 10 years, and Vermont Yankee became history in 2014.

Detmold had been reading about the American government’s conquest of its Native population since he was in grammar school, but it wasn’t until he came to Montague that he learned about Captain William Turner’s militia-led massacre of more than 400 mostly Native women and children sheltering in an undefended refugee camp in 1676.

Detmold’s first response was to target the racially offensive sports mascot at Turners Falls High School: the “Indians.” The name had been chosen to honor a perceived warrior culture, but no Native people were consulted, the school offered no courses on Native American history, and no members from the town’s three surrounding tribes were ever invited to speak at the school. There were, however, the Tomahawk Chop and cheerleaders with painted faces at football games. “Indians” bit the dust in 2017.

Next came the Massachusetts state flag, which features a Native tribesman, his arrows pointing downward in a sign of submission, and a threatening sword held over his head. Led in part by Detmold, who went door-to-door in 91 voting districts, numerous citizens inspired their representatives in the state legislature in 2024 to vote to create a new flag for Massachusetts.

The official name of Turners Falls is still Turners Falls, but give Detmold time: he, like an increasing number of others, now calls his home “Great Falls.”

Start small; end big. That’s David Detmold.

David Detmold’s Keeping the People Alive is available from the website of Off the Common Books – an imprint of Levellers Press, a worker-owned print shop in Florence – and locally at Unnameable Books.

Mr. Detmold will discuss and read from the book next Saturday, February 7 at 1:30 p.m. at the Wendell Free Library, and again on Thursday, February 12 at 6 p.m. at the Millers Falls Library.



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Amanda Gorman, *The Hill We Climb*



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