Village School students lend helping hand to South Sudan

For the Athol Daily News

ROYALSTON — At this time of ar, it's common for people of all es to think about helping those in eir community who may need a nd with providing a holiday meal their family or presents for their ildren to open. Fifth and sixth aders at the Village School have cided their community is the be and, instead of turkeys or toys, ey plan to provide something critilly needed some 6,500 miles from

Fifth and sixth grade teacher orge Bennet said his students ve set up a fundraising project to pport Water for South Sudan, a arity that drills wells across South dan to provide water for villages

at don't have any.

As Bennett explained, "The charwas founded by Salva Dut who, at e age of 11, was forced to flee his me in 1985 to escape the endless il war in his country. He spent ars walking across East Africa to cape the widening conflict, and ore years in refugee camps, before was adopted by a family in chester, New York, at the age of

"Dut went on to found Water for uth Sudan, and the fifth and sixth aders heard his life story retold en their teacher read aloud "A ng Walk to Water," the inspiring ok by Linda Sue Park," Bennett

At the same time, students were mpleting an art project in which



PHOTO BY GREG

Fifth and sixth grade students at Village School work on their art projects.

they used ink, watercolors, and gouache paint to create picture of a February. variety of medieval buildings. Their

sixth graders will also be taking in

"The pictures turned out so well," ideas were gleaned from photos Bennett explained, "that art teacher taken during a previous class trip to Loren Magruder suggested making England — a trip this year's fifth and cards from the images and selling

them to raise money for charity. student immediately suggested gi the proceeds to Water for South dan, and the class unanimo

ELECTION 2022

New state voter fraud units finding few cases from midterm

GARY FIELDS, ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE and SUDHIN THANAWALA

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — State-level v enforcement units created after e 2020 presidential election to instigate voter fraud are looking o scattered complaints more than o weeks after the midterms but ve provided no indication of sys-

gest that the new units were more Paul Smith, senior vice president of Donald Trump and his allies h about politics than rooting out widespread abuses. Most electionrelated fraud cases already are investigated and prosecuted at the local level.

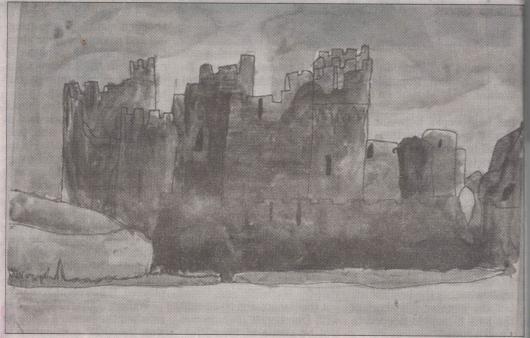
Florida, Georgia and Virginia created special state-level units after the 2020 election, all pushed by Republican governors, attorneys

general or legislatures. "I am not aware of any gionifithe Campaign Legal Center. "The whole concept of voter impersonation fraud is such a horribly exaggerated problem. It doesn't change the outcome of the election, it's a felony, you risk getting put in jail and you have a high possibility of getting caught. It's a rare phenom-

The absence of widespread fraud is important because the lies sur- disputed his 2020 loss and so

penetrated deeply into the Repu can Party and eroded trust in e tions. In the run-up to this ye elections, 45% of Republicans little to no confidence that ve would be counted accurately.

a Associated Press invest tion found there was no widespr fraud in Georgia or the five of battleground states where Tru



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Castle by Wendell Teeter.

School

FROM A1

agreed. Salva Dut's story made a very strong impression on all the children in the class, and they are very happy to be able to support his work.

Anyone who wants to support the students and their cause can order packs of 12 notecards for \$18. Order forms can be found on the Village website, School https:// www.villageschoolma.org/support/. The deadline for ordering is Dec. 2.

Village School Administrator Rise Richardson said the adults had come up with idea of doing the notecards "because we've done that in the past as sort of a fundraiser. But it was the kids who were pretty strong about doing it for this specific charity.'

"In our reading program, we really try to work with engaging books, and we really try to make it possible for the kids to get a world view,:" she said. "We're here in the North Quabbin region, and we know this area and the kids know this area. But what's their experience of the world? It's pretty narrow. So, we try to find them books that are really engaging so they can under-



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London Bridge by Lilliana Kurinsky,

stand other cultures, other ways of life.

"In "A Long Walk to Water," the children spend all day just getting water for their families. And, of course, there's a civil war and families are broken up. And so, the kids here, who are in general pretty secure with their family, to read a book like that, it's a real eyeopener. They really feel for these kids and families that are being broken up."

Richardson said books and projects like this, beyond learning, accomplish another important goal.

build empathy," she said. gvineadn@gmail.com.

"We're not a terribly multicultural school; we reflect the culture of this area. So, we want the kids to experience other cultures and to feel empathy; 'Oh, my God. What if I grew up in a desert, or an area where there's a civil war? What would that be like?

"The idea is, we're pretty lucky with our lives, and not everybody is that lucky," she said. "It's important to begin this process of giving and being understanding toward others who maybe don't have what we have.'

"What we're trying to do is Greg Vine can be reached at

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