



The Montague Reporter

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EDITOR@MONTAGUEREPORTER.ORG

THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

SEPTEMBER 1, 2016

Questions Remain After Fire on Fourth Street

By MIKE JACKSON

TURNERS FALLS – The state fire marshal's office, Turners Falls Fire Department, Montague Police and state police are jointly investigating the cause of a three-alarm fire that caused damage to two Fourth Street buildings early Tuesday morning, leaving ten people temporarily homeless.

The fire started at 83-87 Fourth Street, a five-unit brick apartment building, sometime around 1:30 a.m. "The entire second-floor apartment

was engulfed in fire – it blew a window out," said newly sworn Turners Falls fire chief John Zellman. This ignited the eaves of 89 Fourth Street, a four-unit wooden structure standing mere feet away. Montague police sergeant Richard Suchanek was the first to respond, and trucks from the Turners fire department arrived at 1:52 a.m.

One woman, trapped in a smoke-filled third-floor apartment, was able to climb out a window to safety, and the rest of the residents evacuated

see **FIRE** page A6

Hill Trails Open to Public

By MIKE JACKSON

MONTAGUE – Chestnut Hill. Dry Hill. Country Hill.

A large section of the town of Montague that lies east of Route 63 is a wooded patchwork of private land, state forest, town wilderness area, and water district property, criss-crossed by deer paths, ATV trails, and overgrown logging roads, and long familiar only to a small number of hikers, hunters and landowners.

The town of Montague is seeking to change that. Prompted in part by a directive from town meeting to restore access to the far-flung Dry Hill Cemetery, officials have been working to map and mark, and secure access to a network of trails, and open them up as the Dry Hill Public Trail System.

The project has been a quiet one, but made great strides this week. On Monday, the town highway department installed trailhead information kiosks on both sides of Dry Hill. On Tuesday, Turners Falls water commissioners granted

them approval to include a loop that cuts deep into watershed protection land.

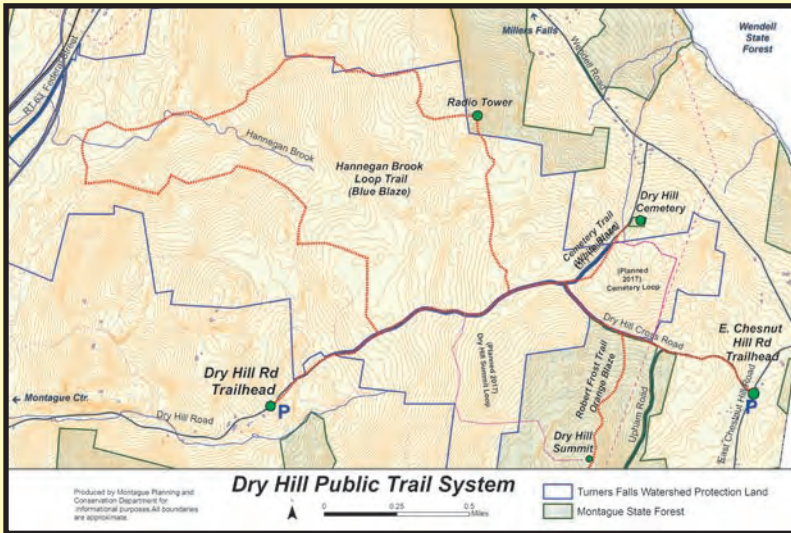
Blazes were being painted on Wednesday.

"I hope that someday, Montague will have a whole townwide trail system, the way towns like Ashfield and Amherst have, where you'll be able to walk from one side of town to the other through woods," said Alex Peterkin, a member of the conservation commission, who has been working on the project in his spare time over

see **TRAILS** page A7



Josh Bassett and Dick Cough of Montague's highway department and contractor David Detmold lower a trailhead information kiosk into the ground on Dry Hill Road on Monday.



Montague's planning department published this map on Wednesday, after Turners Falls water commissioners approved the use of water department land.

Acrimony After Superintendent's Resignation Rends Amherst-Pelham School Committee

By JEFF SINGLETON

LEVERETT – The August 9 decision of the Amherst-Pelham regional school committee and the committee of Union 26, which administers the Amherst and Pelham elementary schools, to award superintendent Maria Geryk to retire from the district has created a firestorm of controversy.

"Amherst Needs Answers on Buyout," declared the *Amherst Bulletin*, suggesting in an editorial that the \$309,238 settlement might be viewed, by "many," as a "golden parachute." Charges of open meeting law violations, school committee dysfunction, and institutional racism have swirled around the decision.

Geryk, for her part, said she had "no choice but to leave the school district" because it is important to "work and live in the way that makes you personally happy and professionally fulfilled."

Public attention has focused on the price of the settlement award, which passed the regional high school committee by a narrow 4-to-3 vote. But the rationale for this

see **ACRIMONY** page A3

NEWS ANALYSIS School Districts Make the Case for Harm from Charter Growth

By ELLEN BLANCHETTE

GILL-MONTAGUE – In response to a November statewide ballot initiative to expand charter schools, school committees in districts across Massachusetts have responded with a statement of their own.

November's Question 2 would lift the existing cap on the number of charter schools, adding twelve more, while also expanding student enrollment allowed in each school.

By the end of July, the "Resolution Against Lifting the Cap on Commonwealth Charter Schools" had been signed by 83 school committees, and several town councils, according to the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC).

The Gill-Montague regional school committee has placed a discussion of signing the resolution on its agenda for the last two meetings over the summer, but bumped it to the following meeting both times.

At the first meeting, chair Michael Langknecht said he felt there were too few members in attendance, and the committee should postpone the discussion.

On August 23, the hour was late when the subject came up, and Jane Oakes raised a concern about a legal directive issued by MASC warning

see **CHARTERS** page A5



Firefighters enter the attic at 89 Fourth Street.

MONTAGUE SELECTBOARD

Many Still Puzzled Over Town's Tree Removal Policy



How large must a tree be before a public hearing is required for its removal?

By JEFF SINGLETON

The thorny issue of tree removal intruded once again into the business of the Montague selectboard at its August 22 meeting. Edita Cunha, who resides on Avenue A between Fourth and Fifth streets, began the meeting with a complaint that the town's tree warden, Mark Stevens, had removed a public shade tree that provides her with "privacy" without a proper public hearing.

"I came back from vacation... at the beginning of August," she said, "and discovered that a tree had been cut down in front of my garden."

Cunha described how the tree, a native crab apple, provided shade for her garden, how she harvested fruit from it each year, and how the

birds loved it.

"Before, I had a garden that was very private," she said.

Cunha handed out copies of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 87, known as the "public shade tree law," which she argued required the tree warden to hold a public hearing on the removal of the tree. She noted the controversy over the removal of shade trees on Montague Street in spring 2015.

"I want to know what we're doing about removing trees, because I know there's been upset around me and my neighbors, and I've been thinking about it," Cunha said. "But then it happened to me. It was absolutely violating and shocking that this tree was gone."

Stevens, who sat at the table next to Cunha, requested that he tell his "side of the story."

Stevens said that said "Mr. Rist" – of Rist Insurance Company, Cunha's next door neighbor – had complained to the highway department that a tree was "blocking his sign and overhanging the sidewalk." When Stevens went to survey the problem, a "co-worker" pointed to the crabapple.

"One branch was headed toward her house over the power service," he said. "We trimmed it off. Another branch was headed toward the new street pole. We trimmed it off."

"It looked like crap. I cut it down."

see **MONTAGUE** page A6

ERVING SELECTBOARD

Park at Usher Site Heads Back to the Drawing Board

By KATIE NOLAN

Because all four bids for constructing Riverfront Park at the site of the former Usher Plant came in over budget, the Erving selectboard has decided to revise the scope of the project, eliminating or reducing several originally proposed design features. The revised bid package is available September 1 and bids will

be opened at the selectboard meeting on September 26.

Earlier this year, the Usher Plant reuse committee secured a \$400,000 matching reimbursement grant through the Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) program, from the state Department of Conservation Services.

After receiving approval from

see **ERVING** page A5



A welter of dignitaries broke symbolic ground for the proposed park on August 20.

The Montague Reporter

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The *Montague Reporter* usually makes its own contribution to world news by printing entirely local content. You may have noticed our editorial page wanders a little further afield from time to time.

Since our last edition, the freshly purged Turkish military has been taking advantage of US support for its intervention south of the Syrian border, ostensibly against the Islamic State, to stage attacks on the ostensibly US-supported Kurdish rebels of Rojava.

Syria's four-way "civil war" is really a world war – *the world war*. It will not end until a common humanity reasserts itself on the global stage, and it is the choice of the

living whether it will end in our own lifetimes.

Yesterday, US vice presidential candidate Mike Pence trotted out an old and vicious line about good fences making good neighbors. (He called it an "old saying in Indiana.")

Has Gov. Pence ever *read* Frost's poem? Does he realize what the world's wall-building traditionalists were preparing to do when it was written, in 1914?

Something there is that doesn't love a wall. In that spirit, we're turning this page over to an expat friend of *Reporter* editors emeritus Chris Sawyer-Lauçanno and Patricia Pruitt, reporting from Turkey.

GUEST EDITORIAL

Letter from Istanbul

By CLIFF ENDRES

We were absently gazing at television news on July 15 around 10:30 p.m. when something strange caught our attention. On air was a bit of shaky footage, possibly relayed from somebody's cell phone, of some sort of fracas going down on the Bosphorus Bridge.

Traffic was stopped at the European end and a crowd seemed to be milling around aimlessly. We thought it must be another of the "terrorism events" to which we're unfortunately somewhat injured. A few minutes later, however, we heard a word that immediately galvanized everyone in the room – "coup".

What? A military coup? In this day and age? Weren't such things long buried in ancient history? Didn't everybody know that Turkey had put that sort of crude behavior behind after the army coups of 1960, 1971, and 1980 – when 650,000 people had been arrested, thousands tortured, and hundreds killed?

Yet some sort of uprising seemed to be in progress. The longer we watched, the more we heard the "c" word, though still uttered in tones of disbelief. Yet events bore the air of theater drama, kind of like a staged moon landing, even when a member of the rebel faction, as it was now being called, appeared on state television and read the traditional announcement of takeover, complete with boilerplate about law and order, human rights, keeping calm, and so on.

The streets and houses of our neighborhood were dark and quiet, only adding to the unreality, when suddenly the roar of a fighter jet shattered the night. Then there was a loud clattering of helicopters. They seemed to be headed south,

where the airport lay. Sure enough, reports of firefights there soon appeared on the news. Military reality was catching up.

And then came religion – a first in the history of Turkish coups. Well past midnight, hours after the day's final call to prayer – prescribed for around ten p.m. – we were startled to hear a well-amplified prayer emanating from the local mosque, followed by a brief message in prose. The latter turned out to be an address prepared by the Ministry of Religious Affairs exhorting the faithful to take to the streets and resist the coup-mongers.

This they did, putting their bodies in the way of tanks and bringing fresh-faced conscripts to heel with kicks and clubs. It was not a game. Over the next eight or ten hours nearly 300 citizens died, some crushed by tanks, some downed by rifle or machine-gun fire. Soldiers lost their lives to gun-toting police and knife-wielding partisans. On the Bosphorus Bridge an army sniper climbed a stanchion and picked off unarmed civilians below one by one, until in due course he himself was shot down.

There seemed to be little strategy in all of this. It was as if an after-match brawl between soccer hooligans had spun out of control into a free-for-all, or incipient civil war, it was hard to tell which. Then at about three a.m. the President, looking pale and nervous, appeared on CNN, speaking via cell phone.

He assured the nation that, while he had narrowly escaped capture or death, he was safe for the moment. He urged patriots in the armed services to take up arms against the coup plotters and requested "lovers of democracy" and "anti-coup citizens" to hold rallies across the nation.



"The artist in me cries out for design." – Robert Frost

People across the political spectrum heeded the call, and by noon the next day, July 16, it was clear that the extraordinary had come to pass: the so-called military coup had failed; the elected government would remain in power. Now what?

The finger-pointing began immediately. Suspicion at first suggested collaboration by hard-line Kemalist nationalists, traditionally hostile to Islamist ideologies, but soon shifted fully to the followers of Fethullah Gülen. Gülen is a cleric who has been living in Pennsylvania since 1999 and who seems to enjoy a vague umbrella of protection by Washington. The official name of his organization, or "movement," is Hizmet, meaning Service, but in recent years the Erdoğan government has dubbed it FETÖ, short for Fethullah Gülen Terrorist Organization.

Politically the two were in bed together during the 1990s and early 2000s, united in the cause of bringing Islamist politics to the Republic. Around 2010, however, they began falling out with one another.

Things went from bad to worse. The government closed the Hizmet network of private schools, source of much revenue and a lever of influence. Then in December 2014, state prosecutors filed spectacular charges of corruption, bribery, and nepotism against Erdoğan, his family, and the cabinet. Four ministers resigned.

The government swiftly undertook a massive restructuring of the judicial system, firing prosecutors and judges associated with the case and ultimately sweeping the scandal under the rug. Erdoğan blamed it all on the Gülen congregation; the two allies became the bitterest of enemies.

The idea that the Gülenists were behind the failed coup took off like wildfire, especially after several of its leaders admitted to involvement with Hizmet. One even offered to put a captured general in touch with Gülen so that he could speak with him directly.

Calls for Gülen's extradition from America rose in volume, not only from government officials but from their joyful supporters, who continued to gather nightly in the plazas to wave a sea of Turkish flags while Erdoğan's image filled giant TV screens and military music poured

from enormous speakers. The epicenter of these demonstrations was Taksim Square in Istanbul.

The city made public transportation free so that participants could the more easily go. As days and evenings went by and the government began rounding up something like 60,000 Gülenist sympathizers and, therefore, FETÖ terrorists, these rallies and the progovernment media began stressing the fact that America had made no move to turn the arch coup-plotter over to Turkey.

Moreover, Obama had been notably tardy in phoning the President to offer congratulations and support – unlike Vladimir Putin, who'd called first thing in the morning.

Suspicions hardened. In almost no time it became a given among the party faithful that Washington had, together with the Gülenists, orchestrated this heinous attack. There was little point in asking, rationally, what America had to gain by such a deed, for it was obviously to thwart Turkey's rise toward global dominance. Official denials from Washington were late and weak – it must have been hard to take this stuff seriously over there – and did little to stem the rising tide of anti-Americanism.

Naturally the U.S. embassy issued a statement denying prior knowledge of or participation in the uprising, but at the same time it advised American citizens not to come to Turkey, and if they did, to avoid crowds. On the street, anyone admitting his or her Americanness even in, for example, casual chat with a taxi driver or shopkeeper, was soon bombarded with questions about what America meant by protecting the traitor.

One of the President's speechifying minions asked pointedly what, if the tables were turned and Turkey were harboring Osama bin Laden, would America expect its ally to do? Washington's answer was: Give us evidence. Ankara's counter was: It's totally obvious, what more do you need? Thus the somewhat ironic situation in which democracy-lovers of Turkey are united in skepticism toward the self-declared gold standard of democracy.

It's been a month since the night of the would-be coup, and ninety percent of the news since then has been obsessed with it. As nearly all objective and critical news media

have been shut down, this means near-total immersion in the government's narrative, though social media like Twitter offer relief now and then. Gülen and his followers are the burning issue at the fore.

And yet, who are they? Yesterday's Gülenists could be today's Erdoganists, and vice versa, which leads to a dilemma. To which camp might your colleague belong? Your neighbor? Your boss? The police you call for help? In any case how could you tell? In some ways the whole thing boils down to a war between two secretive Islamic brotherhoods resembling somewhat the dervish orders of old.

In this case, for a change, both of them are Sunni; and curiously both have been blessed by Washington at one time as "moderate Islamists," that peculiar phrase no one understands.

The outcome of the struggle remains far from certain; yet Americans, oblivious though they may be, will play a pivotal part in it. Will they or won't they hand over the "traitor"? Joe Six-Pack, of course, could hardly care less, and there are sound reasons behind him. One is that most U.S. citizens couldn't find Turkey on a map with both hands.

A more interesting one, I think, is that we have never experienced a military attack on our government, with all its consequent chaos and terror and collapse of trust in public institutions. (With the Turkish army in shambles, for example, who can trust it to defend the country against ISIS and PKK terrorists?) Not to mention, on a personal level, the suspicion of possible treason around every corner.

It's a poisonous atmosphere, one we hope never to experience firsthand. But it might not be a bad idea, in view of our current political climate, to learn a bit more about how and why the Turks have come to such a pass.

Cliff Endres has lived in Turkey for more than two decades. He was co-founder of the American Culture and Literature Program at Kadir Has University in Istanbul, which he chaired until his retirement last year.

This piece originally appeared in the Austin Sun.

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Compiled by DON CLEGG

This Saturday morning, September 3, Charity O’Connor of the **New England Learning Center for Women in Transition (NEL-CWIT)** will be answering questions and passing along information about her organization in Turners Falls. The event will be held in the community room of the Greenfield Savings Bank, from 10 to 11 a.m.

From 1 to 3 p.m. on Saturday, the Great Falls Discovery Center is hosting an artist reception of the works of **Cathy Lawlor, *Quiet Waters***.

Lawlor, a photographer based in Amherst, has been focusing on the natural beauty of Lake Wyola for over ten years. In *Quiet Waters* her work captures the birds, marshes, lily pads, early mornings and sunsets through the seasons. Refreshments will be available.

Residents of Turners Falls’ Hill neighborhood are being warned of a

project to **pave the entirety of Dell Street**, including its many cross intersections, from Tuesday through Friday, September 6 through 9.

The Opioid Task Force is working with Tapestry Health and the North Quabbin Community Coalition to host a series of opioid overdose prevention and **nasal Narcan trainings**. These trainings are free and open to all interested community members.

One will be hosted at Montague Catholic Social Ministries, located at 43 Third Street in Turners Falls, from 6 to 8 p.m. on Wednesday, September 7.

All participants will be given a free Narcan kit. For any questions, contact Liz Whynott at lwhynott@tapestryhealth.org.

The Gill Historical Commission has announced pickup times for those who have preordered and prepaid for their **new book, “Riverside, Life Along the Connecticut in Gill, Massachusetts,”** on Friday,

September 9 from 6 to 8 p.m. and on Saturday, Septempber 10 from 9 a.m. to noon at the Riverside Municipal Building on French King Highway in Riverside, Gill.

They expect that several of the authors will be on hand to sign books.

The GHC is printing quite a few extras for the first printing, so they will also sell the book to anyone who has not prepaid, while supplies last. Cash or check only. Checks should be made out to Gill Historical Commission. The minimum donation to the GHC is \$42 for each book.

If you can’t make this event and would like to purchase a book, please order by filling out an order form (Town Hall in Gill) or downloading the order form from www.gillmass.org/historical.php. Mail it with your check to Gill Historical Commission, Town Hall, 325 Main Road, Gill, MA 01354. They will be reprinting the book as needed.

There will be a **farmers market and tag sale** at the Leverett Congregational Church, across from Leverett Post Office, Saturday, September 10 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., rain or shine. Interested sellers can claim a 12’ x 12’ tag sale space for \$10; no reservations are needed.

Expect homemade baked goods, preserves, homegrown produce, and assorted tag sale items. All proceeds go to benefit Heifer International.

For more information, call Claudia at (413) 359-0003.

Community members Gloria Matlock and Keyedrya Jacobs will facilitate a **speak-out on the issue of violence against people of color** at the First Congregational Church of Greenfield, Saturday, September 10, at 10:15 a.m.

The event, which is sponsored by the group Racial Justice Rising, is free and open to the public. Coffee and tea will be available. To reserve free child care, contact email@racialjusticerising.org.

Baystate Franklin Medical Center’s Oncology Department will present two free seven-week yoga classes, **Gentle Yoga for Cancer Survivors**, at the YMCA of Greenfield. The first session will take place from noon to 1:30 p.m. on Wednesdays, from September 14 through October 26. The second runs from November 2 through December 21.

The course is facilitated by Pam Roberts, a certified Kripalu Yoga teacher and a breast cancer survivor for over 20 years. Roberts is also a certified Yoga of the Heart for Cardiac and Cancer Patients instructor.

For more information or to register for Gentle Yoga, contact Roberts at (413) 625-2402 or pamro@aol.com.

Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.

ACRIMONY from page A1

number does not now appear to be a mystery.

According to “unofficial” executive session minutes obtained by the *Bulletin*, Geryk abruptly requested to sever ties with the district on July 13, in return for severance pay of approximately \$600,000. She later reduced that request to \$485,000, and the school committee later voted on the approximately \$300,000.

The published minutes reveal that school committee members feared a costly and damaging lawsuit. Geryk, through her lawyer, charged that recent public statements and comments made by school committee members on evaluations of the superintendent violated state law, as well as provisions of her contract.

The representatives who voted against the settlement were Amherst representative Vira Doungmany Cage, Trevor Baptiste of Pelham, and Stephen Sullivan of Shutesbury. Baptiste and Doungmany Cage are reported to have been the target of sharp criticism in the superintendent’s resignation email, which has not been made public.

Kip Fonsh, former Leverett elementary school committee member who also served on the regional high school committee, says he believes too much attention has focused on the cost of the settlement. He told the *Reporter* that the actions of some school committee members created a “situation that made it difficult, and ultimately impossible, for her to continue.”

Leverett elementary school committee chair Sarah Dolven, who replaced Fonsh as the town’s representative to the regional school committee, echoed his statements. Dolven, who voted in favor of the settlement, resigned last week, citing the “dysfunction” of the regional body.

As one example, Dolven cited efforts by some members to change, or “redact,” their evaluations of

Geryk. Her resignation received a good deal of publicity, but she told the *Reporter* she planned to leave at the end of the summer due to time constraints.

Doungmany Cage, on the other hand, expressed dismay at the committee’s decision, and how it was reached. She has filed a “consumer complaint” with the state attorney general’s office. Cage also rejected Dolven’s assessment of the committee as dysfunctional.

“Disagreement is not dysfunction,” she told the *Bulletin*. “Part of a democracy is to have different opinions.”

Procedural Complaints

Shutesbury resident Michael Hootstein has filed two complaints with the district alleging that two executive sessions at which the Geryk settlement was discussed violated the state open meeting law. His first complaint, filed on August 1, argued that the public notice of the first two sessions failed to contain a “precise statement” to justify them, because they failed to mention that the “negotiating strategy” to be discussed involved Geryk.

While the notice of the third executive session did mention Geryk by name, Hootstein argued that the committee should have completed its evaluation of her performance in a public session first – as requested by Baptiste – before discussing potential severance negotiations.

The complaint also alleges that the regional school committee violated the law by entering into a joint executive session with the Union 26 school committee. Hootstein cites an opinion by Geryk’s own legal counsel that the district and union are “two distinct entities, and have different scopes of authority.”

Hootstein’s second complaint, issued after the decision to award Geryk the settlement, calls on the committee to nullify it, and demands that penalties of \$1,000 each

be levied against chair Laura Kent and member Kathryn Appy, both of whom he accuses of “scheming” to “embezzle” funds from the district.

The second complaint refers to Union 26 as an “imaginary district,” and to Geryk’s email request for compensation the “SMOKING GUN THREATENING EMAIL!”

According to the open meeting law, the complaint must first be submitted to the school committee, which generally would request a response from its lawyer. If the response is not satisfactory to Hootstein, he may appeal to the attorney general’s office.

Dolven told this newspaper that the process by which Geryk was evaluated was virtually the same as in previous years. “The chair compiles and collates the comments,” she said. “There is a meeting at which all the evaluations are made public.”

Dolven also suggested that the Geryk controversy could undermine support for the proposal to bring the four towns’ elementary schools into a consolidated district with the middle and high school. She stated that many local residents were attracted to the potential budgetary savings of consolidation, but also feared losing local control: “Do we want an even smaller voice? Will we have any?” I’ve heard that.”

Fonsh, on the other hand, said he believed regionalization was “dead in the water, long before this.”

Rising Tensions

The broader context for the dispute between Geryk and members of the school committee involves her handling of racially tense controversies.

The Amherst regional district advertises its commitment to diversity and inclusion, but has been dogged recently by charges of institutional racism.

During the 2014-15 school year, the reaction of the district adminis-

tration to anonymous threats made against a new African American high school teacher was sharply criticized as inadequate. The district reached a financial settlement with the teacher, after a complaint was filed with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, which never issued a finding on the matter.

This spring, Geryk filed a “stay away order” directed at an African-American parent who had complained that her daughter was being bullied at Pelham Elementary School.

Geryk came under fire, in the press and over social media, for her handling of these and other incidents. Both Baptiste and Doungmany Cage publicly supported the Pelham parent. In the evaluations obtained by the *Bulletin*, Doungmany Cage is quoted in the informal minutes as saying that the superintendent had “created an environment and inflames racial hatred and hostility, and does not take action to diffuse conflict and controversy.”

Former Pelham representative Daniel Robb stated in his evaluation that “I have not yet seen a willingness to meet parties half way” in the disputes.

“Let’s be honest and candid,” said Fonsh, who gave Geryk a strong positive evaluation. “Racism is embedded in the soil of the country. Amherst is not unique... But you don’t solve it by calling people racist.”

“The [regional school] committee is not divided on the fact that there is racism,” said Dolven. “But the committee has divided on how to handle it.

“I don’t know what happened at Pelham. The regional committee was not privy to that. The Pelham committee discussed it [in executive session]. We don’t know the full story.”

The next meeting of Leverett’s school committee is scheduled for September 11.

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NOTES FROM THE GILL SELECTBOARD

A Matching Grant for a Gill Community Forest

By KENT ALEXANDER

The Gill selectboard met on August 22 and, after a quick call to order, immediately turned the floor over to Amy Gordon and Ken Sprankle. Gordon and Sprankle from the Gill town forest committee attended the meeting to proudly announce that, in conjunction with the conservation commission, the committee had received a Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Community Forest Stewardship Implementation matching grant in the amount of \$7,100.

This matching grant – one of three disbursed for fiscal year 2017 – will assist in furthering several of the recommendations and practices identified in the town’s Forest Stewardship Plan which include the identification and marking of boundaries, development of a recreational trail system, kiosks, control of invasive plant species, habitat restoration, and controlling unwanted access and dumping in a 162-acre area covering the northwest corner of Gill.

Gordon noted that the forest committee and conservation commission must match the grant amount, dollar for dollar, with non-state funds or services. She admitted the grant process had been “a bit of a roller coaster,” but, in the end, the committee was excited about this new venture that will inform the public about the specifics of the forest through the use of kiosks.

She concluded the presentation stating that they were seeking volunteers, who should contact town administrative assistant Ray Purington at the town hall if they wish to assist with the project

School Road

The selectboard tackled a 0.7-mile stretch of Mount Hermon Road that begins at Main Road, runs past the Northfield Mount Hermon School (NMH), then reconnects with Main Road. This road is currently owned by the town, and will soon need repairs costing anywhere from \$10,000 to \$100,000 to stay fully operational.

Selectboard chair John Ward stated that, to his knowledge, the town and school never had a formal discussion about the ownership of the road but depending upon the conditions of the deal, both might be interested in NMH taking over the road’s ownership and its resulting maintenance.

Purington stated that he’d recently discovered a “great guide” covering the process of discontinuing ownership of such a road, and that there were a couple of ways to go about it, depending upon whether or not the town wished to close public access to the road in question.

Crochier thought it might be a good idea to speak with NMH to see if they would be interested in taking over ownership of the road before the town does any major repairs. He added that no matter what, work would need to be done if the road was to be used as a NMH campus road.

Ward then asked what would happen to abutting land if the ownership of the road changed. Snedeker said that this was one of several concerns

for both sides to consider.

Ward then wondered how much should the town commit to repairs, and whether it might be possible to sidestep any maintenance costs by turning over its ownership.

Crochier interjected that he thought the best thing to do would be to delay any action for one year in order to study the process of turning the road over to the school.

Snedeker agreed, stating that the process was quite complicated and that the selectboard and town should go into things “with our eyes open.” The board agreed that further study was needed.

Hazard Fee

Purington inadvertently opened up a lively discussion when he shared a public service announcement about the multi-town Hazardous Waste Collection Day on Saturday, October 1 at the Greenfield Community College main campus and the Orange Transfer Station.

Crochier asked why it was that Gill was one of only four area towns – along with Barre, Orange and Sunderland – that charge residents a fee to participate in the collection. Purington stated that this item had been cut out of the budget to save money.

Crochier said he believed that if the town of Gill paid for folks to utilize the important service, it might encourage those who might not otherwise make the trip and instead dump their hazardous waste elsewhere, like on the side of the road. He then suggested that the selectboard find money in the budget to restore this privilege.

Ward remarked, and the other members agreed, that since Gill was working to become a “green community,” the town should take the small cost back on since it was a definite “quality of life” issue for all.

Other Business

Purington stated that he had recently received an email promising that the Green Communities grant-funded windows would be installed by the following weekend.

Purington then announced that the USDA-funded project to build a treatment system on the Gill Elementary was moving ahead to confirm “system compliance.” Selectboard member Greg Snedeker asked Purington how close to being finished that confirmation was, and Purington responded that he “wouldn’t want to quantify a completion date at this time.”

Selectboard member Randy Crochier asked Purington if he had “pushed” for an answer, to which Purington stated that he had not. Crochier then indicated that he would.

The board discussed funding sources for the town’s diesel fuel and fuel dispenser. Purington shared that they had currently budgeted \$340 for 5,000 gallons, and that the cost would actually be only \$321. The other members agreed to Crochier’s suggestion that the highway budget should pay the electrical costs connected to replacing the dispenser.

The board discussed the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the newly remodeled Turners Falls-Gill Bridge, held three days later on August 25. Ward stated that he would be attend-

NOTES FROM THE LEVERETT SELECTBOARD

Highway Truck Rims Jacked

By ROB SKELTON

Leverett police chief Gary Billings sought selectboard’s approval to hire Sean Sawicki for part-time hours, at its August 23 meeting. Sawicki, a full-time Shutesbury patrolman, is academy-trained, up-to-date on requirements, and knows the town, said Billings.

“We’re all used to working with him,” the chief said.

The board approved the hire; the pay rate is \$17.58 hourly. With construction detail pay at \$45 hourly, the board had concerns about filling the roster, but Billings said he is doing fine, even with the impending mandatory retirement of Officer Scibilia, soon to turn 65.

The theft of a set of new tires and rims off an old town truck, due to be retired, has the board ready to install security cameras outside several town properties, including the highway department where the theft occurred. Chief Billings had a quote of \$7,380 from Northeast Security Solutions of West Springfield for a system which would provide the high-definition necessary.

Speaking after the meeting, the chief noted that the highway garage is only visible from two neighboring houses, one of whose occupants were out of town. He said that with battery-powered lug wrenches it had taken fifteen minutes to switch out the tires. He mentioned that all

the people who could possibly be considered “insiders” were out of town during the theft.

It seems kind of foolish to not have some kind of security system, members of the board mused. “Everybody else does,” added Billings. Funding sources floated include grants and “free cash.”

Fire Truck Request

Fire Chief John Ingraham asked the board to approve two new hires: Amherst firefighter Brian Cook and Montague EMT Eleanor Massingill, both of whom must pass physicals and CORI checks before starting. The board did so.

The chief said he’d had about 105 calls so far this year, about the same as last year at this time. He noted that the town’s brush truck has died, which now totals three of Leverett’s old fire trucks now in disuse.

Ingraham warned the board that he wants to pave the way for the town to purchase a new fire truck, with all the bells and whistles, and to start the process now to get the purchase on the town meeting warrant for funding.

Dogs and Such

The board discussed animal control and Leverett’s dog officer Roberta Bryant, whose salary is \$1,287 annually. Bryant’s mandate includes yearly inspections of kennel facilities, of which there are

three in town. Kenneling services are offered by the county sheriff in Turners Falls and the town pays a fee for the use of this facility, as there is no pound in Leverett.

The animal control officer is now responsible for wild animal calls in town, which the board thought should be outsourced to a local business, since Ms. Bryant has enough to do, and is in her seventies.

“It’s a big job for \$1,200 a year,” said board member Julie Shively.

The board briefly discussed the latest dog complaint, on Camp Road, where a dog owned by the Hosleys is subject to complaints from abutters Scutari.

Other Business

The board signed a contract with Renaissance Builders to update and improve the “historic” highway department facility, to be paid for with CPA funding.

The board discussed opening the transfer station on Wednesdays during daylight hours, installing lights at the facility, and promoting the idea of a cafe on site to round out the dump-going experience.

The board then entered executive session to discuss pending litigation.

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town meeting for a match from town coffers, the committee had worked with landscape architect firm Milone & MacBroom to develop the initial bid package for Riverfront Park at the disused industrial site on Arch Street. The specifications were presented as a “base package” and several “alternate packages.”

Under the revised plan, the community garden, boardwalk, and right-of-way work on Arch and Crescent streets would be cut entirely.

The base package included roadways, a community garden, parking areas, wooded trails, a “Great Lawn” with a bandshell, a patio area with a pavilion, and environmentally-themed play structures, including a dry river bed. The “alternates” the town selectboard decided to prioritize were additional play structures, street-style lighting along park roadways, and a second pavilion.

According to approved meeting minutes for the August 22 selectboard meeting, Mark Arigoni of Milone & MacBroom reviewed the project status. Town meeting had approved a total construction budget of \$775,000; after Arigoni’s own firm charged \$98,000 for design and \$40,000 was allocated to project managers Tighe & Bond, the town was looking for bids of up to \$637,000.

The lowest of the four bids, submitted by Mountain View Landscapes and Lawn, Inc., was for

\$737,750.

Based on the high bid amounts, Arigoni recommended a reduced project scope. Under the revised plan, the community garden, boardwalk, and right-of-way work at Arch and Crescent streets would be cut entirely; the trail and dry river bed would both be shortened; a walkway would be constructed of stone dust rather than concrete; and an area with pervious pavers would be kept as lawn. The town would also be buying the park equipment, such as trash cans, a pavilion, a bandshell and picnic tables.

Under the revised scope, the estimated equipment cost would be \$75,798.

According to the meeting minutes, both Usher Mill reuse committee chair Jeanie Schermesser and member Jeff Dubay asked if the eliminated features could be added in the future, under additional phases of park development. Arigoni said that the park would be constructed to allow for such future improvements.

Schermesser expressed concern about “watering down” the project, and recommended seeking additional funding. Selectboard members and residents present at the meeting cautioned that any increased funding should be transparent, and would have to be approved by voters.

The board decided to schedule a special town meeting to consider additional funds for the park. The date was set for September 27, the day after bid opening, so that voters may consider adding funds if the second set of bids are higher than the budget. Transfer of money left in the senior center building fund was suggested as a possible source for such additional funding.



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against the use of public funds to pay for political activities. Though the law did not appear to apply to the school committee discussing the ballot initiative at their meeting, the chair felt it was prudent to get an opinion from counsel, and put it off again.

The resolution argues that free public schools are the foundation of democracy; that local accountability is necessary to ensure the schools meet the needs of each community’s children; that the existing financing model is biased in favor of charter schools and compromises public ones; that charter schools benefit high achievers and affluent families; and that lifting the cap on charter school enrollment, as the ballot measure proposes, would widen the state’s education gap.

The general consensus at Gill-Montague seems to be that members are in favor of the resolution, but the public will have to wait until the next school committee meeting on September 13 to see if that is true.

Superintendent’s Advocacy

Michael Sullivan, superintendent of the Gill-Montague regional district, has been discussing the subject at school committee meetings, writing letters to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and working with the superintendents of other school districts to communicate their views of the impact on their schools.

In 2014, Sullivan wrote a letter to DESE commissioner Mitchell Chester, responding to notice that the department was considering an amendment expanding enrollment at the Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion charter school from 584 to 968 students. Sullivan pointed out the financial costs to local districts, but also spoke of the harm done as more high achieving students from more affluent families leave the district.

“It is likely that one of the big-

gest negative impacts of charter schools,” Sullivan wrote then, “may be that districts like Gill-Montague do not just lose families of greater financial means to charters, they lose families that put a high premium on education.

“At a certain point, the flight of these families leaves behind a disproportionate number of students from families for whom their own educational history or life circumstances have not placed such a high premium on school....

“By adding more charter school seats in our geographic area it is likely this flight will continue, exacerbating a trend that not only impedes our improvement efforts, but more importantly, segregates our communities.”

In an interview with him last Friday at his Turners Falls office, Sullivan again emphasized this point. Just as important as the direct financial impact of charter schools on the district budget, he said, is the way charter schools end up serving higher-achieving students from more affluent families, leaving students from lower-income families behind in schools that cannot offer as many programs as they would like, due to loss of revenue and shrinking student population.

He also compared charter schools with the democratically controlled local public schools, where the towns have a say in the district budgets, and residents get to observe school committee meetings because they are subject to open meeting laws.

What Charter Schools Cost

The school district must pay tuition for children who attend charter schools. So how is that determined? Gill-Montague business director Joanne Blier explained which children are included in the student population for which a district is held responsible.

All students living in the district towns, whether or not a student has ever enrolled in the local school dis-

trict, are their responsibility. If a student lives in either of the towns covered, the district must pay for that student to attend a charter school.

(The only exception is if a child was either homeschooled or attended a private school before they attend a charter school. In this case, the district does not have to pay for that child for the first year they attend a charter; after that, they do.)

There is financial compensation provided by the state for the first year a resident student attends a charter school, whether they attended a district school or another public school; the district is reimbursed 100% for the first year, “within budgetary constraints.” After that the district is reimbursed 25% for the next three years, but after that is responsible for the entire tuition share.

This is determined by a complicated formula, of course, as everything in school budgets seems to be. Blier provided numbers to highlight the problem, and explained how the state assesses districts the cost of charter students.

The factors that are considered include the number of students sent to each charter school; the “foundation budget,” which determines how much aid the district receives for each student; and additional items.

The towns of Gill and Montague currently send students to four charter schools. This is the breakdown for tuition cost, per student, sent to each of those schools during the 2015-2016 school year:

- Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter, Hadley: **\$12,573**
- Four Rivers Charter, Greenfield: **\$14,543**
- Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter, South Hadley: **\$17,275**
- Hilltown Cooperative Charter, Easthampton: **\$17,429**

By comparison, students who use school choice to go to schools in other districts cost their home district approximately \$5,000 per student.

as pain and fatigue management, healthy nutrition practices, exercise techniques, communicating with medical providers and family, relaxation and breathing methods, and medication management.

The workshop takes place on Wednesdays, from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., from September 28 to November 2 at the Greenfield Health Center at 329 Conway Street.

To register for either workshop series, contact Marcus Chiaretto, Healthy Living Program Coordinator, by email at mchiaretto@LifePathMA.org or by phone at (413) 773-5555 x 2304. Family members and caregivers are welcome to attend!


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Impact on the Budget

How bad is the bottom line? A recent update of the district’s revenues and expenses, based on information on the DESE website, puts the total impact of charter schools in FY’16 for Gill-Montague, after reimbursement, at \$858,611.

Representing 70 students at four charter schools, this represents the high point of an expenditure which has consistently increased over the last decade. I

n 2007, the district paid \$153,523 in tuition to charter schools. Every year since then it increased

incrementally, but the biggest costs have been in the last three school years: \$403,551 in FY’13, \$512,901 in FY’14, and \$728,382 in FY’15.

“When students leave,” Sullivan said, “the money they take with them – \$12,000 to \$13,000 for each student – the schools can’t reduce spending to make up for the lost revenue.

“What can schools cut? They can’t reduce a teacher, or the heating bill. It makes it difficult to invest in new initiatives.”



September 22: Strangulation Prevention

HADLEY – The Northwestern District Attorney’s office is proud to present a one-day conference on strangulation prevention and intervention, September 22 at Hadley Farms Meeting House on Route 9 in Hadley.

Co-sponsored by Baystate Health, Cooley Dickinson Health Care and Heywood Healthcare-Athol Hospital, the conference will feature Gael Strack and Casey Gwinn. They are founders of the Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention in San Diego and nationally renowned speakers on non-fatal strangulation, a terrifying and potentially lethal tactic used by abusers in intimate partner relationships to control and threaten their partners.

A sweeping overhaul of Massachusetts’ domestic violence laws, recognizing this fact, included the creation of criminal charges specific to strangulation in August 2014.

“If a victim has been strangled once by her abuser, she is 7 times more likely to be killed by that abuser,” said Assistant District Attorney Jennifer Suhl, chief of the NWDA’s Domestic Violence and Adult Sexual Assault Unit.

“Often abusers strangle victims,

not to kill them, but to let their victim know they CAN kill them,” said Mary Kociela, Director of Domestic Violence Projects for the NWDA.

Goals of the conference are to promote an understanding of the lethality of strangulation and to identify its signs and symptoms. The speakers will address anatomy and medical issues as well as best practices in investigating, prosecuting and documenting a case and advocacy with survivors.

Northwestern District Attorney David E. Sullivan will give opening remarks.

About 160 law enforcement officers, medical first responders and community advocates locally and from across the state, are expected to attend. Some space is still available. The deadline to register is September 9.

The \$35 registration fee includes continental breakfast, lunch and on-site parking. Register online (the link can be found at northwesternda.org), or send the a check, payable to Safe Passage, NWDA, Attn: Karin Sheehy, 13 Conway Street, Greenfield, MA 01301. Please include your name, organization, email and phone number.

This Fall: Healthy Living Workshops

GREENFIELD – This fall, the Healthy Living program at LifePath (formerly Franklin County Home Care) will offer three workshop series in Greenfield, all of which begin in September.

The next free workshop series, “A Matter of Balance: Managing Concerns about Falls,” will teach attendees to reduce their fear of falling while increasing their activity level and independence, improving balance, and increasing flexibility and strength.

This series will take place on Wednesdays, September 7 to October 26, from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m., at the Greenfield Senior Center at 54 High Street.

“Diabetes Self-Management,” is for individuals who are either living with type 2 diabetes or have been diagnosed as prediabetic. Trained leaders teach workshop participants how to better manage the symptoms of diabetes through exercise, healthy eating, medication management, and improved communication skills.

This series takes place from September 12 to October 24, 2016, on Mondays from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Greenfield Senior Center.

“My Life, My Health: Living Well with Chronic Conditions” is for individuals with one or more chronic health challenges. The workshop series teaches valuable skills such

River being cleaner and hydropower greener. All of these stories will be submitted as official public comment to the government hydroelectricity relicensing agencies.

Friday, September 2: *Installation Kick-Off*, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m., River Garden, Brattleboro. On display through September 30.

Thursday, September 29: *Closing Reception*, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., River Garden, Brattleboro. With music, refreshments and a discussion of

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MONTAGUE from page A1

Stevens said Chapter 87 had been “revised in 1988, and now [the limit for a public hearing] is three inches at breast height.”

Chapter 87, as it currently appears on the Commonwealth’s website, lists the diameter beyond which a public hearing is required as 1.5 inches, at a distance of one foot from the ground.

The *Montague Reporter* measured the stump of the tree in question, which is currently at ground level, and found that the diameter there varied from 4.5 inches to seven inches.

According to Karen Doherty, executive director of the Massachusetts Tree Wardens Association, the law was amended in 2011 – adding Section 14, which primarily pertains to policies guiding the relationship between tree wardens and utilities. She stated that Section 14 raised the diameter requirement to four inches. However, a review of the link to the amendment on the association’s website failed to reveal any mention of a new diameter requirement.

Section 14 does say that utilities that submit an “annual vegetation plan” may be exempt from the section of the shade tree law which includes the diameter requirement.

In response to the 2015 contro-

versy over the trees on Montague Street, town administrator Frank Abbondanzio drafted a town “tree bylaw.” This includes that 1.5 inch limit in the published version of Chapter 87. Abbondanzio’s draft bylaw has never been considered by the selectboard.

The Franklin Regional Council of Government (FRCOG) recently completed a “Turners Falls Public Tree Inventory” which gave Stevens high marks for doing a “fantastic job,” in the words of FRCOG land use planner Mary Praus.

Concern about the need to re-plant removed trees has led to the creation of a new town tree planting committee. David Detmold, a member of the committee, was at the August 22 meeting but would not comment on the recent controversy.

The board took no action on Cunha’s complaint. Stevens has pledged to replace the tree in front of her garden.

FRTA on Sandy Lane?

Town planner Walter Ramsey came before the board to discuss the possibility of locating the Franklin Regional Transit Authority’s bus garage on Sandy Lane. Ramsey was accompanied to the front table by FRTA director Tina Cote, her assistant Michael Perrault, and Ron Morgan, representing the state

Department of Transportation.

Perrault stated that the current bus garage on Deerfield Street in Greenfield had proved to be inadequate, and the authority was looking to build a new facility with state money. The FRTA garage will house 28 vehicles and is managed by a private company, Franklin Transit Management. The proposed location was “behind the Judd Wire lot,” which is leased from the town.

Ramsey handed out a map of the site and surrounding area. Plans for the area potentially include a new ground-mounted solar facility, a small industrial park, and a new building to house the public works department. Ramsey noted that while the town would not receive tax revenue for the transit facility, the state would pay for extensive infrastructure improvements that could significantly reduce the cost of the new highway building.

Ramsey estimated that approximately 150 vehicles would enter and leave the bus garage daily, though the FRTA does not provide weekend service at this time. Board members expressed some concern about the loss of potential tax revenue, but urged Ramsey and Abbondanzio to continue to meet with the FRTA.

The FRTA board, which will meet in late September, has been

considering sites for the bus garage for over a year, but has not discussed Sandy Lane.

Other Business

Ramsey also requested that the board execute three change orders for the Canal Street Parking Lot totaling nearly \$24,000. The project has encountered unexpected ledge rock, as well as two buried fuel tanks. Ramsey said the change orders could be funded within the existing grant for the project.

The board, meeting as the personnel board, approved the resignation of dispatcher Debra-Lynn Shedd, and the appointment of Katherine Chapdelaine to the same position.

It also appointed Katharine Jones and John Rathbun to Operator positions at the Water Pollution Control Facility. These upgrades are in part a response to the current staffing problems at the facility, and in part a response to the proposed reorganization of the facility which the board rejected this spring.

Pipeline liaison Ariel Elan gave the board updates on the proposed town intervention into the Berkshire Gas forecast and supply plan, which will go before a special town meeting at the end of September, and the state Supreme Court’s rejection of a proposed tariff on electric users to pay for pipeline construction.

Elan stated that Deerfield had joined with the Montague intervention, but that Amherst was going to file with the Department of Public Utilities “on their own.”

The board voted to send a letter composed by Elan to town representatives in the legislature, although Rich Kuklewicz said he thought it was “a bit long.”

The board “revoted” a number of votes from several meetings which were found to have violated the state Open Meeting Law, because roll call votes, required when a member is participating remotely, had not been taken.

The board approved several documents involving the purchase of the building on Fifth Street currently housing the Gill-Montague Senior Center. The town will continue to share the center’s parking lot with the former owner, who owns PowerTown Apartments.

The board announced a “community input” session on Wednesday, September 7 for the committee selecting a new town administrator, as well as the dates of the draining of the power canal for maintenance, September 19 to 24.

It then went into executive session to discuss collective bargaining strategy.

**FIRE** from page A1

more easily. For the next three hours, Fourth Street was a chaotic scene. Twelve fire companies worked to put out the three-alarm blaze, with minor injuries to two firefighters.

“Multiple crews had to go into the two different buildings and fight the fires,” reported Chief Zellman, who described the operation as a “very coordinated effort” that included companies from Montague Center, Greenfield, Gill, Northfield, Erving, Orange, Amherst, Deerfield, South Deerfield, Bernardston and Brattleboro.

Two additional companies, from Sunderland and Shelburne Falls, covered the empty Turners firehouse during the event, and firefighters from Colrain helped cover in Greenfield.

“The initial attack crew went into 87, the fire building. When the Greenfield guys got there we had already started hitting 89 on the outside,” Zellman said. “The Greenfield crew went up and got into the attic, along with my ladder company going up the back. They knocked it down in the attic so it wouldn’t continue to spread.” The last fire-fighting equipment was released at 6:18 a.m.

According to Zellman, two firefighters sustained injuries: one from Turners Falls, with burns to the hand and wrist, and another

from Greenfield, with a knee or leg injury. “Everybody did a good job – police, fire, EMS, Red Cross, everybody.

“Everybody’s stretched so thin,” he added.

Charges Filed

Police arrested 27-year-old Eric Bell on the scene. Bell, a tenant of the apartment in which the fire is believed to have originated, had already been having a bad night: with a hockey mask strapped to the top of his head, he had accosted patrons and staff at the Rendezvous bar, and around 1:20 in the morning was witnessed by this reporter traveling down Third Street while howling at a high volume.

A neighbor of Bell’s, who asked to remain anonymous, said they had already placed two calls to the police that night with concerns about his behavior.

When the fire trucks arrived they encountered Bell in the street. “He jumped in front of a fire truck that had its lights and siren going,” reported MPD detective Josh Hoffman. Bell was cuffed and questioned, and eventually booked on a felony charge of interfering with a firefighter and a misdemeanor charge of disorderly conduct.

He was arraigned Tuesday morning at the Greenfield district court, where he is held without bail, as he had violated probation



GRACE JILLSON PHOTO

Fourth Street had not seen this much activity since last summer’s block party.

relating to three prior cases. His next court date is set for September 29.

Bell was not alone in his apartment Tuesday night.

“He invited this complete stranger into his apartment to stay overnight,” said Karen Letourneau, Bell’s downstairs neighbor. “And then, about a half an hour later, all of a sudden we heard this crackling.”

The man in question appeared back at the scene around 2:30 a.m., and hung around for the next three hours, telling everyone within earshot that a cellphone he had borrowed from his mother must have been destroyed in the fire.

Busiest Fire Summer

Displaced tenants of the two buildings, wrapped in blankets, watched and wondered if they would be able to retrieve their possessions. Contradictory rumors trickled down to them: ground-floor apartments did not sustain much damage, but the buildings’ electricity was disabled, and ultimately, they were declared unsafe to enter indefinitely.

At around 5:30 a.m., a relief truck from the Red Cross arrived at the scene. Mary Nathan, director of disaster services for the American Red Cross of Western Massachusetts, said the group opened seven cases for ten people. Red Cross volunteers, who had mustered in Springfield before making the drive north, passed out blankets, socks, and toiletry kits, and interviewed each of the affected tenants.

“We provided assistance so they could have hotel rooms,” Nathan said. “We also gave them financial assistance so they could get changes of clothes, and feed themselves and their families over the next few days.” According to Nathan, the organization’s caseworkers will work out recovery plans with each resident, connecting them with local resources as needed and communicating with them daily until the emergency has passed.

“This has been our biggest fire summer ever,” she told the *Reporter*. The fiscal year ending in June, she added, was the Red Cross’s busiest year on record; it responded to 134 fires in western Massachusetts.

“We’re looking for disaster responders, because we’re getting busier,” she said. “Usually our fires spike around heating season, but we’ve had the biggest July and August we’ve had in years.... If anyone is interested in becoming a Red Cross volunteer, they can go to redcross.org to fill out an application.”

According to one displaced tenant, several of the residents at 83-87 Fourth had already been receiving transitional housing support. As they watched with relief as the fire was extinguished, several recounted prior experiences of homelessness, and one said he was determined not to use the disaster as an excuse to relapse into drinking.

Bich-Thuy Reed of Whately, the building’s owner, was not present at the scene.



JACKSON PHOTO

Retiring Turners Falls fire chief Bob Escott (left) swears in former deputy chief John Zellman (right) at an August 18 ceremony at the firehouse. Mike Currie was also promoted to captain.

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TRAILS from page A1

the last two years.

Peterkin first started mapping the area as one of several identified to the conservation commission by town planner Walter Ramsey.

“I was originally using a GPS device,” he explained, “but phones have surpassed them in accuracy and ease of use. I take notes as I map, then clean up the data in Google Earth. Walter’s been putting that data into the maps he’s been making, which have all the parcels and labels on them.”

Besides marking the colonial-era Dry Hill Road from east to west, the trails unveiled this week include the 4.9-mile, blue-blazed Hannegan Brook Loop, which Peterkin described as “really beautiful.”

“It winds through some hidden spots where there are streams flowing, and you can’t hear traffic noises,” he said. “There’s all sorts of wildlife – I had some close encounters with coyote and wild turkey, and there are bobcat tracks, and snowshoe hare, and moose.” Many of the trails have been maintained by hunters, and are navigable by all-terrain vehicle.

Next year, the group plans to add another loop trail, which would connect to the Robert Frost Trail at the summit of Dry Hill.

“It’s a great resource for the community,” Ramsey told the *Reporter*. “There’s some beautiful land up there.”

Cemetery Compromise

Ramsey described the project as a “work in progress,” as well as a “team effort.” The town was awarded a \$6,300 grant from the state Department of Conservation and Recreation to cover materials, including signage, supplies for blazing trails, and kiosk construction.

One section of the project is designed to improve access to Dry Hill Cemetery. The town has been mired for decades in a dispute with property owners on Wendell Road who argue that the northernmost section of Dry Hill Road is abandoned, impeding access to the small, town-owned graveyard, where surviving headstones date as far back as 1803.

The new plan directs hikers from the eastern stub of East Chestnut Hill Road, west along Dry Hill Cross Road, and then north into the cemetery, avoiding the Senn family’s property. The highway department will also repair a culvert on the connecting section of Dry Hill Road to allow access by appropriate vehicles.

“We’re going to be pretty well marking what’s public land, and telling people to stay on it,” said Ramsey. “It’s not the ideal solution – it’s more of an interim one – but it’s a step in the right direction.”

Developing Corridors

The conservation commission has also been working with the Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust, headquartered in Athol, to protect wilderness land as part of a

“corridor” Mount Grace envisions between the Connecticut River and Quabbin Reservoir.

The land trust is acquiring conservation easements on properties using Landscape Partnership Grant funds provided by the state, including a cluster of properties around Mormon Hollow Road in Montague and Wendell, and Willie Hunting’s farmland on East Chestnut Hill Road.

“This is a sixth-generation family farm,” said Jamie Pottern, Mount Grace’s farm conservation program manager, “a working farm and forest.”

Pottern said protecting the Hunting parcel opens up the possibility of creating new trail connections between the Montague State Forest, where it is adjacent to the Robert Frost Trail, and existing DCR trails across the town line in the Wendell State Forest.

Mount Grace’s stewardship agreements are still being developed, but the Montague conservation commission has committed to “co-hold” the easements with the land trust.

“This is the first time the town’s done anything like this,” Peterkin said. The commission’s responsibilities, he said, would include a baseline assessment of the condition of the properties, and periodic monitoring to make sure landowners are holding to the stewardship agreement.

Mount Grace executive director Leigh Youngblood said her group approaches the question of recreation differently with each property it seeks to conserve. “We don’t have a blanket recreation agenda,” she said. “We try to make it site-specific.”

Youngblood described the model of jointly held easements as “a mutual support system for caring for the land,” with stewardship agreements that delineate the responsibilities of the towns, the land trust, and owners.

“Different landowners have different comfort levels with public access, and the kind of public access,” she said. The landscape grant requires Mount Grace to secure a minimum of 500 contiguous acres of protected land.

Youngblood described the project as connecting riverfront access, hiking trails, and even a popular climbing spot on the state land adjacent to Wendell’s Hidden Valley Memorial Forest.

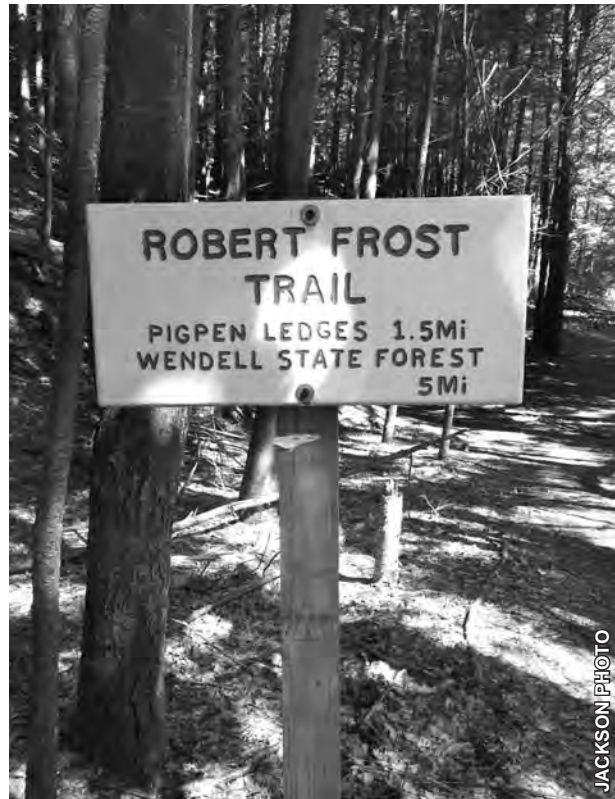
“Large blocks of conserved land have high quality for wildlife habitat, but there are multiple benefits,” she explained. “In the field of landscape ecology, the reason large blocks are good is that they contain a lot of elements. In this case, one of the elements that’s captured by the large block is recreation.”

When asked what Mount Grace considered the value of recreational activities, Youngblood’s answer was simple:

“We think it’s very healthy for people to just get outside!”



A Straight Shot Through The Heart of Montague



This sign marks the trailhead off North Leverett Road, near Spaulding Brook.

By MIKE JACKSON

MONTAGUE CENTER – Most Wednesdays, I’m stuck at the Montague Reporter office in downtown Turners, making calls, directing layout and editing copy as the weekly issue of this newspaper comes together. Our more relaxed biweekly summer schedule encouraged me to finally check out a part of town I’d never been through: the section of the Robert Frost Trail that runs from North Leverett Road to the Wendell State Forest.

A series of spells had previously prevented me from finding the local entrance to the Robert Frost Trail. The last of these was its name, and its namesake – and the sense that it was somehow a woodsy tendril extending northward from places like Amherst College, where Frost taught.

Also, I had once had a bad experience on something called the Robert Frost Interpretive Trail up in Vermont, a short loop in the backyard of some property at which Frost had “summered,” which was interrupted every several steps with plaques engraved with things he had written, and walking around on which I came to the important teenaged realization that poetry is every bit as capable as anything else of ruining the world.

But there I was last Wednesday, deposited by a friend at the trailhead, carrying water, hard-boiled eggs, carrots, sunscreen, a compass, a telephone with both a compass function and the whole Internet on it, and printouts of the final pages of a trail guide published jointly by the Amherst Conservation Department and Amherst Area Trails Committee.

About a hundred yards from me stood the former

Montague Farm, a commune established by an Amherst College alumnus with a loan from an Amherst dean and an Amherst Savings Bank mortgage. I wondered if Marshall Bloom, or someone in his circle, had first noticed the property on a hike up this very trail, and decided it would be a good place to hide the most popular printing press of his generation.

The trail was immediately steep, and my misgivings about history and geography and power gave way to regret over my having just tanked up on chocolate-chip pancakes at the Shady Glen. It all leveled out soon. I followed the bold, orange blazes over dried-out streambeds and up into the thin, quiet pine of Chestnut Hill.

A mile and a half in, I hit the Pigpen Ledges. This is a terrace of imposingly huge stones, clustered so as to create a natural enclosure. This is one of the most stunning and probably totally sacred locations in Montague, but my arrival there surprised a small family at play, so I hiked up and through the ledges as quickly as I could to restore their privacy. I’ll have to visit another day.

They turned out to be the only other humans – or indeed, other living mammals – I would see on the entire trail. Dry Hill is large, and last Wednesday entirely dry. According to Pressey’s *History of Montague*, Dry Hill Road was once the main road east from Montague, “until the road was opened by way of Grout’s corner and Miller’s river.”

“It was a thickly settled mountain road,” Pressey wrote, with sixteen farms and a schoolhouse. “Now crumbling chimney stacks or mere depressions in the turf mark more than half the places of dwellings.”

He wrote that in 1910. These days there are still moss- and lichen-covered stone walls and cellarholes, but besides trees, the hill’s main features are ferns and ants.

I wandered a ways off the trail for a picnic, and to brush up on my orienteering. As soon as I had settled onto the sunny forest floor, Dry Hill mistook me for a fallen carcass, and emitted several hundred of its best ants to start the early work of inspection. I don’t know how many newspaper editors have rotted up there, but I’m guessing I wouldn’t have been the first.

I drank some water, ate an egg, and continued chasing after the orange blazes. The further north and east I got, the more spider-webs I had to push through, and somewhere I tiptoed through a hairy, buggy patch of ground that I’m pretty sure used to be a deer.

Just as suddenly as I had left civilization down by the Leverett line, I joined with a beercan-dotted gravel road, which took me through a majestic power line right-of-way before depositing me on the eastern stub of East Chestnut Hill. There was a man surrounded by wild, or perhaps somewhat domesticated, turkeys on his front lawn, and in an effort to acknowledge or apologize my having stumbled out of the woods, sunburnt and covered in cobwebs, I told him that that was a good trail.

“Is it?” he replied, staring pointedly at his lawn.

I hurried along down the road, across the town line and into the impeccably managed Wendell State Forest, where I spent a wonderful afternoon wringing the last hot drops out of summer.

Saturday, September 10: Industrial History!

For the third year, The Friends of the Great Falls Discovery Center, DCR, and RiverCulture have partnered to present “Turners Falls History Month.” Talks and tours are scheduled at The Great Falls Discovery Center, 2 Avenue A, throughout the entire month of September.

For a full listing, visit the River-

Culture website at www.turners-fallsriverculture.org, or look for brochures in downtown businesses. All events are free!

Next Week, September 10:
Take a Tour of Paperlogic. Meet Under the Paperlogic sign on Turners Falls Road, just over the Canal Bridge. Tours leave at

10:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.
This event is NOT handicap accessible. Children must be 10 years or older.
Learn about “**Turners Falls: America’s 19th Century Cutlery Capitol**” at the Great Falls Discovery Center with Al Shane of Greenfield’s Museum of Our Industrial Heritage, 1 p.m..

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NOTES FROM THE WENDELL SELECTBOARD

State Captures Flag

By JOSH HEINEMANN

Senate president Stan Rosenberg came to the Wendell selectboard's August 24 meeting and took the printed copy of Wendell's flag to hang in the statehouse hall of flags. The original, hand sewn by town coordinator Nancy Aldrich, still hangs with its bright colors in the selectboard office.

Rosenberg met the flag's creators, Pam Richardson and Donna Horn, who told him about their cooperation and the ideas incorporated in the flag. They said they had rejected the inscription, "Incorporated 1781," because it emphasized the Europeans who took over the land rather than the original people who lived here.

Rosenberg said that Wendell's flag will stand out among the other flags. The board agreed that he would take the flag that evening to have it hung, and that they and other community members may come to the statehouse later for its dedication.

Rosenberg asked if there were any other concerns that board members or others in the office had.

After a polite pause, selectboard chair Christine Heard asked about home rule, and the requirement that police and firefighters leave service when they turn 70. Institutional knowledge is lost, she said; experienced people are lost; and it is not easy to find new young people to take their place.

Selectboard member Dan Keller said the town would welcome help from the legislature in its effort to get an internet connection to every house in town. He also mentioned PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes), money the state pays towns for untaxed land, such as the state forest. When Keller joined the finance committee, PILOT payments to the town were \$300,000 a year; they dropped to nothing, have increased some, but have not reached their former level.

Selectboard member Geoffrey

Pooser reiterated Keller's concern about broadband, saying there is a big difference between getting homes connected in two years and three.

Rosenberg said there is a municipal relief bill in the works that would increase efficiency and allow no new (unfunded) mandates. He was not able to fix everything right then.

Citizen Gillian Budine told Rosenberg that Union 28's Community Network for Children had a budget of \$300,000, and now has a budget of \$88,000 with the same job to do. She invited him to come to the network's Wendell playgroup.

Mediation Sought for Broadband

The selectboard has scheduled extra meetings in August and September as part of the broadband effort. They held one on August 17 to appoint members of the newly-created broadband operations committee and construction committee.

The construction committee will include Heard and Pooser, as well as Doug Tanner, Wanita Sears, Ray DiDonato, and Nan Riebschlaeger. They will attend construction meetings, and meet jointly with the operations committee, which is comprised of Sears, DiDonato and Riebschlaeger, plus Al MacIntire and Carol Jud.

Having two selectboard members on both of those committees will create a selectboard quorum at every broadband meeting.

Keller reported that Tanner, Wendell's point person, had learned from the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) that a data collector has been selected for the pole survey, the first step of construction. A "green light" letter from bond counsel is still needed for the loan that Wendell will take for construction after MBI has spent its share, but Keller said that the letter is on its way.

Members of the town's former broadband committee are still divided over the selectboard's decision to



Left to right: Selectboard members Dan Keller and Christine Heard; flag co-creator Pam Richardson; town coordinator Nancy Aldrich; state senate president Stan Rosenberg; and selectboard member Jeff Pooser.

create two committees, instead of a single committee with a construction subcommittee – or, as Robert Heller suggested in a written statement that he brought to the August 17 meeting, a committee with an executive subcommittee that can meet as needed.

Riebschlaeger asked for mediation, saying neither the selectboard nor the former broadband committee had had an exchange of the reasons they wanted either two committees or one, and that the two-committee decision was presented as "this is what we, the selectboard, want; this is what we are doing."

Wendell has a mediation account, unused so far this fiscal year, and selectboard members accepted the idea. Riebschlaeger returned to the board's August 24 meeting and maintained her wish for mediation and so Heard asked Aldrich to contact a mediator, Sharon Tracy of New Salem.

Mediation brings its own complication. Discussion during mediation may legally be confidential, but any meeting with two or more selectboard members is legally an open meeting. Aldrich and Tracy will clear that issue up.

There will be a joint meeting of the construction committee and the operations committee on Wednesday, August 31.

Tech School Updates

Rick Drohen came to the August 24 meeting with Franklin County

Technical School's superintendent, Richard Martin. Martin spoke about the renovations and improvements made to the building and grounds, made possible because all 19 member towns approved the spending.

Forty-year-old pavement was ripped up and replaced, new tight and efficient windows and doors were installed, the roof was redone, and the grounds landscaped. The work was done on time, and slightly under budget.

Martin said that students in the appropriate trades can maintain much of the improvements. The school has added a postgraduate program that allows high school graduates to attend FCTS for a year to train toward a trade. He said he was proud of the school's advanced placement classes, as well as its special education program, which serves 32% of the students, compared with 11% countywide.

Drohen is ready to give up his position on the FCTS school committee, but said he is willing to serve another year. He asked board members to keep looking for a replacement.

Special Town Meeting

According to Nancy Spittle, chair of the Council on Aging, windows of the senior center appear about to fall out. Those are good, double-pane windows, but outside light shows in gaps between the windows and walls.

Board members agreed that

money should be appropriated for the work, and should be on a special town meeting warrant. They set October 13 or 20, both Thursdays, as the date for a special town meeting, depending on availability of town moderator Kate Nolan, and town clerk Gretchen Smith. Smith later said she was available both evenings.

Other Business

Keller reported that the grinder pump that pushes wastewater and solids up from under the library to the east side of the common, where it can flow by gravity to the town septic system, plugged up again. Facilities engineer Jim Slavas recommends getting a second pump, for \$1,200, to have ready when this one fails.

Slavas also invented an electronic way to minimize trouble when the pump clogs. It is not designed to process baby wipes or disposable diapers, and signs were put up to tell people not to flush either down the toilet and to instead use cans that have been provided for that purpose.

Those signs have not been observed, and librarian Rosie Heidkamp thinks the problem might follow from other signs asking patrons not to put diapers or wipes in the trash. The library has started locking its rest rooms so that people can be informed of the new procedures, and wastewater and sewage do not back up onto the floors.

The Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) sent the selectboard a survey asking how good the town is for walkers.

Heard said there are good places to walk, but the area that has the most pedestrians also has the highest number of vehicles passing. She has wanted a sidewalk between the common and the country store, and a survey for that sidewalk was done.

A warrant article to pay for construction failed at the 2016 annual town meeting, but the FRCOG letter implied that there might be money available that could help defray some of that cost.

There will be a money managers' meeting September 21 at 6 p.m., an hour before the selectboard meeting.

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A Long, Winding Road Brings Father O'Mannion to Our Lady of Czestochowa



Father O'Mannion begins work this fall.

By JOE KWIECINSKI

TURNERS FALLS – It's a long way from Guadalajara, Mexico to Turners Falls. But that's the long journey that the Reverend Sean T. O'Mannion has made as he assumes duties here as the new pastor of Our Lady of Czestochowa Church at 84 K Street.

"My parents split up when I was a child," said Father O'Mannion. He and his Mexican-born mother moved to Yucatan, a peninsula and a state in the extreme Southeast of Mexico. They resided there for a year before moving on to their next home in the west-central city of Guadalajara with close to three million people.

"Although I was brought into life by my dear mother in New York City," O'Mannion explained, "I lived in Guadalajara for eight formative years, and I consider that city my hometown. I started learning Spanish at the age of seven when I moved to Mexico and entered third grade."

Young Sean underwent total immersion in the language: his school studies, personal conversations, and play with the kids on the block in this metropolis were all conducted *en espanol*.

After eight years in Guadalajara, the future priest and his mom headed for California in 1980. He attended Santa Fe High School in Santa Fe Springs, a little industrial town near L.A. "The only springs that they had there," said Sean, "were of the metallic variety."

The small family unit moved back to Queens, NY in 1988. O'Mannion served a stint as a Spanish-speaking intermediary between Mora, Inc. and its team of salespeople in the US. Mora produced sheets, bedspreads, and blankets. The Spanish textile firm, with offices on Fifth Avenue, enlisted O'Mannion to sell in high volume to some of the nation's biggest retailers of that time: K-Mart, Target, Zaire's, and Caldor.

"It was an education and a great experience," said Father O'Mannion. Among his other duties, he also

dealt with customs regarding products coming in from Spain via the docks. In addition, the busy priest-to-be handled taxes for the company.

After some two years, the main office closed and O'Mannion headed for Newton, a suburban city seven miles from Boston. He latched on at Tufts School of Veterinary Medicine where he worked as assistant to the registrar for about two years. Always one for a challenge, Sean started night school at UMass/Boston while working at Tufts during the day.

The next port of call was the UMass/Amherst campus in 1991 as a transfer student. Two years later, he graduated from the area university with a BA in French at the age of 30.

A mere year hence, he earned a master's of arts in French literature. While studying for his degree, O'Mannion taught elementary French to help pay for his tuition.

In 1995, he began six years of employment at Merriam-Webster of Springfield, working on bilingual dictionaries. "This company was another great place to work," said Sean.

You get the drift. As they say on the cable TV show, "it's always sunny in Philly" – for the optimistic person.

While living in Northampton and commuting to Merriam-Webster, O'Mannion became a Catholic. This was in 1998. Flash forward to 2001 when O'Mannion left the area to embark on a Jesuit novitiate in Jamaica Plain in Boston, the first step toward ordination. Taking his perpetual vows in 2003, O'Mannion started on an internship as part of becoming a Jesuit (Jesuits are primarily missionaries and educators). He lit out for the Rosebud Sioux Reservation to work with the Lakota Indians at the South Dakota preserve. Next up were trips to Salamanca, Spain and a brief stint at the Vatican, working on a Jesuit website.

However, he left the Jesuits in mid-2004 to be a seminarian at what is now called the Pope St. John XXIII seminary, located in Weston, MA. "One advantage of my experience is that they (the Jesuits) had sent me to the poorest place in the United States, at Rosebud, and then to the wealthiest spot in the country – Fairfield County – teaching French at Fairfield University, a Jesuit school. It provided a stunning, revealing contrast."

Father O'Mannion graduated in 2008 and Bishop Timothy McDonald ordained Sean into the priesthood that year. Next came the newly minted priest's first assignment at Holy Name in Springfield, followed by a three-year assignment at the only parish in the city of Northampton, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton.

From there Father Sean received his first pastoral assignment at two churches in Holyoke: Immaculate Conception and Our Lady of Guadalupe, with Spanish spoken at both parishes. They had the pleasure of his company for some four years before the assignment in Turners Falls.

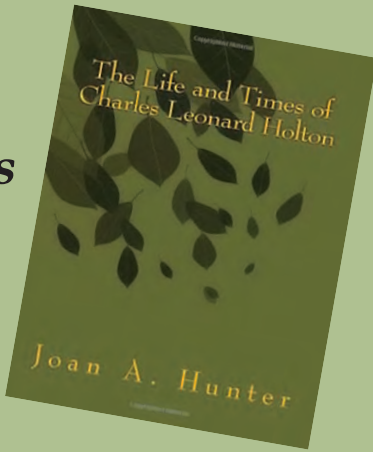
"I'm just about settled in," sighed Our Lady of

see **PRIEST** page B8

BOOK REVIEW

The Life and Times of Charles Leonard Holton, by Joan A. Hunter

By LYN CLARK



Author Joan A. Hunter, a board-certified genealogist and granddaughter of Charles Leonard Holton, has written a family history based on a multitude of both personal sources, mostly letters and diaries, and public ones. Meticulously researched and documented, it is a large, dense book of 383 pages of text and photographs, with attribution to her sources on every page.

The stories of the families from which the author and her grandfather are descended read like a history of Northfield, Gill, Bernardston, and other villages in our little pocket of the Connecticut River Valley. The time during which these lives and stories were played out was mostly the second half of the 1800s and the early 1900s.

Many are names with which we are familiar, such as Dwight L. Moody, evangelist, and the Bartons – think Barton Cove – and many of the family surnames still appear on the tax rolls of these towns.

Hunter weaves their stories together in a deft manner, and the writing is fluid and engaging. I must admit that I was often confused as to who was related to whom, and the book would have benefited greatly from some



Fannie Content Holton

I found that, given the plethora of actors in this drama – and all family histories are dramas – I needed to fasten on one or two characters, and stick with them. I selected Dwight L. Moody, referred to frequently as simply D. L., and his cousin and the author's great-great-aunt, Fannie Content Holton.

It was possible to do this through the index of Christian and surnames that the author kindly included at the end, which listed all the pages on which their

see **HOLTON** page B4



Charles Lewis Holton's 1877 Diary.



WEST ALONG THE RIVER

Late Summer State of Mind

By DAVID BRULE

ERVINGSIDE – The hummingbird in the jewelweed patch and the monarch on the phlox set the tone of this summer morn.

This is the late summer season, a very specific time of year, but noticeable only in the subdued sounds of birds, or a slight change in the quality of sunlight. This ephemeral time pivoted into place almost imperceptibly. For those of us who live life aligned closely to the seasons, back around August 15, something changed.

It has been a slow-paced summer at this old house along the west-running river, mostly because the heat and humidity covering us like a wet blanket has kept most outdoor activity bracketed into early morning and late afternoon. The dog sleeps listlessly in front of the fan, even the birds outside sleep in the afternoon heat, coming alive after five to bathe, splash and frolic in the various baths

spread around the yard.

Just the same, with our attention usually focused on the outdoors in any weather, even the slightest seasonal change out there does not go unnoticed. Even though many human beings spent most of the sweltering month inside in air-conditioned coolness, the season out here did not stand still.

August 4. Already we have likely seen the last of the chimney swifts streak through the evening skies. High summer on this date, but it will likely last only another ten days, so fleeting is time.

Goldenrod, cardinal flower, Joe Pye weed, beach rose are still flourishing. But we've already taken care of some autumn chores: already our chimneys are swept clean, oil burner checked, fuel oil on the way, kindling and firewood are stacked and ready.

August 11 brings slight relief this summer night with a light summer rain. Moods change with the weather,

veils of rain and mist shimmer under the street light on the empty street.

Tonight, the dog has his regular walk on the old neighborhood of the Flat. Rain is no matter. After he has inspected every interesting poop and pee spot, checked out stray trash along the street, we find ourselves strolling the length of the old factory building that is the reason for our winding up on this street so long ago.

I'm here because back in the 1870s, just after the Civil War, great-grandfather came to work for Levi Gunn at the Millers Falls Company. The family has been here ever since.

I take time to greet and remember all the ghosts of the tool work-

ers who used to sit on the sills of the open windows on the upper floors of the now empty mill. They'd be seeking the slightest breeze, thinking about a cold glass of beer waiting for them at the end of the shift.

Windows are boarded up and nailed shut now, no tools being made here since just after 1967. Maybe I'm just a ghost myself lurking around here, one of the few who remember that era, and who remember the old families who lived along my street. They're all gone now, most of the houses currently inhabited by new neighbors who sometimes say hello, sometimes not.

Quiet summer nights can put you in that kind of mood.



Rana (Lithobates) palustris – Pickerel Frog

August 16. This night is ringing with the summer songs of 10,000 crickets and at least two dozen katydids. It sounds like a jungle out here.

The evening was full of night-hawk wings. These large cousins of the whippoorwill, insect eaters and not hawks at all, poured out of the north until the skies were full, close to one hundred of them.

Silent and fleeting, they knifed wildly down through the skies, back and forth on long pointed wings in an erratic dance, cleaning the skies of insects, moving out ahead of the dark and the frost that will eventually come. They feel the urge for going, they know what is coming, they sense that summer has reached a turning point.

August 18. An entire clan of grackles, looking like miniature crows, have spent the last few days clucking and congregating in the trees and bushes around the feeder. They strut and gossip, and soon will be gone, moving further south, joining the river of birds beginning to flow away from us.

The sun this day is warm and veiled. Sparrows drape themselves in the dead branches of the Doug Smith lilac. We've had to fight entangling

see **WEST ALONG** page B6

Pet of the Week

It's true--I have wonderful double paws but I'm not going to show them to you right away. Change is hard for me and while I've had top-notch care at Dakin, I'm still nervous here.

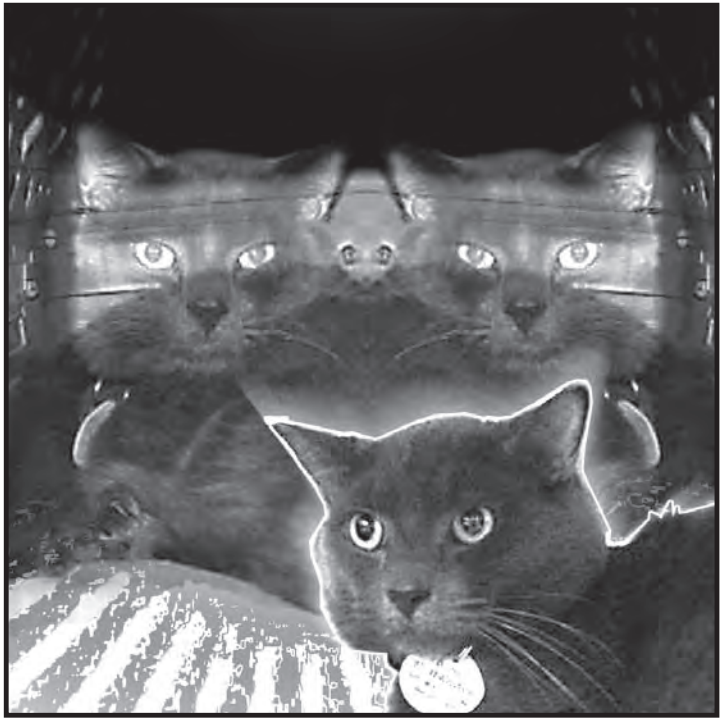
With patience and a slow transition into a new home, I will certainly come out of my shell. In my previous home I was described as friendly and enjoyed playing with mouse toys.

For now you'll just have to imag-

ine how cute it must be to watch my big paws bat around a mouse toy!

If you have a quiet home, come take a peek at me and trust that it's only a matter of time and patience before we're fast friends.

Contact the Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society at (413) 548-9898 or at info@dpvhs.org.



“GRIGIO”

Senior Center Activities SEPTEMBER 5 to 9

GILL / MONTAGUE
Gill / Montague Senior Center, 62 Fifth Street, Turners Falls, is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Congregate meals are served Tuesday through Thursday at noon. Meal reservations must be made one day in advance by 11 a.m.

All fitness classes are supported by a grant from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. Voluntary donations are accepted. Council on Aging Director is Roberta Potter. Kitchen Manager is Jeff Suprenant. For more information, to make meal reservations, or to sign up for programs call 863-9357. Messages can be left on our machine when the Center is closed.

Tues & Weds Noon Lunch
W, F 10:10 a.m. Aerobics; 10:50 a.m. Chair Exercise
Monday 9/5 CLOSED
Tuesday 9/6
9:30 a.m. Chair Yoga
Wednesday 9/7
9 a.m. Veterans' Outreach
12:45 p.m. Bingo
Thursday 9/8 CLOSED
State Primary
Friday 9/9
Reflexology by Appointment

ERVING
Erving Senior Center, 1 Care Drive, Erving, is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for activities and congregational meals.

Lunch is at 11:30 a.m., with reservations required 24 hours in advance. Call the Mealsite Manager at 423-3308 for meal information and reservations.

For information, call Paula Betters, Senior Center Director, at (413) 423-3649. Transportation

can be provided for meals, shopping, or medical necessity.

Call to confirm activities, schedule a ride, or find out about the next blood pressure clinic.

Monday 9/5 CLOSED
Tuesday 9/6
8:45 a.m. Chair Aerobics
10 a.m. Stretching & balance
Homemade Lunch must RSVP
12:30 p.m. Creative Coloring
Wednesday 9/7
8:45 a.m. Line Dancing
9:30 a.m. Blood Pressure Clinic
10 a.m. Chair Yoga
Noon Bingo, Snacks & Laughs
1-3 p.m. Veterans here to guide
Thursday 9/8
8:15 a.m. Foot Clinic
8:45 a.m. Aerobics (*fast moving*)
10 a.m. Healthy Bones
Noon Brown Bag Pick-up
12:30 p.m. Crafty Seniors
Friday 9/9
9 a.m. Quilting; Walking Club
9:30 a.m. Bowling
11 a.m. Market Shopping Van
11:30 a.m. Pizza Salad & Dessert
12:30 p.m. Painting Workshop

LEVERETT
For information, contact the Leverett COA at (413) 548-1022, ext. 5, or coa@leverett.ma.us. Flexibility and Balance Chair Yoga – Wednesdays at 10 a.m. at the Town Hall. Drop-in \$6 (first class free). Senior Lunch – Fridays at noon. Call (413) 367-2694 by Wednesday for a reservation.

WENDELL
Wendell Senior Center is at 2 Lockes Village Road. Call Nancy Spittle, (978) 544-6760, for hours and upcoming programs. Call the Center for a ride.

WENDELL FREE LIBRARY NEWS Historic Film Screening

Back To The Future (1985) will be screened at the Wendell Free library, Saturday, September 3 at 7:30 p.m.

Plot synopsis: A young man is accidentally sent 30 years into the past in a time-traveling DeLorean invented by his friend, Dr. Emmett Brown, and must make sure his high-school-age parents unite in order to save his own existence.

There will be a short (1/2 hour) film before the mov-

ie: an episode of “Caption Z-Ro”: “William Tell”.

This is the next in the monthly series of Science Fiction/Fantasy and Horror/Monster movies at the Wendell Free Library, located in the center of Wendell. Admission is free.

For more information about the Wendell Free Library, visit its web page at www.wendellfreelibrary.org or call (978) 544-3559.



Left to right, and skipping a few: Massachusetts highway administrator Thomas Tinlin, Montague town administrator Frank Abbondanzio, state secretary of transportation Stephanie Pollack, state representatives Steve Kulik and Susannah Whipples Lee, and state senate president Stan Rosenberg all help cut a ribbon to recognize the official completion of the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge restoration project last Thursday morning. Thanks to Ed Gregory for sharing his photo!

THE HEALTHY GEEZER

A Quick Word About Heart-Valve Surgery



By FRED CICETTI

Q. I have a leaky heart valve that may need surgery down the road. Can you tell me about heart-valve surgery in one of your columns?

First, let's explain briefly how the heart works.

There are four chambers in the heart – two atria on top and two ventricles below. There are four valves that open and shut with every heartbeat to control the circulation of the blood. These valves, which are made of tissue flaps, are called the tricuspid, pulmonary, mitral and aortic.

Blood flows in one direction through the heart to get a new supply of oxygen from the lungs. Here's how it goes:

Used blood comes back to the heart from the body and goes into the right atrium. The right atrium pumps the blood downward through the tricuspid valve into the right ventricle. The right ventricle pumps the blood through the pulmonary valve to the

lungs. The oxygenated blood returns from the lungs to the left atrium. The left atrium moves the blood down through the mitral valve into the left ventricle. The left ventricle pumps the blood out the aortic valve, which supplies the body.

Valves can malfunction and strain the heart. If a valve doesn't close properly, blood will flow backward. This is called "regurgitation." If valve flaps don't open correctly, they prevent blood from flowing through them. This is called "stenosis."

Advanced valve disease can cause blood clots, stroke or sudden death from cardiac arrest.

For seniors, there is a problem with the flaps of the aortic and mitral valves; they thicken and harden with age, making blood flow more difficult. These changes may lead to complications in people with heart disease.

Other common causes of valve disease are: birth defects that produce irregularly shaped aortic valves or narrowed mitral valves; infective endocarditis, a bacterial infection of the lining of the heart's walls and valves; coronary artery disease, and heart attack.

People with malfunctioning valves who don't have serious symptoms may not need treatment. Medicines can help with symptoms but don't fix a bad valve. Surgery or a less invasive procedure is often

needed to correct valve disease.

There is a percutaneous (through-the-skin) procedure that may be used to open narrowed tricuspid, pulmonary and mitral valves. In rare cases, it is used on aortic valves. A balloon-tipped catheter is inserted into the narrowed valve and inflated. The balloon makes the central area of the valve larger. The balloon is then deflated and removed.

During surgery, valves may either be repaired or replaced. Repair may involve opening a narrowed valve or reinforcing a valve that doesn't close properly. Surgeons replace irreparable valves with prosthetic valves.

Prosthetic valves can be mechanical; they are made of plastic, carbon, or metal. Or, these replacement valves can be composed of human or animal tissue. There is an increased risk of blood clots forming with a mechanical valve, so patients who get them have to take blood-thinning medicines as long as they have this kind of valve.

Valve surgery is an open-heart operation that requires a heart-lung bypass machine. During the operation, the heart must stop beating. The machine keeps the blood circulating in the patient's body.

If you would like to ask a question, write to fred@healthygeezeeer.com

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Shannon Madigan - Property Manager

MPD from page B3

it might be rabid. Animal Control officer advised.

6:03 p.m. Walk in to lobby reporting that an old man on a blue moped was riding it on the sidewalk and she feels that it is dangerous and she would like us to keep an eye out for him. Rider known to department from past incidents.

8:27 p.m. Report of a raccoon struck by a vehicle near the golf course and Farren Hospital, but is not dead. Animal is walking around in circles in the road causing a hazard. Officer dispatched raccoon, reporting he fired three shots, in case there are calls about the noise.

9:20 p.m. Caller reports a “mangy” looking fox walking into the road; officer checked, unable to locate.

Thursday, 8/25

1:17 p.m. Report of a cat that won’t come out from under a car. Officer advising female who was trying to get the cat and received some scratches to her hand. Officers able to get cat out from under the car and it is now lying safely up in a tree.

8:46 p.m. Report of harassing phone call. Caller told reporting person that he had outstanding parking tickets for being “too stupid to be on the road” and then hung up. On record.


Saturday, 8/27

10:30 p.m. Caller reports seeing a large pack of 8 or 9 dogs running in the area towards the bike path. Says he saw something

in the paper a little while ago about a pack of wild dogs, and thought he should call police. Contact with Greenfield Police department and Animal Control, who advised it was from an article on June 6, in Gill, where a calf had been killed by either coyotes or wild dogs.

Sunday, 8/28

7:51 p.m. Caller reporting he just witnessed four guys on bikes, smash a bunch of glass bottles near the high tension area on the bike path. They then began throwing rocks at the glass. He asked them to clean it up, but they were rude and vulgar towards him. Officer checked area, found no one matching the description.



LOOKING BACK:
10 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Here’s the way it was September 14, 2006: News from the Montague Reporter’s archive.

Combined Sewer Project Underway

Ludlow Construction, under the direction of superintendent Scott Pio, began their \$1.2 million combined sewer overflow abatement project on September 11, at 7th Street and Avenue A, by the Carnegie Library.

The job is to install 700 feet of 21” PVC pipe up 7th Street to L Street, replacing a concrete 15” line laid by Mackin Construction in 1948 to supplant an old 30” x 18” brick line that still runs parallel to the replacement line as a storm drain. The project’s purpose is to prevent sewer overflow into the Connecticut River.

Free Speech in Montague

On a question regarding use of Montague town common for political sings, selectboard member Allan Ross said, “I’m all for total free speech. Or, not total, but within certain public safety [guidelines], and within the appropriate use of public space.”

The topic came up at the meeting of the selectboard Monday at the Montague Center fire station when Taylor Hill Road resident, and former Socialist candidate for Congress, Eric Chester continued to seek permission to put a semi-permanent sign on the common

calling for an immediate end to the Iraq War.

Chester takes the position that since the town permits the Congregational Church to use the Montague Center common each year for a Christmas scene, a form of religions expression, any resident or group therefore has equal right to use the common for political speech.

He cited a Supreme Court decision on a dispute over the use of town common in Lexington, MA, calling for content-neutral guidelines for use of public spaces.

Lively Crowd Tunes in for Candidate Debate

With only days to go before the September state primary election, an intent crowd bellied up to the bar to watch the televised Democratic gubernatorial debate at the Harp on September 7.

The Irish pub served up traditional Guinness and palaver, while state representatives Ellen Story (D-Amherst) and Stephen Kulik (D-Worthington) were on hand to play host to the event.

The actual debate between Attorney General Thomas Reilly, top Clinton administration civil rights prosecutor Deval Patrick, and venture capitalist Christopher Gabrieli took place at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. But the libations and camaraderie were better at the North Amherst bar.

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE GILL POLICE LOG

Hawk Housed; Tractor Trapped; Tools Taken; Bear Break-in Busted

Monday, 8/1

5:10 a.m. Large tree limb reported in roadway on North Cross Road. Officer removed same.

Tuesday, 8/2

10:30 a.m. Dog complaint in Riverside area. No K9 located running loose.

12:20 p.m. Subject reported headed to French King Bridge to jump. Stood by.

12:45 p.m. Assisted resident on Trenholm Way with domestic issue.

2 p.m. Reported cows on Main Road in the roadway. Assisted back to pasture.

5:45 p.m. Complaint of dirt bikes riding on Hoe Shop Road. Under investigation.

7:55 p.m. 20+ subjects locked in at kayak rental on French King Highway. Assisted.

10:55 p.m. Motor vehicle repossessed on French King Highway from resident. No issue.

Wednesday, 8/3

6:15 p.m. Alarm at residence on West Gill Road. Owner error.

Thursday, 8/4

9:10 a.m. Possible jumper at French King Bridge. Same removed and brought for evaluation.

Friday, 8/5

4 p.m. DMV on French King Highway assisted same with a wrecker.

6:10 p.m. Medical assist at business on Main Road.

9:35 p.m. Assisted Greenfield police with arrest of Gill resident for DWI.

Saturday, 8/6

5:50 p.m. Assisted Montague police with disturbance call in their community.

Monday, 8/8

6:40 a.m. Resident complaint of harassment on Boyle Road.

6:55 a.m. Resident found “old” ammo on Camp Road. Same for destruction.

1 p.m. Tractor trailer unit on French King Highway reportedly operating with rear doors open, located same.

Tuesday, 8/9

12:20 p.m. Hazard at Main Road/Route 2 intersection. Tractor trailer unit stuck attempting to turn.

3:50 p.m. Section 12 issued for resident on Riverview Drive. Subject transported for evaluation.

Wednesday, 8/10

1:30 p.m. Assisted resident with background check issue.

Thursday, 8/11

9:15 a.m. Past breaking and entering reported at residence on Camp Road. Under investigation.

6:30 p.m. Reported illegal dumping at business on French King Highway.

9:05 p.m. Reported stolen cell phone from party at Gill Mobil station, located in Turners.

Saturday, 8/13

1:35 p.m. Assisted Montague PD with domestic situation in their community.

2:50 p.m. Assisted Bernardston police with Bear attempting to enter a residence.

5 p.m. Camp Road for a property line dispute.

6:55 p.m. Firearms issue on Center Road. Under investigation.

7:30 p.m. Motor vehicle accident on Munns Ferry Road. Single motor vehicle, with injuries.

Sunday, 8/14

11:05 a.m. Medical assist on West Gill Road with bicycle accident.

Monday, 8/15

12 p.m. Resident on French King Highway reports a harassment complaint.

4:45 p.m. Reported wires on tree, Trenholm Way at Route 2.

Tuesday, 8/16

1:35 p.m. Motor vehicle accident at Route 2 and Main Road intersection. No injuries.

2:20 p.m. Animal complaint. Hawk inside building on Main Road.

4 p.m. Burglar alarm sounding at residence on Main Road. Faulty wire.

Wednesday, 8/17

5 p.m. Reported breaking and entering into barn at residence on French King Highway, power tools stolen.

Thursday, 8/18

4:50 p.m. Medical assist to student on Mount Hermon Campus.

7:20 p.m. Investigation of additional stolen property from French King Highway residence.

10:20 p.m. Medical assist at Franklin Road residence. Subject transported.

Friday, 8/19

10 a.m. Reported breaking and entering overnight at residence on Main Road. Under investigation.

9:20 p.m. Suspicious activity at residence on French King Highway. Nothing located.

Saturday, 8/20

7 p.m. Section 12 subject located in Factory Hollow area. Transported back to hospital for evaluation.

HOLTON from page B1

names appeared. I selected Moody for general historical reasons.

From diaries and his personal letters to family members, we learn how he came to found the Northfield Seminary (which my own mother attended in 1925) and the school for boys, which combined today is the Northfield Mount Hermon School in Gill.

One gains through his letters a sense of his kindness, his generosity and his religiosity.

I followed Fannie C. Holton, his cousin, mainly because, through Moody’s intervention, she was able to attend my *alma mater* Wellesley College during its very early days. I learned through her letters home that in almost no way did it resemble the school I attended about seventy-five years later. How fascinating it is to see those early beginnings of women’s education, in many ways as demanding as today’s.

Fannie’s adult life, which started with a broken engagement and never included a husband and children, but did include time in Europe as governess to D. L.’s grandchildren and a brief teaching career at her cousin’s new seminary, was brought to an untimely end at age thirty-four by tuberculosis.

A book of this type, a compilation of family histories, is an important record one can leave to one’s children and grandchildren, and as such is doubtless a source of great satisfaction to the author.


To the rest of us, less invested in a record of this particular family, the value of such a book rests in what it tells us about a period of history centered on our little valley: a history of, for the most part, ordinary people. What we may find remarkable is the degree to which the people of that period, despite having only the horse and buggy and the railroads in which to travel, were intimately involved in one another’s lives, managed to visit regularly, to travel considerable distances to be with family and friends, and, in the absence of other means of communication, were moved to write letters: many, many letters.

And it is these letters and diaries that shine a light on the period. One was expected to be fluent in expressing oneself on paper, articulate, grammatical, informative, and they honed their skill through constant practice.

What, I ask myself, will this generation leave behind that will give their descendants a sense of their history? Tweets and texts disappear almost as soon as written, lost to all who follow; telephones have taken the place of letters; and the art of letter-writing, tragically, seems to be a thing of the past. But that is a subject for another time.

Joan A. Hunter has written an interesting saga of her family that showcases their letters and diaries, a treasure for her family, and a great resource for local history buffs.

The Life and Times of Charles Leonard Holton by Joan A. Hunter is available through Amazon.





WARREN ONDRAS PHOTO

If you have a scientific idea you'd like to write about, a science-related book to review, an activity to advertise, or would like to share your experiences with science or any related field, please be in touch: science@montaguereporter.org.

Lisa McLoughlin, editor

BOOK REVIEW:

Brethren by Nature

By LISA McLOUGHLIN

Brethren by Nature: New England Indians, Colonists, and the Origins of American Slavery by Margaret Ellen Newell, 2015, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press

This extremely thoroughly researched book is about Indian slavery in New England, and addresses the intersections of race, land, and culture.

It has two chapters that deal specifically with King Philip's War, which will be of great interest to anyone following the progress of the ongoing battlefield grant research in Montague. The decisive battle of



King Philip's War was fought at the Great Falls (now Turners Falls).

But the strength of this book is not details of battles, but rather an insightful analysis of how colonists' need for labor was a major catalyst for war (some of it "just," much more of it "unjust") against various Indian nations.

Colonists started out dealing with Indians with at least the pretense of legal treaties and written agreements. Over time, they allowed their religious beliefs, their cultural biases, and their ambitions to lead them into treating their fellow inhabitants as less than themselves in the eyes of the law.

This problem was exacerbated by the existence of many sets of laws at the time in New England. Each colony had its own rules, England was trying to retain dominion over them all, and each Indian nation had its own way of dealing with the newcomers, ranging from isolation to collaboration. In a surprisingly short period of time, the lives of most Indians and colonists were intertwined.

Anyone interested in the history of this area will appreciate the insights from this book. NatureCulturally, it's a good case study of how "race" is defined culturally, not through science. *Brethren by Nature* is an ambitious read, but well worth it.

NatureCulture Events for September

Accessible Birding

Accessible birding every second Tuesday of the month (through November). Open to birders of all abilities.

Meet at the Millers River Environmental Center, 100 Main Street, Athol

Tuesday, September 13, 8 a.m.

Call ahead for wheelchair van access, (978) 248-9491. Info: atholbirdclub.org

Quabbin Tracking with David Brown

Quabbin Reservoir is surrounded by a huge protected watershed of forest, field and beaver ponds where human intrusion is light and wildlife abounds. Even in marginal tracking or birding conditions, a day spent in this "accidental wilderness" refreshes the soul.

Sunday, September 18, 10 a.m. Pre-registration required. Fee.

Info and registration: dbwildlife.com

"It's Your River, So What Are You Going to Do About it?"

Come join Andrew Fisk, Ph.D. Executive Director of the Connecticut River Watershed Council to learn about the past, present, and future of the Connecticut River. This general interest presentation about biology, law, engineering, and hydrology will cover successes and failures in the decades-long work to improve your river and its 11000 square mile watershed.

Saturday September 17, 1 p.m. Free. Everyone welcome.

Great Falls Discovery Center, 2 Avenue A, Turners Falls.

Citizen Science

By LISA McLOUGHLIN

Thanks to the Internet, there are many collective science projects you can do from home anytime you have a free moment:

Zooniverse (zooniverse.org/projects) was one of the first sites. They offer a wide variety of programs to participate in, including: space, social science, physics, nature, medicine, literature, language, history, climate, biology, and the arts.

I tried a few of these. "Galaxy Zoo" lets you look at wonderful space pictures and categorize the galaxies by type. Early on in this project, a woman discovered a new kind of galaxy we didn't know existed and got to name it.

"Old Weather" was also fun, looking through old ship's logs and noting the weather conditions to get very precise readings about sea and air temperatures over hundreds of years. Likely to help us understand global climate change, I liked this one, but was too tempted to write down the other cool things they did in the logs, so it didn't last.

Briefly I tried putting papyrus scraps with writing on them together, but I wasn't good at that because I didn't clearly know what the letters were supposed to look like. "Sea-floor Explorer," in which you count the number of fish and other under-sea stuff in each picture, is a great thing for divers like myself who are longing to be there over the winter.

Finally, I got hooked on "Whale FM" – identifying whale calls. On this one you get an unknown whale call to listen to, which also shows as a sound wave on the screen. You then get a row of possible ones to match it with and find the best fit. I had a favorite whale to track, and you could

listen to different types of whales in different parts of the world. Unfortunately they archived this project last year, but if you're into whales you can participate in identifying them by their tail patterns in a different project. There's something for everyone on this site.

The Smithsonian Museum has a citizen science page: si.edu/Volunteer/CitizenScience. Their topics include Virginia Working Landscapes (a conservation of biodiversity and sustainability effort), volcanoes, an app that allows you to identify trees electronically, biocube which increases observation skills, eMammal to track mammals by animal cameras, encyclopedia of life which wants your biological data, the transcription center which transcribes historic records, and bird nest watching.

NASA has some citizen science projects you can do (from Earth): nasa.gov including monitoring Lake Erie algae blooms: nasa.gov/feature/citizen-scientists-monitor-lake-erie-algal-blooms, and while not really research, you might enjoy sharing space station spotting with friends on: spotthestation.nasa.gov.

The Audubon's Christmas bird count is the longest (~116 years) running citizen science project. I had never heard of the Christmas bird count until one year people parked in my driveway and said they had been counting birds there on Christmas for decades. OK then. If you have other things to do on Christmas, you can still count birds via the backyard bird count and a hummingbird project. audubon.org/conservation/science.

There are a few sites that warehouse lists of projects. **Scistarter.com** is one that features a project of the day and lets you choose a project by interest, age (meaning you can pick

ones for just kids), and location. I put in a search for free outdoor projects and got a list ranging from road kill surveys for bikers to low-cost robotic telescope building, with many (live) animal and plant observations in-between.

If you're a working scientist or science educator and want more information about utilizing citizen science, check out: citizensciencealliance.org or scistarter.com.

Thanks are due to the excellent article on Hill Town Families that inspired me to write about citizen science: hilltownfamilies.wordpress.com/2016/03/23/htf-261/

This is geared toward families with children, and mentions the **Pioneer Valley Citizen Science Colaboratory**: pvcitizenscience.org which is a local science initiative with many great opportunities in which to participate.



Moon Calendar for September 2016:

Thursday, September 1:	New Moon
Friday, September 9:	First Quarter
Friday, September 16:	Full Moon and Penumbral Lunar Eclipse
Friday, September 23:	Last Quarter
Friday, September 30:	New Moon

Sky Events Calendar by Fred Espenak and Sumit Dutta (NASA's GSFC). Moon image by NASA / Bill Ingalls. Create your own custom sky calendar at: eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SKYCAL/SKYCAL.html

Note: 2 new moons this month! Also, a penumbral lunar eclipse, which will unfortunately not be visible to us in the Northeastern US. For more info on the eclipse, go to: eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/LEplot/LEplot2001/LE2016Sep16N.pdf

September 23 and 24: Source to Sea Cleanup



The Connecticut River Watershed Council is sponsoring its annual source to sea cleanup of the

river and its tributaries. Volunteers in four states bordering the river can participate on foot or by boat. Ac-

cording to their website "more than 2,300 volunteers pulled over 50 tons of trash from over 169 miles of river banks and waterways. Volunteers use human power and sometimes heavy equipment to pull out everything from recyclables, fishing equipment and food waste to tires, televisions and refrigerators."

They also take pictures for a photo contest.

This is a great way to get outside and give back to the watershed that sustains us. Visit the CRWC web page to join, lead, or sponsor a group, or to report a site that needs cleanup.

ctriver.org/projects/source-to-sea-cleanup/

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WEST ALONG from page B1

bittersweet vines that are beginning to choke the older trunks, but that invasive keeps fighting back.

August 22. The endless summer that we all looked forward to is a concept that is getting a little *old* nowadays. Endless drought and heat is more like it! Yet in the evening now, is it possible that a slight coolness is slipping into the feel of this late season?

The lifting of an icy glass on the deck in the evening helps, and has become a summer ritual, justified by the relentless heat of the day. As if we need an excuse!

Nearby, the picnic table that we made twenty-five years ago is laden with summer loot and artifacts: river mussel shells, cobalt-colored river glass, like sea glass, smoothed by the rushing river over stone, a great blue

heron feather found on the bank, white quartz pebbles that showed themselves to us on the beach at the bend of the river, and were brought home.

The Keen water-shoes hang on a hook to dry in the late sun. A two hundred million-year-old loaf of volcanic pumice, full of petrified bubble holes and rolled smooth down the river over an eternity until it reached our shore, sits beside the one year-old pup lolling on his back to catch the new-found coolness of the evening.

Familiar objects like these, flowers, stone, wood, glass, tree, dog, are timeless simple things true in their perfection. They give enjoyment and lend balance and reassurance simply by turning up and being noticed at just the odd moment of lucidity.

Now is a good time to admire the

evening's colors: the shingled house sheathed in aging cedar has turned a warm auburn and clover honey amber hue. Shingles blend into the landscape of fading goldenrod, the early rust of the burning bush, the old mauve of the Joe Pye weed.

August 31. This is last day of August and the drought has not diminished. Thunderstorms and rain clouds pass us by. In spite of the arid conditions, this has been quite a summer for frogs and toads. We have counted more pickerel frogs in the garden and tall grasses on the margins of the lawn left un-mown just for them, than ever before.

A large hoppy-toad, like a prosperous, plump and self-satisfied bourgeois, squats where he can keep an eye on his domain under the rhododendron.

The frog pond itself however is

bone dry for the first time in forty years. The bull frogs and green frogs have sought refuge in the mud or elsewhere in the spring-fed pools deeper in the woods.

Butterflies have been plentiful too: black swallowtails, yellow swallowtails, checkerspots and fritillary, even several monarch butterflies have turned up in recent days, lilting through the yard and flowerbed.

But with September now at hand, there's a vague and distant twinge of the heart that gives me pause. This season would be my time to head back to the classroom, to dust off my lesson plan book and plunge back into what has now become a confusing technological maelstrom of public school teaching.

However that was long ago, and after forty years of teaching, now I'm free to roam the hills and riverbank

instead. That twinge of nostalgia must be like what an old draft horse feels when put out to pasture. Yes, there's a brief longing for the classroom when those first days of school come around, when the school bus comes along, and when the teacher in me could step back into the classroom for one more year. Wouldn't I like to come out of retirement and give it another go-around?

Nah!

Pulling on my walking shoes, heading out the door for a hike with the dog, binoculars slung around my neck, that twinge is really only a very brief twinge. I'm off and out for a ramble, free to do whatever I want, taking one day at a time.

Go back to working for a living?

Not a chance!



All The Paving You Can Stand!

Photos and Captions by JOE PARZYCH



Venture Inc. of Concord, NH sandblasted and vacuumed areas on the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge where blacktop had been slipping on the waterproofing membrane when vehicles, particularly trucks, braked for traffic lights.



After Venture's Blastrac sandblasted and vacuumed the remains of the failed membrane, Venture employee Chris Freni (center) sprayed acrylic resin on the surface, while Glen Mallet (right) sprinkled crushed rock particles on top of that. The crushed rock adhered to the resin, allowing it to grip the asphalt paved over it.

Warner Brothers Paving's crew paved over the acrylic resin.



Charlie O'Connell of Warner Brothers Paving checked the asphalt with a nuclear density gauge.

Here's Denny Folger hamming it up on a HD-90 ten-ton Hamm oscillating roller headed for Gill on the Turners Falls-Gill Bridge, or the Gill-Turners Falls Bridge, as the new plaques on the bridge state.



Davenport Construction completed the site work for a new parking lot, begun July 1 and competed on August 19, with paving by Warner Brothers on August 20.

The Komatsu bulldozer, Volvo excavator with backhoe bucket, and Cat225B-LC (long boom) with a KF-27 Kent Hydraulic Breaker used to break up ledge on the site.

Davenport's crew discovered two underground gasoline storage tanks used during the time Bill Sweeney operated a Ford agency on the site. The water connection to the water main still needs to be disconnected at a future date.



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ONGOING EVENTS

EVERY SUNDAY

McCusker's Co-op Market, Shelburne Falls: *Celtic Sessions*. Musicians of all levels welcome to play traditional Irish music. 10:30 a.m.

ONE MONDAY EACH MONTH

Carnegie Library: *Outside the Lines!* Last Monday of each month. Adult Coloring Group. Supplies provided. 6:30 p.m.

EVERY TUESDAY

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls: Crafts and activities for children of all ages. 3:30 to 4:45 p.m.

1ST AND 3RD WEDNESDAY

Arts Block (4th floor), Greenfield: *Creacion Latin Big Band & Late Night Open Mic JAM*. 20 piece ensemble play son, salsa, chacha and much more. 8 p.m. Open Mic starts at 9 p.m. Free.

EVERY WEDNESDAY

Carnegie Library, Turners Falls: *Story Time*: Thematic stories, projects, and snacks for young children. 10:15 to 11:30 a.m.

Leverett Library, Leverett: *Tales and Tunes Story Hour*. For ages 0 to 5 and their caregivers. 10:30 a.m. to noon.

2nd St. and Ave A, Turners Falls: *Farmers Market*. 2-6 p.m.

1ST AND 3RD THURSDAY

Hubie'sTavern: *Open Mic*. 6 p.m.

EVERY THURSDAY

Carnegie Library: *Music and Movement with Tom Carroll & Laurie Davidson*. Children and their caregivers invited. 10 a.m.

The People's Pint, Greenfield: *Derek Bridges*. Live acoustic guitar. 7 p.m.

Pioneer Tavern, Millers Falls: *Watchdog Open Mic*. All musicians, comedians, and magicians are welcome! 8 p.m.

EVERY THIRD FRIDAY



"Farmer's Castle", a c. 1940 painting by Robert Strong Woodward, is of a barn in Charlemont. Woodward turned to painting as a profession after a gunshot wound paralyzed him from the waist down and he lived most of his life in Buckland. This and other paintings of Woodward's of local scenery and barns are currently showing at Memorial Hall in Deerfield through October.

Element Brewing Company, Millers Falls: *Brule's Irish Band*. Food carts supplement the local beer. 6 p.m.

EVERY FRIDAY

Slate Memorial Library, Gill: *Story Hour*. Stories and hands-on arts & crafts. 10 a.m. to noon.

The Pioneer Tavern, Millers Falls: *TNT Karaoke*, 8 p.m.

EVERY SATURDAY

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Kidleidoscope*. Science fun for kids. 10:30-11:30 a.m.

EXHIBITS:

Artspace, Greenfield: *Retrospective: Local New England Views*. Paintings by Charles Unaitis. Artist reception Friday 9/9, 5-7 p.m. Exhibit 8/22 through 9/16.

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: Great Hall Art Display: *Quiet Waters*, photography of Lake Wyola by Kathy Lawlor. Artist reception Saturday, 9/3, 1-3 p.m. Through September 26.

Memorial Hall, Deerfield: *Relics and Curiosities in Memorial*

Hall. Interesting objects such as wreaths made of human hair and weapons made from shark's teeth. Through October 30. Also at Memorial Hall, *Farmers' Castles* by Robert Strong Woodward, which include barns that Woodward painted in Charlemont, Colrain, and Buckland in the earlier years of the 20th c. Through October 30 \$

The River Garden Art Gallery 157 Main St., Brattleboro, VT: *The Connecticut River Watershed Council presents: The Power of Water /The Power of Words*. Public-participation community Art Project "tells a thousand stories to make the Connecticut River cleaner and hydropower

wright of color for possible production during the 2017 season. Deadline for submissions is 10/1. Complete information at www.silverthornetheater.org/new-play-competition2.html

EVENTS:

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 1

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Eric Love*. '60s and '70s Gold. 8 p.m.

Arts Block, Greenfield: Wheelhouse Kick-off Thursday Series with Wydyde and *Hot Dirt*. Basement music fire, and sonic experiments. 9:30 p.m. \$

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 2

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Steve Dedman*. Americana. 8 p.m.

Shutesbury Athletic Club, Shutesbury: *Larry Dulong & Random Sighting*. Get out your dancing shoes. 8:30 p.m.

Deja Brew. Wendell: *The Equalites*. Reggae fantastico. 9:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

Discovery Center, Turners Falls: *Kidleidoscope*. Science fun for kids. This week it's raccoons! 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Wendell Free Library, Wendell: *Back to the Future*. 1955 and Marty McFly are back. This movie is part of the monthly series of Science Fiction/Fantasy and Horror/Monster movies. 7:30 p.m.

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Cassidy and the Music* with special guest star Jeri Silverman. Singer/songwriter. 8 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Violet Maeve*. All girl indie rock band. 9 p.m.

Plioneer Tavern, Millers Falls: *Ruby's Complaint*. 9 p.m. \$

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Cassidy and the Music*. 2 p.m.

Deja Brew, Wendell: *Shadow Twisters*. Outdoor Labor Day Dance Party. Classic '60s and '70s rock. 8:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

Arts Block,(4th floor), Greenfield: *Creacion Latin Big Band*. See On-Going Events for details.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

Arts Block, Greenfield: An evening of jazz with *Never Been to Spain*, and *Secondary Messengers*. 7:30 p.m. \$

Arts Block (Wheelhouse), Greenfield: *The Mary Jane Jones*. Up to 9 musicians deliver vintage soul, covers and some originals. 10 p.m. \$

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

Smith College, Northampton *Second Friday Family Fun*. Hands-on art making for all ages, inspired by works on view. 4-6 p.m.

Great Hall, Discovery Center,

Turners Falls: The Great Falls Coffeehouse presents *Jay Mankita*, singer songwriter of folk, acoustic, and original music. Each month the Friends of the Great Falls Discovery Center host an evening coffeehouse to raise money for free nature programming for the public. Refreshments. 7 p.m. \$.

Pothole Pictures, Shelburne Falls: *Night on Earth*. Jim Jarmusch's tales of taxi cab fares and their stories. Score by Tom Waits. 7:30 p.m. \$

Mocha Maya's, Shelburne Falls: *Dave Dershman & Ashley Storrow*. Americana. 8 p.m.

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SUBMITTED PHOTO

The pastoral selfie: O'Mannion gears up.

PRIEST from page B1

Czestochowa's new pastor. "I've moved more stuff to Turners Falls than I had realized."

The 53-year-old curate is blessed with a playful, whimsical sense of humor, and marvels at the long road that has brought him north from Guadalajara to Turners Falls.

"I learned to love Jesus Christ," said Father Sean, "in the Baptist church as a little boy. I was taught the acronym JOY, which stands for Jesus, Others and You – in that exact order. And my life has been a series of events in which I tried to live that lesson, falling on my face, and

getting up to try again and again."

One of the goals Father O'Mannion has in mind for his new parish is the inception of a Mass in the Spanish language. He's hoping to start one on Saturday evenings very soon.

The down-to-earth clergyman feels deeply about the scandals that have rocked the Catholic Church.

"All of us," he said, "should never assume that just because a man is a priest, he is a holy man. I tell people to remember that Judas Iscariot was 'a man of God.' Any degree of holiness must come from God, and not from mortals."



ACTUAL NEWSPAPER CONTEST

Someone appears in three photographs in this edition. If you can figure out who it is, cut them out of all three pictures and paste them into a landscape together. Mail or deliver that landscape to the *Montague Reporter*, 177 Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA 01376. Entries will be judged by our office staff. All entrants will be listed in one future edition of the *Reporter*, and the creator of the most convincing or effective collage will be awarded with an honorary title of their choosing, with no further responsibility entailed, and listed on our masthead on Page A2 for two weeks.

MONTAGUE REPORTER

ON THE ROAD

Everyone needs a break like this! From left to right: Kyle Dodge, Jake Dodge, Candice Dodge, Chip Dodge, Jill Putala, John Putala, Jenna Putala and Jack Putala show a very healthy dose of hometown spirit on the beach in San Juan, Puerto Rico last month.

Going somewhere? Take us with you! Send photos to editor@montaguereporter.org.

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